

Summary of Discussion Topics

Introduction

The second meeting of the Santa Rosa Forward Community Advisory Committee (CAC) was held on March 31, 2021, via zoom. This meeting provided an opportunity for the CAC to review the key learnings of the Existing Conditions Report and discuss what lies ahead for the city in the next 20-30 years. It included an interactive discussion on framing a vision for the future of Santa Rosa.

This was the second in a series of ten planned CAC meetings that will be conducted between February 2021 and March 2023. All meetings are open to the public and facilitated by MIG, a planning and urban design firm which specializes in process design and stakeholder facilitation. The MIG facilitators graphically recorded comments of the CAC members and members of the public on a digital whiteboard. A photo export of the whiteboard is included at the end of this document. This summary synthesizes the key discussion topics and questions raised during the meeting; it is not intended to serve as a transcription of the meeting.

CAC Role

The role of the Community Advisory Committee is to:

- **Serve** as liaisons to their community connections and constituent groups.
- **Encourage** community participation in the Santa Rosa Forward project.
- **Understand** broad community needs and desires and articulate those back to the Santa Rosa Forward Project Team.
- **Provide** ideas for consideration in preparing the General Plan Update.

CAC Membership

The City Council identified 25 positions for the Community Advisory Committee. Currently (March 2021) there are 21 members of the CAC. Four of the seven members have been appointed by the Santa Rosa City Council as district representatives. The other 17 CAC members were selected by the Planning & Economic Development Department through an open application process. The committee currently includes the following individuals:

1. Aaron Schreiber-Stainthorp
2. Ali Soto
3. Ana Stevens cc
4. Andres Vigil
5. Anne Barbour
6. Annette Arnold cc
7. Delashay Carmona Benson
8. Erica Mikesh
9. Evette Minor
10. Hugh Helm cc
11. Jen Klose Lee Pierce
12. Lisa Joslen
13. Melanie Ahlers
14. Michael Cook
15. Omar Lopez
16. Patricia Thompson
17. Rituja Bhowmik
18. Ryan Tracey
19. Stephanie Manieri
20. Steven Spillman
21. Gary Wysocky cc
22. Vacant
23. Vacant
24. Vacant
25. Vacant

Discussion Summary

The meeting included an open discussion with each CAC member providing their initial thoughts and ideas to help refine a Community Vision for Santa Rosa. The following is a summary of ideas and comments raised by CAC members, which focus on framing overarching community values and priorities that should be included in the Vision.

CAC Member Community Engagement Roles

- The group discuss several activities each CAC Member can do during Community Event Set #1 to support the broader City engagement process:
 - Call or email City staff with ideas for organizations and groups that you are interested in reaching out to.
 - Disseminate Community Survey #2 and encourage people to attend one of the Community Vision Workshops. The Project Team mentioned that they will share the community survey with the CAC and post survey links on the project website.

- Reach out to youth/students to bring awareness to the Santa Rosa Forward project and to gain their voices/perspectives during the Community Vision phase of the project.
- Reach out to the disadvantaged and underserved community to bring awareness to the Santa Rosa Forward project and to gain their voices/perspectives during the Community Vision phase of the project.
- The committee also provided suggested on how the City can expand community outreach and engagement:
 - Proactively address NYMBY (“Not In My Backyard”) sentiment by providing clear information and neutral analysis.
 - Consider a Bus/self-guided city tour so people can become familiar with the whole city (while following COVID protocols and requirements).
 - Identify additional ways to fill in the gaps in participation.
 - Make sure all engagement materials are translated (digital and printed).
 - Provide services for the hearing and visual impaired (related to the workshops and surveys).
 - Conduct pop-up events and help guide people through the survey.

Vision Statement/Topics

The CAC also provided feedback on the draft vision topics and areas of potential focus. The following is a summary of committee comments and ideas.

Parks and Public Services

- Community Activity Centers
 - Make Santa Rosa a wine tasting destination.
 - Encourage and support activities for families and children.
 - Create and showcase more green and open spaces.
 - Create gathering spaces throughout the community and program activities and events on those spaces.
 - Having community centers throughout the city.
 - Protect the natural environment.

Social and Environmental Justice

- Access/Needs
 - Ensure there is equitable access to parks and recreational amenities.
 - Understand the emerging needs of children, students, elderly, etc.
 - Reconnect with seniors and reach out specifically to isolated seniors.
 - Provide mental and social health resources to the homeless and those with housing insecurity.
 - Address the current difficulty in navigating health systems and receiving medical services (i.e., access to vaccines, transit to clinics, affordability).
 - Understand the “whole person” and full community demographics.
 - Work to become the leader in health metrics.
- Investing in Youth
 - Include and keep in touch with children and students in all aspects of community life.
 - Provide access to quality and equitable educational resources.
 - Increase youth activities to keep them busy (especially now since the pandemic is impacting socializing).
 - Empower youth so they have a voice and active role in the community.
 - Provide counseling for career, education, and vocational training.
- Specific Community Focus
 - Make a special effort to engage communities that have been underrepresented or underserved in the past, including Roseland, South Park, and areas near Highway 101.

Housing, Employment and Economic Development

- Vibrant City Centers
 - Identify and create community centers/anchor and parks throughout the city (including more suburban and rural parts).
 - Add affordable and mixed-income housing in Downtown to create a more vibrant urban core.
 - Promote tourism and the tourism industry.
 - Support local businesses that were hit hard by the COVID pandemic.
 - Enhance transportation in/to Downtown.
 - Integrate green, resilient, and sustainable infrastructure throughout the city.
 - Encourage supportive entertainment and retail spaces to have later operating hours (keeping young and students in mind).
 - Encourage and celebrate artists.
 - Integrate Smart City technology (data, internet, integrated systems, etc.).
 - Activate streets and sidewalks with businesses, dining, retail, and outdoor events.
 - Innovate on new inclusionary policies (housing access and affordability).
- Healthy and Diverse Neighborhoods:
 - Update zoning and design guidelines so they are more specific and result in the types of projects desired and needed by the community.
 - Up-zone all single family home neighborhoods in increase housing supply.
 - Integrate different types of housing (fourplexes, Transit Oriented Development, affordable housing, income-based housing) for all people (single people/youth/seniors/underserved groups/diverse locations).
 - Increase housing density in strategic places to promote infill development.
 - Do not increase the density in areas that are already dense (such as Southwest Santa Rosa).

- Create more resilient housing products that can better withstand wildfires and other natural disasters.
- Integrate urban and rooftop gardens into existing and new projects.
- Ensure that infrastructure can support new housing development.
- Ensure safety during emergencies and natural disasters.
- Specifically address homelessness throughout the city.

Land Use and Community Character

- Businesses
 - Attract, build, rebuild, and support a range of different businesses, especially Black-owned and Latinx-owned businesses.
 - Understand how local businesses can thrive in Santa Rosa and provide support/education to local businesses and entrepreneurs.
 - Advertise, attract, and recruit employee for potential in SR, staying competitive
- Diverse Neighborhoods
 - Create smaller neighborhood centers in more parts of the city.
 - Update zoning to allow flexibility and variety.

Fire and Related Hazards

- Communication/Partnerships
 - Communicate to those at risk about how to make their property less fire prone and how to evacuate in the event of another wildfire or disaster.
 - Work with the County on disaster planning and response.
 - Improve streets so they are wide enough for evacuations.
 - Monitor and address the impacts of housing, mental health, evacuation, and climate change related to natural disasters.

Travel and Commute Patterns

- Transit
 - Coordinate transit hours and stops with Santa Rosa Junior College to better support the students (night and day).
 - Make transit more comfortable and affordable.
 - Expand evening bus and rail transit hours.
 - Improve the transit system to help the environment and lower overall vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in Santa Rosa.
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Amenities
 - Create better connections throughout the community through new/linked bicycle paths, sidewalks, pedestrian bridges, etc.
 - Ensure there is sufficient space for pedestrians and bicyclist
 - Improve pedestrian amenities and increase sidewalk activity to make it more comfortable to be on/near the street
- Safety and Comfort
 - Improve safety by increasing street activity (walking, outdoor dining, shopping, etc.) to allow more “eyes on the street.”
 - Provide accessible services and resources for all forms of mobility.

CAC Member Information Requests

CAC members requested additional background information to better understand the meeting context to guide future discussions. Specific requests included:

- Community Engagement Tool Kit: That includes instructions, templates, and materials for running additional meetings during Community Event Set #1 (Visioning).

Public Comments

There were five members of the public who provided comments during the virtual meeting. The following is a combined summary of their comments.

- Concerned with Reaching Underserved Communities
 - There are communication gaps due to existing gaps in access to technology and the internet.
 - People want to gather and communicate with the City and their neighborhoods.
 - The City should hold itself to a higher standard of engagement.
 - Follow-up with neighborhood and community organizations.
 - Suggest using printed materials and more localized/neighborhood targeted community engagement.
- Transportation Challenges
 - Highway 101 divides the city and creates many challenges for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and transit riders.
 - We need to identify ways through the General Plan Update to lower vehicle miles travelled (VMT).
 - Create more diverse and spread-out community anchors (services, food, retail) to make the community more accessible by walking and bicycling.
- Santa Rosa Forward Process
 - Encourage the City to get specific with the plan and solve problems facing the community.
 - Stress the need for community and political accountability in current and future decisions.
 - Build community character and a sense of identity.
 - Celebrate Santa Rosa people and culture.
 - Make Santa Rosa a fun place to live!



10 - Members of the Public



Questions

For community members to contact their local representative (or specific issue of interest)	Will members of the CAC be invited to attend workshops & focus groups in order to get first-hand insights?	Are meetings the only mechanism to share ideas?	Go out to neighborhood by council district-	It is hard to read because it is tiny ... and there is no contact information for the individuals who are to serve as liaisons.
it would be helpful if there is a way to identify who on the CAC to contact, by area and/or area of interest.	Yes- everyone is invited - Focus group attendance will be more challenging due to brown act - but everything will be recorded	Members can meet with staff any time cant meet with the CAC in groups		Are the liaisons to be outreach only? (this is a great spectrum of people
	Specific area neighborhood gaps - are we able to visit the area as a group or on our own?	Can always email the Project email and call staff		
	In progress- was planned but due to covid we have to wait			



Public Comment

Dwayne from Rosalind - many don't know - if everyone can go through Rosalind - b/c its gotten worst- no legal status- aspirational -	Transportation and land use coalition - look at the relationship with the street and land use- want to focus on VMT - state wants to reduce by a 1/3 -	Thank you - general plan is important opp- reach out to SR Together and do neighborhood-based engagement. hold to a higher standard -	More transit - get rid of 101 it divides the city - whole person and walkability outlook - Corner store- community anchors	Deeper community involvement - grew up in Rosalind - need the channel to voice opposition - need the update - going to detail with this plan
Hoping that the project is better publicized and accessible to those w/o internet - virtual exclusion during covid - could reinstate paper resources - dt planning became exclusionary - please help	Many of the trips people do are less than 5 miles which is doable on foot and bike- need safe and accessible to get to places and food - need to think about lowering the amount of vehicles	underdeveloped standard of neighborhood culture - Follow up discussions in neighborhoods who want to be involved		- stress accountability - can do more and better- sr needs to find its soul - think it is the Trees or roses- more fun activities - a bit boring for younger people



Next Steps and Follow-up Items

Engagement tool kit - physical and digital materials	Repurposing zones and property - how does that impact our work
	GP is big idea that Lays out the outline of what goes in the Zoning
	need to reevaluate that is what this updated to what the community thinks is appropriate will change the zoning

Community Advisory Committee Meeting #2, March 31, 2021
Digital notes prepared by



Crafting a Vision and Values Statement for the Future of Santa Rosa

