

SANTA ROSA 2050 GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

SUMMARY OF THE COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY: 06/24/20

I. Introduction

Santa Rosa is ready to advance from recent challenges and “bounce forward” to a safe, healthy, sustainable, and equitable future. The General Plan is the City of Santa Rosa’s overarching policy document and will establish direction and programs that support housing for all, improve neighborhood quality and connectivity, foster economic development, and reinforce environmental protection citywide.

The City of Santa Rosa is committed to designing and implementing an inclusive and dynamic engagement process to ensure the 2050 General Plan Update (GPU) is based on robust and genuine feedback from the community, civic and city leaders, and the private sector. The development of the General Plan will require inclusive engagement across many different platforms.

The Project Team (which includes City staff and consultants) developed a **Community Involvement Strategy (CIS)** which outlines key outreach strategies and methods, target audiences, communication tools and the proposed timeline for implementation. This document is a high-level summary of the CIS and includes the proposed community involvement activities which will inform and guide the development of the 2050 General Plan Update. The CIS includes specific community engagement activities that were added, enhanced, or expanded upon as a direct result of the Kaiser Permanent Healthy Communities Grant provided to the City of Santa Rosa (see the table below). These activities will ensure that all members of the Santa Rosa community are actively engaged throughout the project, and that community ideas, perspectives, and needs directly inform all phases of this important project.

A key component of the CIS is to form a **Community Advisory Committee (CAC)**, composed of a diverse cross section of the Santa Rosa community, that will serve as ambassadors to ensure broad and deep community engagement. The CAC will meet at key points in the project to provide feedback on work products such as the City Profile, Existing Conditions Analysis, Land Use and Circulations Alternatives, and Draft General Plan.

In light of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, we expect there will be a continued emphasis on virtual engagement due to the ongoing need for social distancing; however, we will also conduct in-person activities as the project progresses. It is possible that even if restrictions on in-person gatherings are loosened, many people may continue to choose to keep their distance and prefer methods that allow for online and telephone participation. Our community engagement experts are at the forefront of virtual meetings, online community engagement techniques, and other strategies for interacting with the community during this challenging time, and beyond. The Project Team is committed to **bridging the digital divide** during COVID-19 to ensure that a broad cross-section of Santa Rosa community members can access and fully participate in all engagement activities.

II. Approach

The Community Involvement Strategy (CIS) offers numerous opportunities for the public, key civic and business leaders, as well as City staff and elected officials to be involved in the General Plan process. The CIS highlights ways that specific outreach activities will seek out and consider the viewpoints of a wide cross-section of Santa Rosa communities, with a targeted focus on reaching populations that are traditionally under-represented in planning processes (e.g., communities of color, low-income communities, immigrants, youth and seniors). Our approach includes the following goals:

1. **Leverage Local Networks and Existing Community Engagement Efforts.** Build on the variety and depth of existing community involvement initiatives in Santa Rosa to effectively and efficiently engage the public in the General Plan process. Tap into existing community-based networks of local leaders and groups to connect with a wider range of community members.
2. **Identify Barriers to Participation.** Cultivate an understanding of existing or potential barriers to the full participation of all community members, particularly communities of color and low-income populations, in the General Plan process.
3. **Create Opportunities for Inclusive and Equitable Participation.** Provide multiple and varied opportunities for a broad range of community members, businesses and interest groups to share meaningful input.
4. **Collaborate and Inform General Plan Decision-Making.** Collect useful and relevant public input that reflects local expertise and values and informs decision-making related to the General Plan.
5. **Build Long-Term Capacity for Civic Engagement around Growth, Development and Community Design.** Build social capital and support those engaged through the process to stay involved and share not only concerns and issues, but also solutions and strategies necessary to implement the General Plan.

III. Guiding Principles

The overarching goal of the community engagement process is to provide opportunities for meaningful participation and consensus-building among residents, community groups, partner agencies, City departments, and other stakeholders to define a shared vision for Santa Rosa's future. The Community Involvement Strategy is based on the following guiding principles:

- **Authentic and Equitable.** One of the principles of this outreach effort is to start and/or continue authentic dialogue, rooted in planning research and data, to establish a framework for future development and investments. Community education regarding existing conditions and the current degree of equity in the distribution of services, amenities and opportunities for housing and jobs in the City of Santa Rosa will help ground these conversations. We will work with community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, and others working directly with communities of color to develop culturally relevant outreach approaches, most appropriate to meaningfully connect with Santa Rosa's diverse residents.
- **Inclusive and Flexible.** Using a mix of creative and traditional approaches, the Project Team will proactively reach out and engage a full range of community and stakeholder groups across Santa Rosa.
- **Interwoven Equity.** The General Plan Update process will provide a focus on equity issues and offer opportunities to have constructive conversations in lower-income communities of color regarding challenges to upward mobility and access to educational and economic advancement.
- **High-Touch and High-Tech.** We know that many people respond well to personal, face-to-face communication. Outreach methods such as focus groups, interviews and pop-up events will allow the Project Team to interact with community members in a "high touch" fashion. Many of these same materials will be adapted to the digital environment to supplement a "high tech" aspect to the

engagement – through social media, online questionnaires and websites.

- **Clear, Focused and Understandable.** Activities will have a clear purpose and use for the input and will be described in language that is easy to understand.
- **Integrated Framework for Growth, Development and Community Design.** Our approach will focus on synthesizing the best of what is working in terms of growth policies, and creating new, community-centered strategies for addressing Santa Rosa’s opportunities and priorities.
- **Respect.** All participants, including Project Team, City staff, residents, and civic and elected leaders, demonstrate respect in words and actions and approach decisions with open-mindedness so that everyone feels comfortable expressing their opinion regardless of differences. We will work with community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, and others working directly with communities of color to develop culturally relevant outreach approaches, most appropriate to meaningfully connect with Santa Rosa’s diverse residents.

IV. Key Audiences

The General Plan Update is an opportunity for Santa Rosa to further build a network of increasingly diverse and engaged community members to collectively contribute to the City’s quality of life. In particular, the community outreach will seek out and consider the viewpoints of hard-to-reach groups such as communities of color, low- and moderate-income residents, seniors, youth, limited-English proficient individuals, and people with disabilities, in the course of conducting public outreach and involvement activities. The key audiences below will be targeted through the appropriate engagement methods. This is a “living list” and the Project Team will continue to add stakeholders/audiences to the list to ensure strong representation from across the City.

- Santa Rosa residents and community members
- City Council and elected officials
- City of Santa Rosa Departments
- County of Sonoma Departments
- Transportation Service Providers
- Community organizations
- Neighborhood associations
- Faith-based organizations
- Educational institutions (schools and universities)
- Large employers and local businesses
- Chambers of Commerce and business associations
- Transportation, public health, open space and environmental advocacy groups

V. Phases of Engagement Activities

The matrix below outlines each of the tasks in the Community Involvement Strategy and details if the engagement activity will be provided in-person, virtually or some combination of both. The Project Team will revisit and update this matrix in accordance with guidance from health officials. *Please note that the * denotes specific community engagement activities that will be added, enhanced, or expanded upon as a direct result of the Kaiser Permanent Healthy Communities Grant provided to the City of Santa Rosa.*

	Topic/Task	Time Frame	In Person Engagement	Virtual Engagement	Hybrid Engagement
Ongoing Community Involvement Activities					
1.	Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Meetings (10)*	(On-Going)			✓
2.	Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Meetings (6)	(On-going)			✓
3.	Translation Services*	(On-going)			✓
4.	Community Events and Outside Agency Meetings (10)*	(On-going)			✓
5.	Project Brand	(On-going)		✓	
6.	Project Website	(On-going)		✓	
7.	Communications and Media Roll-Out	(On-going)		✓	
8.	Online Surveys*	(On-going)		✓	
9.	General Plan Video Series*	(On-going)		✓	
10.	Community General Plan Studio and Open House Space*	(On-going)			✓
11.	Growing Better Places Board Game*	(On-going)			✓
12.	Youth Engagement Activities*	(On-going)			✓
13.	Youth Art Contest*	(On-going)			✓
Phase 1: Project Commencement and Existing Conditions					
1.	Develop Community Involvement Strategy (CIS)	March 2020 – Sept. 2020		✓	
2.	Review Current and Recent Community Input Efforts	March 2020 – Sept. 2020		✓	
3.	Create a Calendar of Community	March 2020 – Sept. 2020		✓	
4.	Community Discussions and Events Set #1: Vision *	July 2020 – Sept. 2020		✓	

	Topic/Task	Time Frame	In Person Engagement	Virtual Engagement	Hybrid Engagement
5.	Community Meeting*	July 2020 – Sept. 2020		✓	
6.	Focus Groups (4)	June 2020 – Sept. 2020		✓	
7.	Council and Commission Presentations	May 2020 – Sept. 2020		✓	
Phase 2: Land Use and Circulation Alternatives					
1.	Community Discussions and Events Set #2: Alternatives*	October 2020 – April 2021			✓
2.	Pop-Up Events*	February 2021- April 2021			✓
3.	Mobile Outreach – The Plan Van*	April 2021 (On-going)	✓		
4.	Double Decker Bus Tour	April 2021 (On-going)	✓		
5.	Council and Commission Presentations	October 2020 – April 2021			✓
Phase 3: Preferred Alternative					
1.	Community Discussions and Events Set #3: Preferred Alternative*	April 2021 - June 21			✓
2.	Council and Commission Presentations	April 2021 - June 21			✓
Phase 4: General Plan Update Document					
1.	Community Discussions and Events Set #4: Draft General Plan*	May 2021 – July 2022			✓
2.	Council and Commission Presentations	May 2021 – July 2022			✓
3.	Planning Commission and Council Review of Final EIR	May 2021 – August 2022			✓

Phase 5: General Plan and EIR Adoption					
1.	Commission Presentations	March 2022 – September 2022			✓
2.	Planning Commission and City Council Hearings	March 2022 – September 2022			✓

VI. Metrics of Success

The Project Team will regularly evaluate the Community Involvement Strategy based on the objectives outlined below, complemented by a set of targets and metrics to be developed:

1. **Accessibility.** The community involvement process will be accessible, understandable, and welcoming to all who wish to participate.
 - Participants will complete surveys and evaluation forms (both in-person and online) indicating their opinions on the overall accessibility of the GPU process.
2. **Reach.** The community involvement process will involve and inform as many members of the public as possible.
 - The Project Team will strive to reach all households and businesses in the city through the community involvement process. The Project Team will use a wide variety of engagement activities, tools and communication methods to reach community members, including workshops, focus groups, surveys, radio advertisements, mailers, and social media, among other approaches.
3. **Diversity.** Participants will reflect the diversity of age groups, ethnicities, incomes, geographies, and special needs of the Santa Rosa population.
 - The Project Team will track and measure the diversity of participants to ensure participants reflect the demographic and geographic composition of the Santa Rosa population.
4. **Impact.** Participation will influence and inform the decision-making process for the General Plan.
 - Participants will complete surveys and other evaluative tools indicating their opinions on how their input informed the engagement process and key project documents. The Project Team will highlight how community input influenced process and policy decisions in the engagement summary documents.