



YOUTH ENGAGEMENT FOR THE GENERAL PLAN

July 6th, 2023

TO: AMY LYLE, SUPERVISING PLANNER

FROM: BEATRIZ GUERRERO AUNA, EQUITY AND PUBLIC HEALTH PLANNER

SUBJECT: YOUTH ENGAGEMENT FOR THE GENERAL PLAN

BACKGROUND

The City of Santa Rosa is currently updating its General Plan. Since the start of the project in 2020, the Project team has been focused on engaging the community throughout the entire process, including those who usually do not participate in planning activities, including youth, low-income communities, and people of color, among other groups.

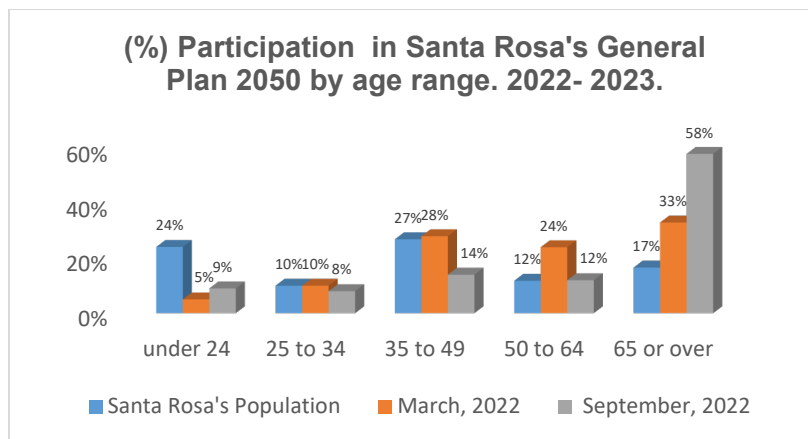
As of May 2023, community involvement has been evaluated in the following way:

- **Accessibility:** Events, meetings, activities and surveys completed: **100+**
- **Reach.** Community participants: **4,220+**
- **Impact:** Individual community member comments and ideas: **21,500+**
- **Diversity.** Community groups, organizations and neighborhoods engaged: **80+**

After the COVID-19 restrictions permitted staff to have in person events, the Project Team started to track demographics to evaluate our baseline and improvements in engagement and participation of residents in the General Plan Update process.

Santa Rosa residents, by age, have been participating proportionally to the city's population, except for youth. Young residents under 24 years old had been underrepresented by 15 percentage points or more in the last events, meetings, activities, and surveys.

For this reason, the most recent set of engagement work has been focused on youth engagement, to increase participation of the residents in this age range.



Source: Census Bureau, Census 2020 and Santa Rosa City Demographic questionnaires and surveys

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT FOR THE GENERAL PLAN 2050, SANTA ROSA FORWARD

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The objective of the youth engagement activities is to inform, teach, and empower young residents about General Plans to spur participation in the SR Forward project. Two major strategies were implemented to increase participation of people under 24 years of age:

1. Planning Classes with Montgomery High School Teachers

Dates: December - March 2023.

Description: In collaboration with two Government and Civics teachers at Montgomery High School, Mr. Rudesill and Mr. Hahn, [curriculum](#) was developed for a multi-session planning activity for 120 students. The students worked within 20 separate groups and presented their final work to seven City Planners from the City of Santa Rosa team.

The students were introduced to the urban planning process and assigned a general plan project/subject as an official component of the class curriculum. The students also learned about local government structure and processes.

Objectives of the class:

- To learn about the General Plan process and the urban planning professional field.
- To allow students to interact with young professionals and people of color.
- To identify a community concern, priority, or challenge.
- To develop recommendations for the City to overcome identified challenges using research and lived experience.
- To present as a team the findings and recommendations to the city staff.



Final Presentations at Montgomery High School.

The Project team collaborated with the teachers to design a [curriculum](#) which was divided in five steps with a flexible schedule to meet the classes' needs.

Over the course of the semester, the Project team visited each class six times to implement the five-step curriculum. Each meeting included foundational education components about the field of urban planning, in-person presentations from the consultants about local government, and individual support leading up to the final presentation.

Results:

- **120 high school students** learned about General Plans, and the urban professional field.
- **20 groups of students** presented [recommendations](#) to the City staff (presentations and recommendations are available on the SR Forward website).
- **A planning [curriculum](#)** was developed for high school students that can be used for future classes.
- **Meaningful relationships** built among City staff, students, and school staff and teachers.

The Montgomery High School teachers would like to continue the collaboration on this curriculum. They also suggested that we connect with other schools within Santa Rosa to expand the reach to other students and teachers.

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2. Youth Engagement through Public Art

Dates: March – June 2023

Description: In collaboration with Santa Rosa’s Public Art Program and Kimzin Creative, a series of art engagements with local artists were organized to expand awareness and participation of youth (5 – 24 years old) in the General Plan Update process and to collect information through art related to the subjects of health and environmental justice.

Art Engagements:

- **Art Installation.** Four workshops were facilitated by [Erika Lutz](#) and [Briona Hendren](#) for over 100 high school students to talk about the future of Santa Rosa while developing art in partnership with the following organizations:
 - Roseland University Prep (29 students)
 - Amarosa Institute (28)
 - Latino Service Providers (24)
 - Environmental Justice Coalition and Development, Advocacy, Leadership, & Engagement (DALE) (28)



Art Instalation “Journey to the Future, Court House Square.

The data collected through workshops was incorporated into an interactive art installation reflecting the dreams of the youth. The art pop-up was displayed in Court House Square on May 21st, 2023 and will be displayed at different times, including SR Forward community workshops.

- **Coloring Book.** A bilingual coloring book for grades 3-8 on the topics of health and environmental justice was developed by [Blanca Molina](#) and translated into Spanish. Once printed, it will be distributed to arts and youth organizations for 500 kids within Santa Rosa’s Equity Priority Areas. Distribution will start over the summer of 2023 at youth camps and then will be provided to school districts for the 2023/2024 academic year.

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- **Song and Music Video.** Four workshops were facilitated by [Kayatta Patton](#), at Juvenile Hall for 60 young adults and with 20 students from the Black Student Union in Santa Rosa Junior College. The data collected was turned into a song and music video representing Santa Rosa youth desires for 2050.



Coloring Book, by Blanca Molina.

Results:

- **200+ young residents** learned art skills and about the General Plan process.
- **100+ students** created art to represent the future they want for the City of Santa Rosa.
- **Meaningful** collaboration was accomplished among youth, artists, and City Staff.

Funding:

- The Planning Classes with Montgomery High School Teachers were funded under the budget already committed for engagement under our General Plan consultants' contract. The Youth Engagement through Public Art has been funded through Kaiser Permanente Healthy City grant and the Santa Rosa's Public Art Program.