

# ANNUAL REVIEW 2007

Santa Rosa 2020: General Plan



City Council / Planning Commission Joint Session

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Office of Advance Planning and Public Policy



## ***INTRODUCTION***

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The General Plan addresses issues related to the physical development and growth of Santa Rosa, and it represents the community's aspirations for the future. The General Plan is required by State law, and it has a long range focus, looking 20 years into the future. It guides the City's planning and zoning functions as well as the funding of public improvement projects, such as parks and streets.

The Santa Rosa General Plan was adopted by the City Council in June 2002. The State General Plan Guidelines were consulted in the development of the General Plan, and the document complies with those Guidelines to a high degree.

Each year, the Planning Commission and City Council review the General Plan, consistent with General Plan policy and State Planning and Zoning Law. State law directs that an annual report be provided to the City Council on the status of the plan and progress in its implementation, including meeting its share of regional housing needs. This report is developed to assist citizens and the Planning Commission and City Council in understanding recent decisions involving the General Plan.

The annual review covers General Plan actions in 2007 and addresses General Plan implementation. The yearly review of the Growth Management and Housing Allocation Plan Ordinances is also included, following the General Plan information.

## ***GENERAL PLAN ACTIONS IN 2007***

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According to City policy, the General Plan can be amended three times per year. Amendments to the Land Use Diagram and the text can be considered. Any change to the General Plan requires a hearing before both the Planning Commission and the City Council. The following General Plan Amendment requests were considered during the 2007 Amendment cycles:

- ξ ***Santa Rosa Avenue Amendment:*** Various properties fronting and near Santa Rosa Avenue south of downtown changed land use designations as follows:
  - From Medium Density Residential to striped Medium Density Residential / Retail and Business Services for 8.5 acres along Santa Rosa Avenue from Highway 12 north to Charles Street;
  - From Medium Density Residential to Retail and Business Services for 14.3 acres on and near Santa Rosa Avenue south of Highway 12;
  - From Medium Density Residential to Low Density Residential for four parcels consisting of 0.26 acres east of Santa Rosa Avenue.

In addition, a new policy was added to the Land Use and Livability Element which allows continuance and limited expansion of industrial uses in areas designated Retail and Business Services south of Highway 12.

- ξ ***Downtown Height Policy:*** The amendment allowed an exception to the 10 story maximum building height policy for the 14 story Comstock Mixed Use Project on Third Street.
- ξ ***2001 Piner Road:*** An approximately 0.53 acre parcel was redesignated from Mobile Homes to Low Density Residential.
- ξ ***2877 Giffen Avenue:*** Two parcels of 9.62 acres were redesignated from Business Park to Light Industry.
- ξ ***Sebastopol Road Urban Vision Plan:*** The General Plan was amended to ensure consistency between it and the City/County prepared Sebastopol Road Urban Vision Plan. The Land Use Diagram was changed as follows:
  - From Retail and Business Services to a striped Medium Density Residential/Retail and Business Services for 27 parcels totaling 18.5 acres
  - From 7 acres of Medium Density Residential to 3 acres of striped Medium Density Residential/Retail and Business Services and 4 acres of Retail and Business Services
  - Four proposed neighborhood park symbols were added
  - West Avenue (extended) and frontage road between there and Hampton Way were illustrated.

Various text amendments in the Land Use and Livability and Public Services and Facilities Elements were made to reflect the changes noted above.

- ξ ***Downtown Station Area Specific Plan:*** The General Plan was amended to ensure consistency between it and the Downtown Station Area Specific Plan. Numerous changes were made to the General Plan text and Land Use Diagram to reflect the policies of the Specific Plan. Two new land use designations, Transit Village Medium and Transit Village Mixed Use were adopted, five new neighborhood park symbols were included, and population projections were increased to reflect additional units proposed by the Station Area Plan. The General Plan also now reflects a unified Courthouse Square due to the policies of the Specific Plan.

Overall, the amendments approved in 2007 favor new residential development over non-residential development. With the adoption of the Downtown Station Area Specific Plan, about 2,300 additional residential units will be allowed over prior General Plan designations.

Another significant change is to allow a building in excess of the downtown height policy. Staff finds that case by case exceptions are preferable to an overall increase in the height limit, given the findings of the absorption study and follow-on analysis that an increase in height was not necessary to accommodate demand for new uses over the next 10 years.

## **GENERAL PLAN IMPLEMENTATION**

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The General Plan contains hundreds of policies which guide the daily decision making of City staff, the City Council and City Boards and Commissions. The following addresses the progress in implementing the General Plan.

### **Growth and Development**

#### ***Residential***

There were 845 residential building permits issued by the City of Santa Rosa in 2007. Of the permits issued, 283 were for single family detached dwellings, 169 were for single family attached units, 307 were for multifamily dwellings, 55 were in mixed use projects (21 single family attached and 34 multifamily units), 24 were for second dwelling units and 7 were for mobile homes. Of the 845 total units, 296 were constructed in northeast, 129 in southeast, 240 in southwest and 180 in northwest Santa Rosa.

Overall residential permitting was down 5 percent from 2006 when 888 permits were issued for residential dwellings. Permitting decreased 27 percent in the southeast and 58 percent in the northwest, while during the same period permits had risen 72 percent in the southwest and 27 percent in the northeast over the prior year.

Permitting for second dwelling units decreased by 64 percent from 2006. Twenty-four second units were permitted, 12 along with construction of a single family unit and 12 on lots where a single family unit already existed.

As of December 2007, there were 3,449 residential units approved and ready for development. There were another 3,403 residential units proposed and proceeding through the development review process.

Santa Rosa had 157,985 residents on January 1, 2007, according to the State Department of Finance. This represents an increase of 0.53 percent over the 2006 population.

#### ***Non Residential***

Santa Rosa issued building permits for just over 160,000 square feet of new non residential construction in 2007. The chart below details this square footage by type and projects the number of jobs which would be generated by this development, using General Plan assumptions.

<b>Permit Type</b>	<b>Square Footage</b>	<b>Projected Jobs</b>
<b>Retail</b>	28,778	96

<b>Office</b>	59,204	237
<b>Light Industrial</b>	9,992	25
<b>Public/Institutional</b>	71,329	238
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>169,303</b>	<b>596</b>

Non residential square footage permitted last year decreased 22 percent from 2006, when 220,581 square feet was issued building permits.

Significant non residential square footage has been approved (899,327 square feet) with an additional 244,100 square feet in the review process as of December 2007. The type of square footage and the estimated number of jobs it will generate are outlined in the following table.

<b>Non Residential</b>	<b>Pending</b>	<b>Jobs</b>	<b>Approved</b>	<b>Jobs</b>
Retail	95,138	317	301,011	1,003
Office	15,500	62	364,582	1,458
Light Industrial	52,880	132	5,600	14
Public/Institutional	80,582	269	228,134	760
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>244,100</b>	<b>780</b>	<b>899,327</b>	<b>3,235</b>

### ***Jobs / Housing Review***

The jobs housing ratio refers to the relationship between the number of jobs and the number of employed residents in the city. The ratio is found by dividing the number of jobs by the number of employed residents. The basic idea is that a jobs/employed residents' ratio of 1.0 indicates a balance. A ratio greater than 1.0 indicates a net in-commute due to the fact there are more jobs than employed residents. A ratio of less than 1.0 indicates a net out commute of workers, since there are not enough jobs in the community for all its workers. The Association of Bay Area Governments projects Santa Rosa's jobs/employed residents' ratio to be about 1.09 in 2005.

As outlined in the sections above, 845 new units and 169,303 commercial square feet with the potential to generate about 596 jobs were issued building permits in 2007. The annual jobs/housing ratio can be determined using the following factors.

New units (households)	845
Employed residents/household (ABAG)	1.28
New employed residents	1,082
Jobs/employed residents (596/1,082)	0.55

To see how this will affect the existing 1.09 jobs/employed residents' ratio, the following factors are used.

Total units (70,670 in UGB + 845 new)	71,515
Employed residents/household (ABAG)	1.28
Total employed residents	91,539

Total jobs (94,225 + 596 new)	94,821
Jobs/employed residents	1.04

This year’s slight permitting decrease did not significantly change the existing jobs/employed residents’ ratio, suggesting a two year consistency in total jobs to employed residents. (Notes: No conversion made to households from units; units from Santa Rosa Existing Land Use Survey; employed residents and total jobs from ABAG for 2005).

***Annexations***

In 2007, 44.86 acres of land were added to the City of Santa Rosa through 7 annexations. All of the annexations were for either existing homes or for future residential use. With last year’s annexations, the City now includes 41.58 square miles.

**Housing Needs Information**

The 845 units permitted in 2007 meet the following income categories: Very Low - 154; Low - 96; Moderate - 58; Above Moderate - 537. Very Low and Low income units are generally those under contract with the City and second dwelling units. The following table compares the ABAG Regional Housing Needs Determination (RHND) numbers for Santa Rosa with building permit issuance by income category to illustrate the remaining need., with 18 months remaining in the reporting period.

Building Permit Issuance by Income Category 1999 - 2007					
Income Category	Very Low	Low	Moderate	Above Moderate	TOTAL
ABAG RHND - 1999 - 2009	1,539	970	2,120	3,025	7,654
Building Permits Issued 1999 - 2007	728	1,451	2,212	4,778	9,169
Remaining Need	811	0	0	0	811

*Note: 17 units in Cypress Ridge, Jay’s Place and Timothy Commons were previously tabulated as very low income units, but are actually low income units. This adjustment is reflected in this table.*

***General Plan Quantified Objectives***

- Help fund the development of 264 very low and 125 low income units annually.***

In 2007, 154 permits were issued for very low income units and 96 permits were issued for low income units. Of these units, 127 were subsidized by the City; for the remaining units, some were required through the Housing Allocation Plan, and for others, market rents were estimated to be affordable to low income households. The City did not achieve the specific quantified objective, but continued assistance to a significant number of units affordable to very low and

low income households.

The table below illustrates funding for affordable projects which was committed in 2007. It is important to note that some of the projects in the table have received funding in prior years and have been listed in prior reports on affordability to the Planning Commission and City Council. The City committed more than \$7 million in 2007 to 4 projects which will contain 356 units.

Project Name	Very Low	Low	Total	In Lieu	Other Funds	Total 2007 Subsidy	Prior Subsidy
Rowan Court	61		62	\$1,027,991	\$790,095	\$1,818,086	\$3,520,000
Amorosa	104	44	150	\$122,025	\$2,877,975	\$3,000,000	
Acacia Lane	43		44		\$785,500	\$785,500	
Lantana Place	60	39	100	\$400,000	\$1,478,703	\$1,878,703	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>268</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>356</b>	<b>\$1,550,016</b>	<b>\$5,932,273</b>	<b>\$7,482,289</b>	<b>\$3,520,000</b>

There are currently 31 very low and 63 low income units which are approved but not yet built and 262 very low and 232 low income units in projects which are in the development pipeline or are being discussed with staff in Economic Development and Housing.

2. *Assist in the rehabilitation of 50 units annually (25 very low and 25 low income housing units).*

In 2007 1,475 units were rehabilitated through the City’s Housing Rehabilitation Conservation Program, the Neighborhood Revitalization Program and Section 8 rental assistance programs.

Six single family and 124 multifamily dwelling units were rehabilitated with Redevelopment Low/Mod funds in the amount of \$457,085. Of these, 32 were modified for disabled occupants. Three of the units rehabilitated are owner occupied, and 127 are renter occupied. Thirty four of the units are affordable to very low income households and 96 to low income households.

Seven hundred sixty three units were rehabilitated through the Neighborhood Revitalization Program as a result of building code enforcement measures which were cited and cleared in 2007. This includes 212 units in the Sunset neighborhood, 175 in the South Park neighborhood, 174 in the Aston neighborhood, 120 in Corby/Olive and 82 in Apple Valley.

Five hundred eighty two units were rehabilitated and brought into Housing Quality Standard Code Compliance through the Section 8 rental assistance program. These improvements generally include upgraded electrical and plumbing, flooring, paint, new

appliances and fixtures and removal of hazards and blight.

3. ***Promote development of 30 second units annually. These units are expected to be affordable to low income households.***

In 2007, 24 second dwelling units were permitted. This is the first time since 1998 that permits for second units were less than 30 per year. There were a number of projects approved in the early 2000s which included second units to be developed concurrently with single family dwellings such as Gordon Ranch and College Village. This trend seems to have peaked, and fewer projects with second units have been approved in the last few years.

4. ***Preserve the existing 473 beds and 12 cribs located in emergency shelters and the 188 beds of transitional housing for homeless persons. Support development of 200 additional beds for homeless persons.***

No emergency or transitional beds for homeless persons were lost during 2007. The Housing Authority approved a loan of \$245,407 to assist with the acquisition of 2149 West Hearn, a 12 bed transitional housing facility for homeless veterans with extremely low incomes. In addition, a rehabilitation loan of \$15,000 was provided to Stony Point Commons, a 16 unit permanent supportive single room occupancy facility for mentally ill adults with very low and low incomes. Lastly, a \$50,000 rehabilitation loan was provided to Hurley House, a 6 unit single room occupancy facility for very low income developmentally disabled adults.

5. ***Preserve the existing inventory of federally and locally funded affordable units including the 432 very low and 107 low income units which may be subject to termination of federal mortgage or rent subsidies between 2001 and 2006.***

During 2007, 99 units lost affordability. This includes the 77 unit Rosenberg building downtown, which had federal Section 8 Project Based Certificates, an affordable housing program which has been discontinued by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The Rinwood House, a four bedroom single room occupancy transitional housing facility which was funded with Community Block Grant funds was sold at market rate. One very low income unit and one low income unit were released from restrictions of the Density Increase Program. Six low income units on Apple Valley Lane were lost due to expiration of affordability agreements. Lastly, nine units bought out of affordability restrictions in six ownership projects: Bellevue Ranch, Youthbuild, DeTurk, Parkside, Gray's Meadow and Rancho Miguel.

6. ***Preserve the 2,500 existing mobile homes, which are largely occupied by lower income seniors.***

No mobile home units were lost in the community last year, though one unit which had benefited from the rent deferral program is no longer part of that program. During 2007, there were two mobile home spaces fewer which were part of the rent control program than in 2006.

### **Housing Policy Implementation**

Housing Element policies are unique among General Plan policies in that implementation dates and responsible entities are included. All but one policy with a completion target have been fully implemented. The remaining program is outlined in policy H-A-3, which calls for improving community acceptance of higher density housing through community-based outreach, recognition of existing livable neighborhoods, and assurance of well-designed high density projects. A number of activities have been undertaken which address this policy, including a community workshop regarding transit oriented developments, which include higher density housing; a field trip to transit oriented developments in the East Bay with elected and appointed officials and neighborhood representatives; and the community process for development of the Downtown Station Area Specific Plan.

Housing Element policies which have been implemented in recent years include those resulting in a single room occupancy ordinance, a rezoning exemption for projects including affordable units, reasonable accommodation provisions, establishment of a Housing Trust and development of a new homeless facility at Samuel Jones Hall.

### **Land Use/Design/Livability**

General Plan policy promotes mixed use development downtown, in Community Shopping Centers, and along Sebastopol Road and Santa Rosa Avenue. An increasing number of projects are proposing a mix of residential and non-residential uses.

For 2007, only one mixed use project was built which is located off Sebastopol Road and Billie Jean St., in the southwest region of Santa Rosa. The project area consists of 34 multifamily residential units, and 60,408 square feet of commercial space. The project is consistent with mixed use General Plan policies.

Four other mixed use projects are approved and ready for development in the southwest area. Collectively these projects will provide 58 multifamily units, 669 single family attached units, and 65 single family detached units. In addition to adding future housing units to the area, the mixed use components of these projects will also contribute 110,042 square feet of retail, 14,042 square feet of office space, and approximately 3,000 square feet of public institution space. While these mixed use projects are all approved, one other project in the area is currently in the entitlement process which will add approximately 20 single family attached units, 5,500 square feet of retail and 5,500 square feet of office space. Altogether the southwest quadrant has the most number of mixed use projects that are either approved or proposed than the remaining areas of the City.

Within the northwest area of Santa Rosa there are two proposed mixed use projects that are currently being processed with the City. Both are located in the Railroad Square District where the General Plan promotes mixed use development. Between the two projects in the entitlement stages, current estimates amount to 36 multifamily units, 45 single family detached units, 4,900 square feet of retail space, and 8,000 square feet of office space.

Southeast Santa Rosa has one large mixed use development that is currently under construction. This project includes 129 single family attached units, 10 multifamily units and 10,000 square feet of retail.

The northeast quadrant currently does not have any mixed use projects being processed through the City. However, one project that was recently built in the Fountaingrove area contains single family attached homes designed around a separate commercial center.

The General Plan directs a program for the comprehensive upgrade of Sebastopol Road from Stony Point to Dutton Avenue. The purpose is to transform the street into a pedestrian friendly mixed use environment. The City participated with the Sonoma County Community Development Commission to develop a Sebastopol Road Urban Vision Plan, implementing this Plan directive. This plan captures area residents' vision for the corridor from Stony Point Road to Dutton Avenue and provides a land use, streetscape and urban design concept. The City built on the Urban Vision Plan effort and developed the Sebastopol Road Corridor Plan following community meetings in 2006. This plan expands the focus area to include the roadway segment from Dutton Avenue east to Highway 101. The end product is an urban design concept and a corridor plan for the area from Stony Point Road to Highway 101. A joint public hearing was held by the City of Santa Rosa and Sonoma County Planning Commissions in Spring 2007. The Urban Vision Plan was heard separately by the City Council and the Board of Supervisors, but both adopted the Plan in June 2007.

### ***Downtown***

The General Plan directs downtown to be the major office, financial, civic and cultural center in the North Bay. It also directs development of housing units to increase downtown's vibrancy. There are a number of planning activities and projects which are striving to meet these goals.

The planning effort that began in 2006 to develop a Downtown Station Area Specific Plan was completed in the fall of 2007. The plan encompasses the proposed Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) station site while also providing guidance for growth to the Santa Rosa Downtown area. The City General Plan calls for preserving and strengthening downtown while also promoting vibrant street activity and attractive building designs. The Station Plan has a direct correlation to the General Plan by providing the necessary goals and policies that will offer development opportunities for the future, while also preserving the character of downtown Santa Rosa.

Agreements with Monahan Pacific Corporation to develop a mixed use parking garage on the

site of the former White House Department Store at Third and E St were discontinued in 2007. Ongoing efforts are being made to find qualified builders who can come to a Development Agreement with the City as to meet the needs of the downtown area. Requests for proposals were solicited from three developers, and proposals are due in May.

During the first quarter of 2007, the Comstock Mixed Use Project located off of Third St. near Old Courthouse Square was approved. The mixed use plan consists of 116 condominiums and 8,400 square feet of retail. Another project being processed that is located in the Railroad Square District is a 50,000 square foot office and retail building on Fourth and Davis St. Nearing completion in the Railroad Square District is a two story commercial building located on West Third and Davis Streets.

The unification of Old Courthouse Square proceeded in 2007 with the City Council declaring a winner in its contest to redesign the 1.5 acre downtown public square. The winner of the contest was the SWA Group of Sausalito. The conceptual design will provide two new side roads with street side parking, a large cascading glass fountain and several areas for musical and cultural events. Since the awarded design of Old Courthouse Square is still in its conceptual stage, many workshops will need to take place in order for the design to be considered final. Expectations for unification of the square will be for at least another year.

In addition, many events have been held downtown in the past year to meet the City's vision of downtown as the city's cultural center. The Tour of California bike race, Wednesday Night Market, the First Friday Art Walk, July 4<sup>th</sup> Festival, Art in the Park, Railroad Square Heritage Days and Railroad Scare, the Rose Parade and the Book Festival are mainstay events which draw crowds to the downtown area.

The newly created Arts District...Downtown Santa Rosa, has been actively pursuing an 18 Month Implementation Strategy for 2007. Their recent programs have contributed to the installation of murals along the Third and Fourth Street parking garages and to various public art exhibits located throughout the downtown area. Ongoing programs that the Arts District provides allows for continuous rotation of public art and contest for art display. A new program such as the Street Performer/Art Vendor Program is being planned for 2008 to help broaden their downtown appeal. Further updates of the Arts District can be viewed in the *Art and Culture* section of the Annual Review.

The City created a Downtown Program within the Economic Development and Housing Department which has been focusing on improvements to the downtown area. They range from installation of picnic tables on the west side of Courthouse Square to the securing of grant funding to purchase permanent recycling containers throughout the downtown. The Downtown Program has engaged in economic development activities including the development of a tenant improvement and façade improvement loan program for businesses and property owners. The Downtown Program also works closely with Santa Rosa Main Street and Historic Railroad Square Association to create community events in the downtown area. They also run targeted advertising campaigns focusing on downtown businesses which help promote Santa Rosa's downtown identity. Aside from these recently implemented programs, the beginning stages of a

Street Palette Program is being developed which will help further complete the street furnishings for downtown.

## **Transportation**

Traffic circulation remains one of the biggest issues for Santa Rosans. Based on General Plan modeling, it is recognized that continued growth will cause congestion and affect travel times, and some areas will not meet City Level of Service standards. The General Plan focuses on alternative transportation modes such as transit service and bicycling to reduce auto trips.

The General Plan calls for maintaining acceptable traffic flows, with a level of service of “D” or better along major corridors. While modeling is utilized to analyze specific projects and plans to measure level of service, the City also uses traffic signal timing to address levels of service. The College Avenue Adaptive Traffic Control project was put into motion with the help of a Federal earmark in 2006 and implementation began in early 2007. This system, which is in effect from North Dutton to Brookwood Avenue, has decreased traffic delays by 33 percent and the number of vehicle stops by 49 percent. The system utilizes a computer which monitors and modifies signal timing 24 hours per day.

The General Plan also directs traffic calming on streets subject to high speed and/or cut-through traffic, to improve neighborhood livability. The Public Works Department operates a Neighborhood Traffic Calming program which assists up to three neighborhoods annually. In 2007, Public Works assisted citizens in the West Junior College, Montgomery Drive and Crest Drive neighborhoods. Traffic circles were installed at Benton and Morgan and Benton and Glenn Streets to calm traffic in the West JC neighborhood; intersection modifications were installed in the Crest Drive area and bicycle lanes were installed on Montgomery Drive from Hahman to Jacqueline.

A roadway widening project was completed in 2007 for Fulton Road between Piner and Wood Roads. This project widened Fulton Road from two to four lanes, added a two way left turn lane and bicycle lanes.

Addressing the policy for a solution for regional traffic on north-south and east-west corridors, a widening plan for Stony Point Road was approved in 2005. The Farmers Lane extension from Bennett Valley Road to Bellevue Avenue is another planned improvement which will carry regional through traffic as well as local trips. The Highway 101 widening from Highway 12 to Steele Lane began in Spring 2006 and is scheduled to be completed in 2008, resulting in the City’s major regional north-south route having increased capacity.

The General Plan also calls for coordination of the City’s Transportation Plan with regional entities such as the Sonoma County Transportation Authority, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and CalTrans. Staff works with all these groups to secure funding and to develop strategic plans to implement transportation improvements.

### ***Transit and Transportation Systems Management***

The General Plan calls for expanding transit service and encouraging ridership through marketing and promotional efforts. Transit ridership remained relatively stable in the last year, with an increase of approximately 40,000 trips with annual ridership at about 2.6 million trips. The City provides bus transit service with an active fleet of 29 buses which operate on 17 fixed routes and serve 540 bus stops.

Santa Rosa's Paratransit program serves disabled individuals who cannot use fixed route transit. Paratransit offers curb to curb service for users. Strong use continues for this program, with 49,158 trips in 2006/07. In addition, Santa Rosa Paratransit increased its fleet of lift equipped vans from 7 to 11 while continuing to operate 3 sedans.

The *Learn to Ride Santa Rosa CityBus* travel training program for seniors continues to be very popular. The seven monthly classes held at the Santa Rosa Senior Center were well attended. In addition, Santa Rosa CityBus combined with Sonoma County Transit to present two informational classes at Oakmont. Both events were packed with Oakmont residents looking to learn how bus travel can work for them. Also, Santa Rosa CityBus conducted a special "Holiday Shopping on CityBus", which taught Oakmont residents how easy it is to take the bus into town and avoid traffic and crowded parking lots.

In addition, Santa Rosa Transit again conducted the *Seniors on the Go* promotion which promotes senior ridership by offering free transit and promotional items to seniors for 5 days in October.

For younger riders, the Department conducted five *Buses to Books* classes. Working with Community Child Care Council, Santa Rosa CityBus staff visits local pre-schools. One of our Spanish speaking drivers conducts a short class for parents on Santa Rosa CityBus. The parents, students and teachers are taken on a special CityBus trip to a local Santa Rosa library where they learn how to use the library, are issued library cards, and select and check out books. These popular trips are very informative and a lot of fun for all participants.

The *Santa Rosa Free Ride – Trip Reduction Incentive Program*, which provides incentives to people who use a commute alternative to get to and from work, underwent a major overhaul with the completion and launch of a new Web based interface [www.santarosafreeride.org](http://www.santarosafreeride.org). The benefits of the new Web site have been phenomenal in reducing administrative time and increasing data collection. In 2007, participants recorded an incredible 95,000+ trips reduced and over 625,802+ miles saved.

Santa Rosa Transit continued to offer free CityBus CityPasses for employers who enroll their employees in the *Highway 101 Construction Program*. This offer was made to give employees working in areas that are heavily impacted by the Highway 101 construction and road closures a convenient alternative to negotiating the detours and traffic caused by the construction.

The *Bike to Work Day* in mid-May continues to be a positive promotion, with numerous participants throughout Santa Rosa riding bicycles or walking to work.

## ***Bicycles and Pedestrians***

The General Plan directs attractive and safe streets for pedestrians and bicyclists. Last year, bicycle lanes were added along Fulton Road from Piner to Wood Roads. New lanes were also installed on Montgomery Drive from Hahman Drive east of Jacqueline Drive.

Five pedestrian flashers were added to enhance pedestrian safety at the following locations: Benton and Mendocino, Yulupa and Neotomas, Montgomery Drive at Memorial Hospital, Chanate Road at Sutter Hospital and Vallejo Street at Brookhill Elementary School. Thirty intersections were outfitted with countdown pedestrian heads, providing pedestrians the time available to cross the street safely.

Bicycle lanes will be installed on Mendocino Avenue in three consecutive projects, from College Avenue to Fountaingrove Parkway as part of an overlay project in 2008. Additionally, more bike lanes are planned with upcoming projects on West Steele Lane from Coffey Lane to Range Avenue.

In early 2006, the City Council appointed a new Board, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board (BPAB). The BPAB's charge is to identify bicycle and pedestrian projects and to prioritize those. One of its main tasks will be to review and recommend revisions to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (BPMP). Staff has initiated the BPMP update process in 2007, with the first round of public workshops held in October 2007. The second round of public workshops is scheduled for March 2008 with a third round of public workshops in June/July 2008. Besides BPAB, a Technical Advisory Committee made up of planning and engineering staff from city, county and state is providing technical input. The BPAB is in the midst of reviewing and commenting on the first Task Report of the update. A revised Master Plan is expected to be adopted in Fall 2008.

## ***Rail Transit***

The General Plan supports the development of rail service along the former Northwest Pacific Railroad right-of-way. The Sonoma-Marina Area Rail Transit (SMART) project is a proposed rail service line extending 70 miles from Larkspur to Cloverdale, along the NWP corridor. Two stations are planned by SMART in Santa Rosa. (Santa Rosa's General Plan shows three stations). SMART prepared an Environmental Impact Report for its planned service, and it was certified during 2006. Passed in November 2004, the Measure M sales tax earmarks \$23 million for passenger rail to develop station sites, improve rail crossings on local roads and for engineering. SMART is anticipating placing a sales tax measure on the November 2008 ballot to support rail transit.

The City has worked with SMART regarding the development of its site in Railroad Square. SMART hired Creative Housing, and City staff has met with this group to discuss site planning and circulation during 2007.

## **Public Services and Facilities**

### ***Parks and Recreation***

The General Plan directs the continuing acquisition and development of neighborhood and community park facilities, along with special use facilities, throughout the City. Multiple parks that were in the planning stage a year ago have been built or have started to be built in 2007. Other parks are still undeveloped due to certain market constraints.

Phase I of the Nagasawa Community Park in Fountaingrove had its grand opening during the summer of 2007. Five acres of the total 33 acres were available to the public for use. Improvements to this site have been ongoing in order to open the remaining 28 acres to the public. Expectations are that the remaining undeveloped park will be accessible by 2009.

The Prince Gateway Park started construction in downtown. Completion of construction for this new park is scheduled for the middle of 2008. This downtown park is approximately a half acre and is connected to the existing Prince Memorial Greenway.

A Place to Play Phase II is a 53 acre community park addition that began construction in 2007. This large community park will provide an array of playing fields and natural observation areas that will support many levels of recreational activity for the community. Construction of this facility is currently ongoing.

Located in the northeast portion of Santa Rosa, a new neighborhood park named Skyhawk Park was designed and developed last year. This new neighborhood park consists of a half acre and is adjacent to Skyhawk Village. This facility provides public drinking fountains, benches and tables.

In the northwest quadrant, designs for the Jack London Park were complete at the end of 2007. This new two acre park will be adjacent to the Jack London Elementary School sport fields which encompass four acres. Construction for this addition to the existing sport fields will begin in 2008.

There are multiple undeveloped parks throughout the City that were expected to be developed in 2007 but did not. Dauenhauer Park, Harvest Park, and the Air Center Park have been delayed until appropriate financing measures or environmental clearances could be made in order for these parks to be developed. Between the three, they total approximately 8.93 acres of park. Expectations are for Harvest Park and the Air Center Park to begin construction during the last quarter of 2008, while Dauenhauer Park does not have an outside starting date for development.

Funding is ongoing in the City's Capital Improvement Program for an additional aquatic facility, as called for by the General Plan. The Plan directs new swim centers in the southeast, southwest and Rincon Valley.

Conceptual plans have been developed for a possible community center/library/aquatic center at Southwest Community Park. An anticipated June 2006 library bond did not pass, but another ballot measure is planned for 2008, and if it passes, Santa Rosa will be ready to apply for funding.

The City is working in conjunction with Seniors, Inc., which has developed conceptual plans and working drawings for a new Senior Center to be located on the Finley Community Center site. Private fundraising is ongoing, and it is anticipated that construction will begin in 2008.

### ***Police and Fire Services***

The General Plan calls for collaboration with other local jurisdictions in the provision of some police and fire services if it improves service levels and is cost effective. Both the Police and Fire Departments work collaboratively with other local agencies where efficiencies can be achieved.

The Fire Department is part of a Joint Powers Agreement for emergency dispatch and communications services, called the Redwood Empire Dispatch and Communications Authority (REDCOM). REDCOM provides fire/emergency medical dispatch services for most cities and Fire Protection Districts within Sonoma County. The Fire Department has Auto Aid Agreements with Rincon Valley Fire Protection District, Bennett Valley Fire Protection District and the Kenwood Fire Protection District. The Rincon Valley Fire District Agreement is designed to ensure the closest, most appropriate fire resources are dispatched to an incident regardless of jurisdictional boundaries. All of the agreements cover automatic emergency response to specific areas in which the City and the respective district share jurisdictional boundaries. In addition to Auto Aid Agreements, the Department is a member of a joint response plan with Rincon Valley, Bennett Valley and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection which covers specific wildland/urban interface areas. This plan is known as the Santa Rosa Mutual Threat Zone Operating Plan.

The General Plan calls for the addition of three new fire stations and the relocation of three existing fire stations to better serve the community. The passage of Measure O in November 2004 provides funds for the building and staffing of the new stations and the relocation of the 3 existing stations. A new station was placed in service in March 2006 on Circadian Way off Corporate Center Parkway in the southwest area. Last year the City acquired property on Lewis Road near Mendocino Avenue and has received planning approvals for a new station at this site. The final new station called for in the plan is scheduled to be in service in 2008-2009 near Kawana Springs and Petaluma Hill Roads.

The Police Department is part of a multi-agency Computer Aided Dispatch/Records Management System. It includes Sonoma County and most of its cities and features a common records data base and access to state and federal data bases. Other collaborations occur in establishing checkpoints for drunken drivers, preparing for events involving weapons of mass destruction and various joint training opportunities.

General Plan response time goals and information on 2007 incidents and responses are included in the Growth Management Ordinance review section of this report.

### ***Water and Wastewater***

The General Plan directs that an adequate supply of water be available to serve existing and future City needs. The City is currently under contract with the Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA) for the delivery of up to 56.6 million gallons of water per day (mgd) on average, and up to 29,100 acre feet of water annually. In the long term, the City's current water entitlement from SCWA, groundwater supply and recycled water supply will need to be supplemented slightly to meet the growth projected in the City's General Plan. Additional water increment may be needed between 2015 and 2018, depending on the number of existing well connections which connect to the City water system. This additional long term annual volume increment will be met through a combination of sources such as additional entitlement from SCWA, additional local groundwater resources, additional recycled water supplies, and additional water conservation efforts. This will allow Santa Rosa to meet the projected water demand associated with the General Plan through 2020.

The General Plan calls for adequate sewer capacity to serve existing and future City needs. Wastewater from Santa Rosa is treated at the Laguna Subregional Wastewater Treatment Plant (LTP) and is disposed of in the Santa Rosa Subregional Water Reuse System. The current system rated capacity is 21.34 mgd. This is expected to provide capacity through at least 2013. Planning is currently underway to expand the system to 25.9 mgd, which will meet General Plan projections of Santa Rosa and the other subregional partners.

### **Open Space and Conservation**

General Plan policy supports conservation of wetlands, vernal pools, wildlife ecosystems, rare plant habitat and waterways. The Plan thus supports the preservation of the Sonoma County California tiger salamander (CTS), listed as endangered in 2003, and its habitat. Since that time, three Environmental Impact Reports have been certified for projects in southwest Santa Rosa which describe the impacts of development on the salamander.

In addition, the Santa Rosa Plain Conservation Strategy Team, comprised of state and federal agencies, the environmental and development communities, and city and county representatives, has published the Santa Rosa Plain Conservation Strategy. The Strategy, adopted in December 2005, provides the biological framework for conservation of the endangered California tiger salamander and four rare plant species found in conjunction with wetland habitat on the Santa Rosa Plain. It identifies conservation areas and mitigation requirements for development projects that will impact the habitat of these protected species. In Fall 2007, the County of Sonoma, the cities of Santa Rosa, Rohnert Park and Cotati, and the Town of Windsor adopted the *Santa Rosa Plain Conservation Strategy Planning Agreement* which supports the conservation approach set forth in the Strategy. The main purpose of the *Planning Agreement* is to establish a process and

timeline for the local jurisdictions to finalize and develop an implementation program for the Conservation Strategy. This includes creation of the Santa Rosa Plain Conservation Strategy Implementation Committee, which meets monthly, to guide this effort.

The Santa Rosa Citywide Creek Master Plan, called for by General Plan policy OSC-D-13, was adopted by the City Council on March 27, 2007, providing guidelines for the care, management, restoration and enhancement of nearly ninety miles of creeks in Santa Rosa. The Master Plan is intended for use by City and County staff when planning creek enhancement and restoration activities, coordinating and expanding creekside trail systems, making broader land-use planning decisions concerning creeks, and in reviewing development projects proposed adjacent to a waterway. The Citywide Creek Master Plan consolidates previously adopted creek policies in a comprehensive and illustrative form which includes recommendations for habitat preservation, enhancement, restoration, and development of trails by each watershed. The Master Plan supersedes the Santa Rosa Creek Master Plan and the Santa Rosa Waterways Plan.

General Plan policy calls for greater energy efficiency in residential and commercial structures. Last year, the City Council introduced a green building ordinance which will require residential structures to meet standards which exceed existing State Residential Building Efficiency Standards by 15 percent. The City Council also adopted an ordinance outlining Local Energy Efficiency Standards. This ordinance is now under review by the State Energy Commission. Following its approval, this and the green building ordinance will have a second reading at the City Council, with ordinance effective dates 60 days following the second reading. The City continues to strive for energy efficiency of its operations and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This has occurred through the installation of solar panels at City facilities, use of recycled water and an environmentally preferred purchasing program adopted last year. This policy aims to improve purchasing by which focusing on resource conservation and toxics reduction as well as recycled content and source reduction.

## **Economic Vitality**

Economic development continues to play an important role in Santa Rosa. The Economic Development program focuses on ensuring diversification of economic activity, promoting business expansion, retention and attraction, providing jobs for our citizens and strengthening the partnership between business, government and education.

One program which promotes business expansion, retention and attraction is the Business Visitation Program. The Business Visitation Program visited 12 local businesses during 2007, and conferred with business owners and managers. This is consistent with General Plan direction to maintain close ties with business through this program.

Economic Development staff is focused on implementing the Phase II Economic Development Strategy adopted in 2005. The Strategy focuses on three areas: existing and emerging industry cluster development, innovation and entrepreneurial development and business climate, culture and communications. In 2007, Economic Development staff worked on strategies in each of

these areas and accomplished the following: continued the successful Venture Communities partnership with the Santa Rosa Chamber of Commerce, winning state and national awards for the program; acquired professional economic development tools including Business Analyst Online and the Economic Impact Calculator; upgraded its portion of the website to include Loopnet commercial property listings; sponsored multiple educational and outreach events locally; and continued supporting the programs established in the prior years. Since over 80% of the tactics detailed in the Strategic Plan have been successfully implemented, and since the local economy has changed since 2005, the Strategic Plan is currently being updated to reflect past progress and current conditions.

The General Plan calls for provision of sufficient land for business expansion and attraction to utilize the local labor force. There are currently about 199 acres of vacant non-residential sites of in Santa Rosa, with 177 additional acres in the Urban Growth Boundary. The breakdown by designation is as follows:

	<b>In City</b>	<b>In UGB</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Retail Business Service	46	75	121
Business Park	71	-	71
Industrial	60	102	162
Office	22	-	22
<b>TOTAL ACRES</b>	199	177	376

Economic Development staff finds that there is greatest demand for retail sites, but there are not sites of sufficient size for many businesses interested in Santa Rosa, which has potential to cause businesses to seek sites in other communities. Interest is also expressed in Class A office space, which is not abundant in Santa Rosa. Existing large spaces for high tech firms are also difficult to find.

### **Historic Preservation**

General Plan policy calls for preserving significant historic structures, designating new preservation districts and providing historic street name signs for preservation districts. One of the major accomplishments in 2007 was the designation of the Ridgway Preservation District by the City Council in February 2007. This is the City’s eighth preservation district, and its boundaries are College Avenue, Mendocino Avenue, Ridgway Avenue and Armory Drive. New street signs were placed at appropriate intersections to demarcate the district last year as well.

Santa Rosa was also designated a “Preserve America Community” in 2007. This designation is given to communities which protect and celebrate their heritage and use historic assets to attract visitors and promote economic and community development. This designation will provide grant opportunities for future resource preservation.

Survey work in 2007 included windshield surveys of all the preservation districts to ensure survey information remains current. This updated information about historic properties is

available on the City's GIS maps website for all districts except the McDonald and West End, which are expected to be added in the future.

## **Youth and Family**

The Youth and Family Element promotes the health, safety and welfare of children, teens, the elderly and their families in the fabric of life in Santa Rosa. Child care services, youth and senior programs are supported.

The Department of Community Development staffed the Council-appointed Child Care Committee until 2004, when the Committee ceased to exist. The Committee was charged with implementing the Child Care Action Plan, adopted in 1996. The Department of Community Development continues to refund fees paid by applicants for child care facilities after these facilities become operational, consistent with General Plan policy.

The City continues to support and staff the Teen Council. The Teen Council's role continues to be advising the City Council on issues related to youth in the community. A priority is to focus on Santa Rosa's gang prevention and intervention efforts. Early in 2008, the Teen Council was restructured by the City Council, with its members expanded from 11 to 30 and middle schools included. The Teen Council will now be part of Measure O programming. Measure O passed in 2004 and provides funding for gang prevention and intervention.

The Recreation and Parks Department is addressing gang prevention and intervention by operating 32 programs at 19 sites including after-school, neighborhood, sports and summer playground programs. Focus is on neighborhoods where need for these services is greatest. The Recreation and Parks Department has also partnered with Santa Rosa City Schools to increase after school programming last year, providing children with opportunities such as assistance with homework, participation in recreation activities and interacting with caring and energetic staff members. Free summer playground programs for at risk children were expanded in 2007, with nearly 1,300 children participating, an increase of more than 40 percent over 2006.

The Recreation and Parks Department also plays a role of employer of local youth and young adults, hiring many employees from neighborhoods served. Currently, 52 temporary employees are from neighborhoods served by the Department.

In addition, through the CHOICE, Reclaiming Our Youth Grant Program, 13 programs with 8 agencies have been funded to increase gang prevention/intervention programs in 5 target areas: Outreach to Youth and Families, Parent and Family Support, Outpatient Counseling, Job Readiness Training/Job Placement for Gang-Involved Youth and Targeted Programming for Youth at Risk of Gang Involvement.

The General Plan also directs expansion of police officers at middle and high schools. In 2007, an additional officer was assigned, providing four officers to local schools, an increase over the prior year. When overall staffing increases in the next few years, one additional officer is planned to be added at middle and high schools.

The City operates one Senior Center on Bennett Valley Road. The General Plan directs evaluating the feasibility of another Center. This second senior center will be located at Finley Community Park. A conceptual design and working drawings have been completed for this facility. It is hoped that development of this Senior Center will commence by 2008.

## **Art and Culture**

The General Plan Art and Culture Element calls for increasing public art throughout Santa Rosa, developing places for art activities to occur and directs exploration of creating an Arts District. The Arts District was adopted by the City Council in late 2006. The District encompasses Downtown and the Juilliard Park area to its south. It is envisioned that this area will become a focal point for arts and culture in the community. The Council approved an 18 month funding and implementation plan and also adopted an ordinance which directs certain non-residential projects Citywide to provide public art or pay a fee in lieu of providing public art which is defined not only as visual arts but includes cultural programming. A business plan for the Arts District is being developed to assure its sustainability.

Since creation of the Arts District, both new and continuing art and cultural events have occurred. These include: new murals on downtown parking garages created by Art Start; a “Chalk it Up” street art program hosted by Santa Rosa Main Street; new sculptures have been rotated into the Civic Art Walk; Dia de los Muertos, the Book Festival and the Performance Sonoma Gala events were held in Courthouse Square; a performance of the American Philharmonic with Mariachi Compana Navin was a special occasion in Juilliard Park; the Winter Blast Gallery Stroll occurred on A Street, and the Unsilent Night holiday parade was held with amplified boom box music. This past year the City once again sponsored “Live at Juilliard” on summer Sunday evenings, with free concerts at Juilliard Park downtown and the “First Friday” art walk downtown, where artists display their work. A new Sister City sculpture was installed in 2007 on Jeju Way at Fourth Street. Thursday Noon Concerts were initiated as an annual summer lunch time concert series at Courthouse Square.

Early in 2007, the City of Santa Rosa won the All America City Award with the development of the Art District as one of the three examples of a city which can solve community challenges.

The City participates and promotes the arts in other ways as well. The City staffs the Art in Public Places Committee, which oversees the public art program in Santa Rosa. The Committee sponsors the Civic Art Walk, which has installed art work on loan from artists in return for the City’s promotion of this art for sale. Art is rotated every three years, with the second rotation installed in Fall 2007 with the installation of four new sculptures at City Hall and Courthouse Square. The installation of the Ned Kahn sculpture on Garage Nine in the Comstock Mall was completed as well as the purchase of the Brien Tedrick Horse Sculpture and the bronze sculpture, Daphne, at City Hall. The Committee also sponsors the Art Start Program, in which professional artists mentor youth. Hundreds of young people have participated in this program in its seven years of operation. The City staff will also facilitate the 1% for art ordinance

advising the developers on the public art criteria or collecting the in lieu fee.

In Spring 2007, the Art in Public Places Committee sponsored a competition to design an art piece for the intersection of Mendocino and Healdsburg Avenues, near College Avenue. Five designs were selected as finalists in the competition, with a sculpture titled “Wholesome” selected for this downtown gateway. It is expected to be installed in Spring 2008.

The Recreation and Parks Department also sponsors rotating art exhibits at the Finley Center, the Steele Lane Recreation Center and the City Council Chamber. The Annual National Arts Exhibition and Competition is going on its fifth year of providing awards and scholarships to our local artists and hosting informative forums on the value of art in our community.

During Summer 2007, artists participated in the *Snoopy’s “Joe Cool” Summer* program which involved the painting and placement of 95 Snoopy sculptures throughout Santa Rosa in tribute to the late Peanuts cartoon creator Charles Schulz. This was a very popular program, with local residents and visitors alike enjoying finding and taking pictures of the sculptures. This was the final year of the three year program, which previously featured Charlie Brown and Woodstock.

### ***GENERAL PLAN REVISION PROGRAM***

In July 2007, the City Council approved a budget and work program for a focused update of the Santa Rosa 2020 General Plan. The focus of the revision is the Housing Element. In addition, recently completed and ongoing plans will be incorporated into the General Plan. The program is being completed in-house, except for the environmental review work. Proposals were solicited from environmental consultants at the end of 2007, and a consultant has been selected to prepare an environmental impact report for the draft General Plan, which is anticipated to be released at the end of 2008. The draft EIR is anticipated in early 2009 with General Plan adoption slated for June 2009.