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Cover art created from the Santa Rosa Press Democrat.
INTRODUCTION

Santa Rosa serves as San Francisco’s North Bay urban core and economic center. Downtown Santa Rosa is centrally located in the City and laid out on a walkable street grid. Downtown encompasses several distinct residential neighborhoods and provides a strong concentration of jobs and a wide array of stores, services, and restaurants. The reunification of Courthouse Square, completed in 2017, provides an important community space in the heart of the city, while Downtown Station in Historic Railroad Square provides access to passenger rail service on the Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) corridor, and the regional transit mall near Courthouse Square links the Downtown area to a network of North Bay communities.

The Santa Rosa Downtown Station Area Specific Plan (DSASP) seeks to capitalize on these assets and guide the intensification of an energetic commercial enterprise and innovative cultural center with a strong sense of place, enhanced connectivity, and increased residential and social options. The DSASP envisions a vibrant urban core centered around Courthouse Square and a network of pedestrian-friendly mixed-use village centers, each with its own character. To make this vision a reality, the DSASP offers strategies designed to remove barriers to development, meet the community’s housing and job needs, foster vibrant civic spaces, and enhance local quality of life.

The Santa Rosa DSASP serves as the blueprint for development and preservation in a 720-acre area at the heart of the city.
PLANNING AREA/CONTEXT

A culturally rich, self-contained urban center situated within predominantly agricultural surroundings, the City of Santa Rosa is located in central Sonoma County, approximately 55 miles north of San Francisco. Like each of the other eight incorporated cities in Sonoma county, Santa Rosa is defined by an urban growth boundary that ensures a regional commitment to open space and a uniquely picturesque location. It is the fifth largest city in the San Francisco Bay Area, the 26th largest city in the state, and it's ranked in the top ten greatest Metropolitan Service Area GDPS in California. Santa Rosa consistently ranks highly in the nation's top places to live and work. Within its city limits, Santa Rosa has a diversity of neighborhoods and historic districts that house one-third of the county's workforce and over a third of the county's businesses.

The Downtown Station Area covers approximately 720 acres surrounding the Downtown Station SMART site in the heart of the city. As shown on Map INTRO-1, the Downtown Station Area is bounded by College Avenue to the north, Brookwood Avenue to the east, Sebastopol Road and State Route (SR) 12 to the south, and Dutton Avenue and Imwalle Gardens to the west. The Downtown Station Area encompasses Courthouse Square, the city's central business district and an important regional jobs center, Santa Rosa Plaza, Sonoma County's largest retail shopping destination, as well as other established neighborhoods, including Railroad Square, Maxwell Court, the Santa Rosa Arts District (SOFA), and several residential neighborhoods, including many that are designated preservation districts.

Originally inhabited by the Southern Pomo Tribe, the future city of Santa Rosa was settled by the Carrillo family in the 1830s. Downtown was laid out with a rectangular street grid around the town plaza, now known as Courthouse Square. In the later nineteenth century, the town flourished as an agricultural trading center, and the advent of rail service established Railroad Square as another commercial center. The two cores were bordered by several residential districts that now constitute Downtown Santa Rosa's historic preservation districts. The structure of Downtown Santa Rosa was shaped significantly by the earthquakes in 1906 and 1969, the decentralization of commercial services due to auto-oriented development, construction of Highway 101, and development of the Santa Rosa Plaza mall during urban renewal. In addition to changing the character and connectivity of Downtown neighborhoods, these events often resulted in the elimination of potential historic structures. Recent civic achievements that
Map INTRO-1: Planning Area

Source: City of Santa Rosa, 2019; Dyett & Bhatia, 2020
have helped to enliven the Downtown landscape include establishment of the Downtown SMART Station, completion of the Prince Memorial Greenway, and reunification of the public plaza at Old Courthouse Square. Despite the negative public perceptions of the now dated structural changes resulting from the 1969 earthquake, and construction of the mall and highway, there has also been recognition of the inadvertent benefit of encouraging the Downtown Station Area neighborhoods to develop with unique character.

The Downtown Station Area is made up of a mix of residential, commercial, office, retail, industrial, and entertainment uses. Based on data from the US Census and the Sonoma County Assessor, there were 2,445 housing units in the Downtown Station Area and 8,432 jobs in 2018. Approximately 65 percent of the existing homes are multi-family housing units, predominantly duplexes, triplexes, and fourplexes integrated into the fabric of established residential neighborhoods. As shown in Chart INTRO-1, on average, residents of the Downtown Station Area generally tend to be younger, with 40 percent of Downtown residents between the ages 25 and 44 years old, compared to 28 percent citywide. They are more likely to live alone or with roommate, whereas a larger share of the citywide population is married with a family, as shown in Chart INTRO-2. While the Downtown Station Area has 11 percent of the jobs in Santa Rosa, less than three percent of people who work in Downtown Santa Rosa also live there, and about 62 percent of workers in the Downtown Station

Area commute from outside the city.

Given its proximity to major healthcare and technology employers as well as Santa Rosa Junior College and Sonoma State University, there is significant opportunity to create an atmosphere that is attractive and supportive to recent graduates and young professionals, address the imbalance between jobs and residents living in the Downtown Station Area, and provide housing options for a variety of family types, income levels, and ages.

The Downtown Station Area is designated as a Priority Development Area (PDA) in Santa Rosa, established by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission/Association of Bay Area Governments (MTC/ABAG) to provide opportunities for compact, infill development in proximity to transit, jobs, schools, shopping and services (see Figure INTRO-2). PDAs are an integral part of Plan Bay Area 2040, the regional sustainable growth strategy that coordinates housing plans, open space conservation efforts, economic development strategies, and transportation investments. With the collaboration of local governments throughout the Bay Area, MTC/ABAG estimates that about 80 percent of the region’s future housing needs can be met within PDAs. By promoting dense, mixed-use residential and commercial neighborhoods in areas well-served by transit in this way, Plan Bay Area 2040, and the update of the DSASP which is underway, seeks to reduce traffic congestion and air pollution and further statewide goals for climate action.
Background

Downtown Santa Rosa has been the focus of planning efforts in the past. Anticipating the inauguration of SMART service, the City adopted the original DSASP in 2007 (2007 DSASP) with the goal of increasing the number of residents and employees within walking distance of the Downtown Station. While this plan enabled more housing density, it did not address some of the other policy elements needed to accommodate the type of infill development desired. Soon thereafter the housing bubble burst, triggering a global financial crisis, The Great Recession, and a dramatic drop in nationwide housing production. While the Bay Area region saw an economic recovery in 2012, housing production in Napa and Sonoma Counties did not rebound as quickly, and development in Downtown Santa Rosa has been limited since adoption of the 2007 DSASP.

In light of Downtown’s central location, proximity to transit, concentration of jobs, and urban growth boundaries that disincentivize sprawl, Santa Rosa City Council has prioritized density infill development policies promoting new multi-family housing and mixed/shared use development in the area. The need for housing became increasingly urgent in the wake of the devastating loss of homes in the North Bay Fires of 2017 and 2019 and rising housing costs throughout the Bay Area. To address this, the City undertook a series of initiatives, including preparation of a Housing Action Plan in conjunction with a process improvement action plan, adoption of Resilient City Development Measures as a short-term strategy to fast-track housing development in the burn areas as well as throughout most of the Downtown Station Area, and implementation of an Expedited Permitting Program, which dramatically reduces time for planning, engineering and building review. The City also created the Downtown High-Density Residential Incentive Program, an aggressive fee reduction program that reduces impact fees and defers water and wastewater fees for higher density projects that break ground Downtown before August 2023.

In this context, the City secured a grant from MTC/ABAG and initiated an update to the 2007 DSASP with the objectives of:

- Revisiting the 2007 DSASP land use plan and policy framework to accommodate increased housing density in the Downtown Station Area along with other transit-supportive uses and improvements;
- Improving motorized, non-motorized, and transit connectivity between the SMART station site, the Downtown Transit Mall, regional alternative transportation pathways, including the SMART pathway, Joe Rodota Trail, and Santa Rosa Creek Greenway Trail, and existing and future adjacent commercial, residential, educational, and governmental areas;
- Developing and implementing urban design standards which promote walkable and livable environments within the Downtown Station Area;
- Actively involving the public in updating the Plan through a comprehensive community involvement strategy.
Planning Process and Community Engagement

Community engagement was integral to the development of the DSASP. More than simply hosting or attending a meeting, the process involved proactively initiating conversations, maintaining ongoing dialogue, collaboration, and the creation of new relationships with community members with the goal of reaching a place where decision-making and processes are shared by staff and community stakeholders. A multifaceted community engagement strategy sought participation and input from a broad cross-section of the community’s population and interests, and a Community Advisory Committee (CAC) was formed to act as “ambassadors” to further engage community members in the process. The CAC was instrumental in building connections to historically unengaged (e.g. youth and students), underrepresented, or hard to reach groups, establishing forums for dialogue with their networks and the general public, and helping to develop and refine outreach methods. Additionally, a designated website, available in both Spanish and English, was maintained to provide the community with updates, resources, and information. The website also served as a platform for administering surveys and other data-gathering tools. At each phase of the work, a variety of different methods was used to provide opportunities for discussion and meaningful input and build community ownership of the DSASP:

- **Phase 1. Issues and Opportunities (Winter-Spring 2019):** The purpose of this phase was to conduct an intensive “deep-dive” early in the process to identify and understand stakeholder priorities and concerns, and to establish a coordinated and realistic direction for the future of the plan founded on community vision. Community engagement methods included a series of stakeholder interviews with the representatives from the developer, nonprofit, business communities; two community workshops with over 90 participants; small group meetings and citywide outreach events; and an online issues and opportunities survey, with close to 400 respondents.

- **Phase 2. Alternatives Exploration (Summer-Fall 2019):** Based on community vision and input, this phase saw development of distinct land use alternatives, each of which highlighted opportunities and tradeoffs. Over 120 community members participated in a charrette-based alternatives workshop, and 90 people responded to an online alternative concepts survey. Additionally, neighborhood meetings in Maxwell Court, Santa Rosa Avenue, Roseland, and other areas within Santa Rosa were held to provide more targeted input on relevant areas of the DSASP.

- **Phase 3. Draft Plan Preparation (Winter 2019-Summer 2020):** A draft plan was prepared based on the preferred plan concept that emerged from Phase 2. About 300 people provided their input on preferred architectural design, ground floor requirements, and civic spaces in a visual preferences survey disseminated online, which informed development requirements and design guidelines in Chapter 3 of the DSASP.

- **Phase 4. Plan Finalization (Summer-Fall 2020):** The final plan was presented for adoption to the Planning Commission and City Council. Outreach activities included an open house and pop-up engagement to raise awareness about the DSASP.

Vision

Reflective of its size, Santa Rosa has a diverse economy and population. Santa Rosa welcomes people of all ages, income levels, and backgrounds, and this diversity is linked to its vitality. To grow in a manner that continues to meet the needs of its current and future residents, retain and expand its business base, and attract new businesses, Downtown Santa Rosa is envisioned to feature a vibrant urban core centered around Courthouse Square, with a network of pedestrian-friendly mixed-use village centers, each with their own character. City-owned parking lots and garages will be redeveloped to accommodate housing, commercial space, and replacement parking without requiring additional parking spaces. Higher density work and housing options in Downtown will support by quality of life amenities such as grocery stores, healthcare, childcare, pharmacies within the Downtown Station Area, and infrastructure accommodating multi-modal and public transportation options will be abundant, reducing the need for cars. It is also envisioned that whether on public or private property, there will be ample community space to socialize and allow for a variety of programming and activation opportunities. It is recognized that what is built now needs to be flexible enough to change with time.

Vision Statement

Downtown Santa Rosa is a vibrant, sustainable, and important community gathering place where we celebrate our diversity, our heritage, and our local culture; we live, work, and share with one another; and everyone plays a part in shaping Downtown’s future.
GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR OUR DOWNTOWN AREA

Our Downtown is a community-centered place where we can all live, work, shop, and play in a thriving urban space.

- Downtown is safe and friendly for people of all ages, income levels, and cultures.
- Downtown’s streetscape is active and comfortable day and night, with pedestrian-scale lighting, street trees, landscaping, seating, and other coordinated amenities that establish a distinct identity.
- A successful Downtown is a driver of Santa Rosa’s economic health and quality of life.

We value our heritage - from Courthouse Square to our historic buildings and throughout our network of unique pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use village centers – and acknowledge those people and places who have contributed to our success.

- Downtown values its historic buildings and encourages compatible, high-quality new construction.
- A diverse array of distinct neighborhoods with vital business activity, housing options, and multimodal connections to each other and the greater region is essential to Downtown Santa Rosa’s success.
- Meaningful and visible communication about Downtown Santa Rosa’s heritage can link past, present, and future, and it can contribute to Downtown’s evolution.

We move about assured that our sidewalks and trails, our bicycle facilities, our public transit, and our streets take us to where we want to go, however we want to travel.

- Downtown will safely accommodate many modes of travel – pedestrians, bicycles, rideshare, and transit – with the easiest choice being forgoing a personal car entirely.

- Downtown’s network of public parks, plazas, trails and recreational spaces is enhanced and interconnected.
- Increasing active lifestyles is Santa Rosa’s greatest opportunity to improve the health of its residents.

We create higher density living and employment options that enhance our quality of life by supporting a diverse array of retail goods and services, arts and culture activities, and outdoor recreation opportunities.

- Downtown continues to serve as an economic engine for the City and region, promoting a diverse economic environment that supports both local entrepreneurial ventures, as well as larger businesses.
- Downtown provides economic opportunity for all residents.
- Downtown is comprised of successful, desirable, and complete neighborhoods with a variety of housing choices and mix of uses.

We experience one another, and our local arts and culture together, in public and private civic spaces that encourage us to connect with each other.

- Downtown has a thriving cultural and arts community and its lively public spaces are local and regional destinations.
- Downtown’s network of public parks, plazas, trails and open space is enhanced and interconnected.
- Santa Rosa’s arts and cultural scene offers opportunities than can enrich everyone’s lives.
- Active celebration of Santa Rosa’s diversity will help ensure economic and social success.

We celebrate Downtown Santa Rosa together as we value our past and look forward to our future success.

- Downtown protects and restores natural resources and incorporates environmentally friendly elements into new projects.
LEGAL CONTEXT AND RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER PLANS

California Government Code (Section 65450) states that planning agencies may prepare specific plans for the systematic implementation of the general plan for all or part of the area covered by the general plan. “A specific plan shall include a text and a diagram or diagrams which specify all of the following in detail:

- The distribution, location, and extent of the uses of land, including open space, within the area covered by the plan. This requirement is addressed in Chapter 2, Land Use.

- The proposed distribution, location, and extent and intensity of major components of public and private transportation, sewage, water, drainage, solid waste disposal, energy, and other essential facilities proposed to be located within the area covered by the plan and needed to support the land uses described in the plan. This requirement is addressed in Chapter 3, Mobility; and Chapter 5, Public Services and Sustainability.

- Standards and criteria by which development will proceed, and standards for the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources, where applicable. This requirement is addressed in Chapter 4, Design and Development Standards; and Chapter 5, Public Services and Sustainability.

- A program of implementation measures including regulations, programs, public works projects, and financing measures necessary to carry out paragraphs (1), (2), and (3). This requirement is addressed in Chapter 6, Financing and Implementation.

In addition, “the specific plan shall include a statement of the relationship of the specific plan to the general plan.” Refer to Chapter 6 for a summary of the relationship between the DSASP and goals, policies, and actions in Santa Rosa’s General Plan.

Relationship to General Plan

Although amendments to the City’s General Plan will be necessary to allow its implementation, the recommendations and objectives of the DSASP are consistent with the broad goals of the Santa Rosa 2035 General Plan. The General Plan describes a vision for Downtown as the heart of the community with expanded residential, commercial, and civic uses that will provide a high level of urban activity and a strong identity. In general, the policies of the General Plan support Downtown Santa Rosa as a mixed-use hub that serves as the major regional office, financial, civic, and cultural center in the North Bay, and a vital mixed-use center. In addition, new and existing housing development should be well connected to transit centers and the core of Downtown for pedestrians and bicyclists. The recommendations contained in the DSASP are consistent with and further these goals.

Zoning Code

The Santa Rosa Zoning Code provides standards for development, including height restrictions, setbacks, parking regulations, allowed uses, and signage requirements, among others. These standards set the pattern and character of development in the city. The DSASP proposes new land use designations and streamlines the number of existing land use designations within the Downtown Station Area. The Zoning Code will be amended to reflect these new designations to ensure consistency and facilitate implementation.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (2019)

This Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Update 2018 establishes a long-term vision for improving walking and bicycling in Santa Rosa by updating the previous plan adopted by the City Council in 2010. The Plan Update 2018 provides a strategy to develop a comprehensive bicycling and walking network to provide access to transit, schools, and Downtown Santa Rosa attractions alongside support facilities like bicycle parking and pedestrian amenities. The DSASP incorporates all Master Plan recommendations for the Downtown Station Area and makes some additional bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements outlined in Chapter 3. The Master Plan will be updated for consistency with DSASP recommendations and will remain the guiding document for bicycle and pedestrian network improvements.

Santa Rosa Avenue Corridor Plan (2011)

Approved in 2011, the Santa Rosa Avenue Corridor Plan provided a comprehensive, long-term vision for this corridor and surrounding area, including recommendations for capital improvements and design guidelines. The DSASP incorporates the Corridor Plan’s vision for roadway reallocation, bicycle lanes, and pedestrian improvements along Santa Rosa Avenue. The Santa Rosa Avenue Corridor Plan will be amended to allow the DSASP to control where there is overlap in the Plan boundaries.
Environmental Impact Report

The Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the 2007 DSASP was certified in October 2007. The updated DSASP makes certain changes to the land use designations, development regulations, and infrastructure improvements envisioned in the 2007 Plan that could potentially result in new or substantially more severe impacts as compared to those analyzed and mitigated in the 2007 EIR. Additionally, since certification of the 2007 EIR, the California Natural Resources Agency has adopted updates to the CEQA Guidelines that represent a substantial change to the circumstances under which the Proposed Plan would be implemented. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15063, the City prepared an Initial Study in December 2019 to determine which of the proposed Plan’s effects were adequately examined by the 2007 EIR and which effects to analyze further in a Subsequent EIR (SEIR). The SEIR was prepared concurrently with the Draft DSASP and policies in the DSASP were developed to respond to the findings of the environmental analysis for the SEIR to minimize or reduce significant environmental impacts to the extent feasible; in this way the DSASP is “self-mitigating.” The SEIR provides a basis for evaluating the potential environmental impacts of subsequent development projects and for granting project approvals.

Roseland Area/ Sebastopol Road Specific Plan (2016)

The purpose of Roseland Area/Sebastopol Road Specific Plan is to support a unified, vital, healthy, and livable Roseland community. The area’s designation as a Priority Development Area supports walkable, bikeable, and transit-rich neighborhoods by increasing the number and proximity of residents to amenities, schools, parks, and jobs. The plan aims to do this by improving connectivity, concentrating areas of activity, and enhancing the physical environment. The Plan area was previously bounded by State Route (SR) 12 to the north, Bellevue Avenue to the south, US Highway 101 to the east, and Stony Point Road to the west. The Roseland Area/Sebastopol Road Specific Plan will be amended to remove the area bounded by Highway 12, Sebastopol Road, and Dutton Avenue to be consistent with the DSASP boundary and Downtown PDA boundary.
PLAN ORGANIZATION

The following chapters of this document present guiding goals and accompanying policies; design standards and guidelines; and recommendations for implementation:

**Chapter 1: Introduction.** Provides background and context, DSASP objectives, and the contents of the DSASP document.

**Chapter 2: Land Use.** Presents key features of the Downtown Station Area, including existing land use, development potential and opportunity sites where significant change may be expected to occur, the land use framework, vision, and designations, development form and intensity standards, and affordable housing strategies.

**Chapter 3: Mobility.** Addresses the Downtown Station Area’s roadway network and circulation, pedestrian and bicycle connectivity, transit and transportation demand management measures, and parking management strategies.

**Chapter 4: Urban Design and Civic Spaces.** Provides guidance for the development of the built environment in the Downtown Station Area, including streetscape improvements and the public realm, civic spaces, detailed development standards and design guidelines, and preservation and compatibility of new development with historic resources.

**Chapter 5: Public Services and Sustainability.** Addresses public services and infrastructure needed to ensure public health and safety in the Downtown Station Area. Also identifies and addresses key environmental issues that will potentially have an impact on the design and location of new development, including noise and hazardous materials, air and water quality, flooding, geology and seismicity, and biological resources. Emergency response strategies are also described.

**Chapter 6: Financing and Implementation.** Outlines measures for consistency with the General Plan and Municipal Code and provides an infrastructure cost assessment, preliminary financing strategies for infrastructure and public improvements, and a phased implementation program.
Cover art by Dyett & Bhatia.
LAND USE

Downtown Santa Rosa is envisioned to become a lively, modern regional hub and a prime destination for urban living, business, civic, and social life. As an inclusive and diverse community, Downtown Santa Rosa will feature a range of different housing types and an array of public spaces that offer residents, employees, and visitors opportunities to socialize and connect with one another. New development will be focused near transit and integrated into Downtown Santa Rosa’s fabric in a way that respects historic character and celebrates local heritage, culture, and natural resources as key aspects of a unique sense of place while encouraging the Downtown Station Area to evolve consistent with the Vision and Guiding Principles of this plan. The core area, centered around Courthouse Square, will provide a diverse mix of places to shop and socialize, nightlife and entertainment, and amenities that support daily needs, such as grocery stores, childcare, and pharmacies. Surrounding the core will be a mosaic of pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use village centers, each with their own character, where any need can be met within easy walking distance.

This chapter provides a land use and development framework to guide the evolution of the Downtown Station Area. It includes land use designations and standards for development intensity, as well as policies to support economic vitality and the creation of new housing for all income levels, lifestyles, family types, and ages.
EXISTING LAND USES

EXISTING LAND USE PATTERN

The 720-acre Downtown Station Area is comprised of residential neighborhoods, commercial districts, and industrial areas. Chart LU-1 summarizes the relative acreage of existing land use and Map LU-1 shows the distribution of existing land use throughout the Downtown Station Area. Reflective of the historical development pattern of the community, the two principal Downtown commercial districts are located at the heart of the area, surrounded by residential neighborhoods. US 101 bisects the area in a north-south direction, with the central business district around Courthouse Square to the east and the historic commercial core around Railroad Square to the west. Industrial development generally flanks the railroad tracks, which further divide the Downtown Station Area in a north-south direction, separating residential areas on either side from one another.

Within the Downtown Station Area, residential uses account for 184 acres or 26 percent of the land, concentrated primarily in established neighborhoods. In general, multi-family residential land uses are interspersed throughout the residential neighborhoods.

Commercial land uses, including retail and office uses, account for 138 acres, or 19 percent of the land in the Downtown Station Area. These are primarily concentrated in the core of the Downtown Station Area around Courthouse Square, Railroad Square, the Santa Rosa Plaza Mall, and east of E Street as well as corridors like Santa Rosa Avenue and College Avenue. These areas include a mix of bars, restaurants, retail stores, and hotels depending on the location.

Industrial land uses, representing seven percent or 50 acres of the Downtown Station Area, are generally located adjacent to the railroad tracks west of US 101. Whereas Maxwell Court has active manufacturing businesses, the industrial uses in Roberts Avenue consists of auto body shops, vacant land, and commercial at the corner of Sebastopol Road and Dutton Avenue.

Institutional land uses make up 52 acres, or seven percent of the Downtown Station Area. This includes a variety of public or semi-public land uses, such as Santa Rosa City Hall, the Postal Service, the Federal government buildings, Santa Rosa Middle School, Saint Rose Catholic Church, the Museum of Sonoma County, the Sonoma County Library, and the Santa Rosa Police Department.

There are also nearly 25 acres of parking lots, or three percent of the Downtown Station Area, which are generally accessible to the public. Vacant land makes up 20 acres or approximately three percent of the Downtown Station Area. Several large sites account for a large portion of this vacant land, including the SMART site west of the Downtown Station between West Third and West Sixth Streets and several properties in the western portion of the Downtown Station Area around Imwalle Gardens.

Parks and green space account for another 44 acres or seven percent of the Downtown Station Area and are generally spread throughout Downtown Santa Rosa. These parcels include a variety of parks and green spaces, including major community focal points, like Courthouse Square plaza, Juilliard Park, and the Santa Rosa Creek Trail, along with neighborhood parks like Luther Burbank Home and Gardens, Fremont Park, and Olive Park. The remaining 207 acres or 29 percent of the plan area is occupied by public streets and roads including US 101 and SR 12.

Source: Sonoma County Assessor, 2018; Dyett & Bhatia, 2020
Figure LU-1: Existing Land Use

- Single Family Residential
- Multi Family Residential
- Commercial
- Light Industrial
- Industrial
- Public / Institutional
- Parks and Open Space
- Right-of-Way
- Vacant

Legend:
- Undercrossing
- SMART Rail

Source: MTC, 2019; City of Santa Rosa, 2018; Dyett & Bhatia, 2020
DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

OPPORTUNITY AREAS AND CATALYST SITES

While vacant land represents about three percent of the total Downtown Station Area, there is a significant number of properties which are underutilized. Underutilized properties are those where the value of the land is worth more than the buildings and structures on it, giving the owner an incentive to redevelop with new uses that command higher rents or sale prices. City-owned parcels also present opportunities, particularly when located adjacent to vacant and underutilized land. Areas where vacant, underutilized, and City-owned properties are clustered present the best opportunities for redevelopment as they are locations that can accommodate significant physical change. As shown in Map LU-2, there are eight “Opportunity Areas” within the Downtown Station Area:

- Courthouse Square,
- Juilliard/Santa Rosa Avenue,
- Roberts Avenue,
- SMART Station area,
- North Railroad Square,
- Maxwell Court, and
- College Avenue.

Within these “Opportunity Areas” there are catalyst sites that are important for advancing the DSASP vision. Shown on Map LU-2, these include privately owned properties that are large enough to accommodate significant higher-density development or where interest in parcel assembly and redevelopment has been expressed. There are also several City-owned catalyst sites in key locations within the Downtown Station Area that could serve as demonstration projects to “prove” the market for higher density multi-family development, with a view to catalyzing similar projects and attracting institutional capital. Pursuing a public-private partnership can be a vehicle for realizing “pioneer” multifamily residential projects that otherwise would not be financially feasible without public subsidy and support. The DSASP land use framework seeks to facilitate development in Opportunity Areas and on catalyst sites in order to move the vision toward reality.

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Santa Rosa has significant unmet housing needs. A Citywide needs assessment conducted to inform the 2016 Housing Action Plan determined that the City would need to add approximately 1,000 housing units per year through 2023 to satisfy unmet demand. Downtown Santa Rosa Opportunity Areas have the capacity to accommodate more than enough housing to meet unmet demand, and to allow for the addition new higher density multi-family housing that caters to people of all income levels, lifestyles, family types, and ages. Concentrating new housing in the Downtown Station Area, with its central location, proximity to transit, and concentration of jobs and services would promote vitality in the area and align with City goals for sustainable development. Since the 2007 DSASP was adopted, however, relatively little residential development has occurred, in spite of an extended period of robust economic growth following the Great Recession.

One of the key challenges for multi-family residential development has to do with the rents and sales prices that the market will bear. Achievable rent or sales price is one of the key factors used by developers and lenders in evaluating the feasibility of new residential development. Available data indicates that average rent per square foot in Santa Rosa is significantly below rents in other benchmark Bay Area communities, and slightly below that in the neighboring Sonoma County communities. In the larger context of rising construction costs in the Bay Area, this means that developers are more attracted to other communities where the margins are better and profits are higher. Even within Santa Rosa, average citywide rents are similar to those downtown and there is no fiscally compelling reason for a developer to incur the higher costs associated with infill development downtown. Further, existing multi-family development downtown largely occurs in small developments of four units or less, with relatively few larger multi-family buildings that might offer an indication of comparable rents for that type of construction. This tends to discourage institutional investors such as insurance companies and pension funds that have significant capital to invest in large-scale real estate developments.

In order to address these challenges and to fast-track housing development following the Tubbs and Nuns fires of October 2017, the City has already put in place a number of important measures to streamline the development
process and reduce development fees. These measures have reduced project approval timelines by up to 70 percent and cut time for planning, engineering and building review from 18 to 6 months. By providing clear standards for new development downtown, flexibility to encourage creativity and innovation in project design, and incentives for downtown development, DSASP goals and policies seek to close the competitive gap between downtown Santa Rosa and other Bay Area communities.

NON–RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

The Downtown Station Area encompasses approximately 9.5 percent of the office space in Sonoma County, and the Old Courthouse Square is a regional center for financial and government offices. Market demand projections anticipate that the Downtown Station Area will capture a commensurate share of new office development as long as there is a sufficient amount of housing that is attractive and affordable to a growing workforce. With the planned departure of some industrial businesses in the area, the total amount of industrial square footage will decrease; however, there are opportunities for small-scale maker-oriented businesses dedicated to creating and selling a wide range of self-made products to establish in the area. The biggest challenges for non-residential development downtown relates to retail, particularly given the rapid evolution of that sector with the rise of e-commerce. Across the nation, the demand for physical retail space is declining as consumers choose to buy more online. At the same time consumers are demonstrating a preference for “experiential retail” that offers more than just goods for sale.

Santa Rosa Plaza has a regional retail draw with national and international chains in a traditional mall format, while the Railroad Square commercial district offers a unique blend of local retailers in an historic setting. These areas offer differentiated retail experiences, and as such they represent the best potential for successful retail in the future, although they would continue to compete with other amenity rich retail destinations in the county that offer free parking and easy access. A focus on creating a differentiated retail experience that provides local residents and visitors with a unique sense of place will be critical to economic vitality.
LAND USE VISION AND FRAMEWORK

Based on the development potential for the Downtown Station Area, the DSASP articulates a vision for future land use involving the following key elements:

The area surrounding Courthouse Square is the heart of the City where tall buildings accommodate residents and employees to strengthen Santa Rosa’s role as the cultural and business hub of the wider region. In turn, new rooftops and new jobs support both the vitality of existing businesses and the establishment of new amenities. Residents and visitors will enjoy shopping at unique and eclectic stores, dine at restaurants or meet coworkers for after-work drinks, attend a show at new entertainment venues or civic spaces, enjoy family fun the sunshine at Courthouse Square, and take advantage of other recreational amenities.

A key gateway into the Courthouse Square area, Santa Rosa Avenue is envisioned to transform into a multi-modal, tree-lined gateway with higher density housing and commercial spaces. Uses and design techniques have been incorporated to activate the ground floors of buildings at the corners of Mills and Maple streets.

Railroad Square and vacant sites west of the railroad tracks make up a distinct district with a transit and visitor orientation. The larger western parcels will support higher-density housing, oriented to provide easy pedestrian access to SMART’s Downtown Station and Railroad Square via the at-grade rail crossing to the east. Residents of the new housing on the SMART site join with visitors in shopping, dining, and enjoying leisure time in Railroad Square. The vitality of this charming commercial district is further enhanced with the redesign of Depot Park, which creates a public plaza that puts the “square in Railroad Square,” and design standards call for active ground floors to foster walkability around the plaza and on Fourth Street.

A similar visitor orientation is envisioned in the Roberts Avenue area south of SR 12 between Sebastopol Road and Dutton Avenue. An anchor use such as a sports facility, civic center, performing arts center, or a major shopping, dining, or recreation destination will give this area a distinct identity and will attract both area residents and visitors.
Industrial areas in Maxwell Court and Roberts Avenue areas will be home to a mix of maker-oriented businesses, live/work shops, and housing that co-exist with and complements existing businesses in a village-like atmosphere. In Maxwell Court, new mixed use development will be centered on a new public plaza, creating a distinctive neighborhood feel in concert with light industrial uses. In portions of the Roberts Avenue area allowed uses include live/work spaces, and creative, maker-oriented uses such as artisan shops and studios, media and print production outlets, tech startups, limited light industrial businesses and other supportive uses add character and vitality to the village center.

Pockets of neighborhood-scaled multi-family development together with shops and services catering to the daily needs of local residents would be fostered in the Imwalle, North Railroad Square, SOFA, East Side, and College areas. Elsewhere in the Downtown Station Area, the unique character of existing neighborhoods will be retained and enhanced.

**LAND USE DESIGNATIONS**

The DSASP introduces a distinctive set of land use designations to advance the vision for the Downtown Station Area by guiding new development on vacant and underutilized clusters of land within Opportunity Areas. No change is envisioned in established neighborhoods outside these areas. Shown on Map LU-3 and described below, the DSASP land use designations are intended to recognize, enhance, and foster the character of various distinct Downtown Station Area districts.

**MIXED USE DESIGNATIONS**

**Core Mixed Use** - The Core Mixed Use (CMU) designation is intended to foster a vital mix of residential, retail, office, governmental, entertainment, cultural, educational, and hotel uses to activate the greater Courthouse Square area and key transit corridors. The principal objectives of the CMU designation are to strengthen the role of this area as a business, governmental, retail, and entertainment hub for the region, and accommodate significant new residential development that will extend the hours of activity and create a built-in market for retail, service, and entertainment uses. High-rise development in all-residential or mixed-use buildings is envisioned in a walkable, bikeable environment with public gathering places such as plazas, courtyards, or parks and easy access to public transit. The Core Mixed Use designation has a maximum FAR range of 3.0-8.0 except for 12 contributor properties on B, 7th and 10th Streets; refer to
Figure 2-3 for allowable FAR. Specified height and density maximums apply to the 12 contributor properties where there is no FAR expressed.

**Station Mixed Use** - The Station Mixed Use (SMU) designation is intended to provide for a range of visitor-serving uses, including retail, restaurants, entertainment, cultural amenities, and hotels in proximity to the Downtown SMART station. While commercial uses are emphasized, new multi-family housing will also be allowed to support the daytime and evening vitality of the Downtown Station Area. New development will be required to respect the historic character of the Railroad Square area, adding to the mix of uses and enhancing the walkable, pedestrian-oriented streets and public spaces that attract local residents, SMART train riders, and visitors from the wider region.

**Maker Mixed Use** - The Maker Mixed Use (MMU) designation emphasizes a balanced mix of residential, creative, and maker-oriented uses, including artisan shops, studios, media production, printing and publishing, distilleries and micro-breweries, cannabis, tech start-ups, research and development facilities, limited light industrial uses, and home-based businesses. Multi-family residential units are encouraged in all-residential or mixed-use buildings, as are live/work units. Supportive uses that contribute to a vibrant village atmosphere, such as bodegas, specialty food stores, cafes, coffee shops, performing arts venues, theatres, restaurants, schools, and educational facilities are also permitted.

**Neighborhood Mixed Use** - The Neighborhood Mixed Use (NMU) designation allows for new multi-family residential development in all-residential or mixed-use buildings, together with a broad mix of uses that primarily serve local residents, including professional office, retail, entertainment, service, and other neighborhood-scale supporting uses. Housing development will include low- and mid-rise apartments and condominiums, as well as small-lot single-family attached dwellings (e.g., duplexes, triplexes, townhomes.) Live-work spaces and maker-oriented uses are permitted subject to performance standards. Street design that integrates “Complete Streets” concepts for accommodating all roadway users and incorporates traffic-calming features will be required with on-street parking where appropriate.

**RESIDENTIAL DESIGNATIONS**

**Low Density Residential** - Single family residential development at density of 2.0 to 8.0 units per gross acre. The classification is mainly intended for detached single family dwellings, but attached single family and multiple family units may be permitted.

**Medium-Low Density Residential** - Housing at densities from 8.0 to 13.0 units per gross acre. This classification is intended for attached single family residential development, but single family detached housing and multifamily development may be permitted. Development at the mid-point of the density range is desirable but not required.

**Medium Density Residential** - Housing densities from 8.0 to 18.0 units per gross acre. This designation permits a range of housing types, including single family attached and multifamily developments, and is intended for specific areas where higher density is appropriate. New single-family detached housing is not permitted except in historic preservation districts and historic neighborhoods where single family detached units are allowed.

**PUBLIC/QUASI-PUBLIC DESIGNATIONS**

**Civic Spaces** - The Civic Spaces (CS) designation provides for publicly accessible spaces programmed or improved with recreational amenities. The intent of the CS designation is to foster opportunities for interaction between residents, workers, artists, and visitors and to celebrate local culture and history. Lands designated CS may be publicly or privately owned and maintained. Amenities may include green spaces, play structures, seating, picnic tables, fountains, public art, special landscape features, walkways, and trails that are part of larger circulation networks. The CS designation is a floating designation and the precise boundaries are not defined; however, the general location and distribution of Civic Spaces is shown with a symbol on Map LU-3. Until such time that these properties are purchased by the City or privately developed as a publicly accessible urban park or plaza space, development consistent with the underlying land use designation shown on Map LU-3 is allowed. Additional policies and standards related to Civic Spaces are included in Chapter 4, Urban Design and Civic Spaces.

**Public/Institutional** - An area or cluster of governmental or semi-public facilities, such as hospitals, utility facilities and government office centers, etc. New facilities may be appropriate in any land use category based on need and subject to environmental review.
Active Ground Floor Overlay - This overlay requires that new development activate the ground floor of buildings with uses and/or design techniques that engage the street and enhance the pedestrian environment. Active ground floor uses include retail and service establishments, restaurants, cafes, bars and brew pubs, co-working spaces, art and craft studios, and other substantially similar uses. Building design that optimizes pedestrian access; facade length and articulation; and window coverage will be required. The overlay applies at locations within mixed use areas where retail currently exists and where enhanced walkability and vitality is desired. (See Map LU-4, Policy LU 1-4, and Standard DS-1 in Chapter 4, Urban Design and Civic Spaces).
GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL LU-1: Downtown Santa Rosa will be an energetic regional commercial and cultural center with a range of housing, employment, retail, entertainment, and restaurant options in a safe, vibrant, walkable environment.

POLICIES

LU-1.1 Provide a Downtown Station Area land use and development framework that establishes a vibrant big city urban core centered around Courthouse Square, and a network of mixed-use village centers that offer an array of housing options for people at all income levels and stages of life, mixed with retail and services catering to residents’ daily needs.

LU-1.2 Foster a rich mix of uses in the Core, Station, Maker and Neighborhood Mixed Use areas, while allowing differences in emphasis on uses to distinguish between them.

LU-1.3 Actively facilitate and promote redevelopment in the Core Mixed Use area to create a compact hub of high-intensity structures providing a vibrant mix of housing, employment, and visitor-oriented uses. The objective is new non-residential development with a strong government, financial, commercial, and visitor-serving orientation and significant new residential development to provide workforce housing and vitality during non-work hours.

LU-1.4 Require that development in areas shown on Map LU-4 provide uses or building design features that activate the ground floor. To comply with this requirement, one or more of the follow active ground floor uses may be provided: retail and service establishments; restaurants; cafes; bars and brew pubs; co-working spaces; art and craft studios; other substantially similar uses. Alternatively, building design features that optimize the pedestrian experience and access may be provided as detailed in Standard DS-1 in Chapter 4, Urban Design and Civic Spaces.

LU-1.5 Focus new residential and employment-generating land uses along key transit corridors, including Mendocino Avenue, Santa Rosa Avenue and Third Street in order to support higher-frequency transit service.

LU-1.6 Prohibit drive-through establishments and other new development whose design prioritizes automobile access in the Core and Station Mixed Use areas in order to Establish a strong pedestrian and transit orientation.

LU-1.6 Locate buildings that specifically serve individuals with disabilities or seniors near accessible pathways to transit and public services.
DEVELOPMENT FORM AND INTENSITY

As a way of providing more flexibility to help developers to design and build financially feasible projects, the DSASP establishes a system that regulates Floor Area Ratio (FAR) in Opportunity Areas, replacing height and density regulations. Traditional height and density regulations regulate areas outside the Opportunity Areas.

FAR is a planning tool widely used throughout California and the US. It is the ratio of total building space in relation to lot size. It can be calculated quickly based on information that is readily available to planners, architects, and developers - simply by taking the total building square footage and dividing it by the area of the lot. The graphic on the next page shows different building forms on the same lot at 1.0 and 3.0 FAR. FAR does not directly limit the height or number of stories of a building; it simply controls the amount of building space allowed on a given lot.

FAR will be calculated as the total area of all floors in a building as measured to the outside surfaces of exterior walls or to the center line of common walls. FAR calculations exclude crawl spaces, structured parking, carports, breezeways, attics without floors, porches, balconies, terraces, below grade structures, and outdoor recreational space (common, public, or private). Additionally, for ceilings over 20 feet above floor height, the gross floor area of these areas would be doubled for the purpose of calculating floor area ratio, but not for the purpose of determining actual floor area. This is to ensure that double-height lobbies, ballrooms, and similar spaces are adequately accounted for in the FAR calculation.

FAR is particularly useful in central business districts and in other areas of high-intensity land use with a mix of office buildings, restaurants, shops, hotels, and tall apartment buildings. Some of the advantages it offers are that:

- it provides flexibility for developers to meet community and market needs;
- it permits a variety of unit types and sizes which allows “affordability by design” (i.e. smaller units with lower rents or sale prices);
- it makes the utilization of new construction methods more feasible than under traditional controls
- it removes the inducement to squeeze extra stories into the permitted volume of a building.

Map LU-7 shows the maximum base FAR allowed in Opportunity Areas prior to application of any FAR bonuses.

DSASP standards exclude parking areas, outdoor recreational spaces, and the area of any historic structure to be preserved on-site from the FAR calculations so as to maximize the building square footage that can be devoted to housing, employment, cultural, and entertainment uses. The flexibility and incentives provided through this approach are complement other incentives available to downtown housing development. Residential and mixed use developments that offer housing affordable to low and very low households are also eligible for additional "bonus" FAR under State density bonus law and the City’s Density Bonus ordinance. Additionally, the Santa Rosa Resilient Cities Development Measures allow most residential uses by-right, and the City has also set up an Expedited Permitting Program to further fast-track housing development.

Figure LU-5: Examples of FAR

FAR = 1.0

FAR = 3.0

Floor Area Ratio does not directly limit the height or number of stories of a building.
### VISUALIZING FAR

The FAR-based system regulates the amount of development that can occur on a site, but leaves open a greater range of design options than would be possible under existing regulations.

The examples at right illustrate some possibilities for each of the FAR tiers that apply downtown. The renderings at right are massing studies intended to illustrate height and form, but do not represent completed architectural designs. They were modeled in SketchUp by an architect and geolocated into the site using Google Earth. The surrounding buildings in the aerials views are actual building found in Santa Rosa. The colors of the model represent different land uses: red is commercial, yellow is residential, and parking is gray.

Note that development standards and design guidelines included in Chapter 3 Urban Design and Civic Spaces also apply in order to ensure that the look and feel of new development is consistent with community standards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FAR: 2.0</th>
<th>AERIAL</th>
<th>STREETVIEW</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>410 B St, Santa Rosa</strong></td>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Aerial View" /></td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Street View" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buildings wrap around a shared parking structure. 2.1 FAR.</td>
<td>View looking east towards Courthouse Square.</td>
<td>Street view looking west at Mendocino Ave &amp; 5th St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total building area:</strong> 278,393 sf</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stories:</strong> 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Height:</strong> 55’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Residential Units:</strong> 211 units</td>
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</thead>
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<td><strong>410 B St, Santa Rosa</strong></td>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Aerial View" /></td>
<td><img src="image4.png" alt="Street View" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buildings wrap around a shared parking structure. 4.2 FAR.</td>
<td>View looking east towards Courthouse Square.</td>
<td>Street view looking west at Mendocino Ave &amp; 5th St.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total building area:</strong> 546,523 sf</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stories:</strong> 10, 8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Height:</strong> 105’, 85’</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Residential Units:</strong> 446 units</td>
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<td><strong>Above-grade podium parking with towers. 5.9 FAR.</strong></td>
<td><img src="image5.png" alt="Aerial View" /></td>
<td><img src="image6.png" alt="Street View" /></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total building area:</strong> 771,577 sf</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Stories:</strong> 8, 18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Height:</strong> 85’, 180’</td>
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<td><strong>Residential Units:</strong> 543 units</td>
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<table>
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<th>FAR: 8.0-9.0</th>
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<th>STREETVIEW</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Above-grade podium parking with towers. 8.1 FAR.</strong></td>
<td><img src="image7.png" alt="Aerial View" /></td>
<td><img src="image8.png" alt="Street View" /></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total building area:</strong> 1,063,177 sf</td>
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<td><strong>Stories:</strong> 8, 27</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Height:</strong> 85’, 270’</td>
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<td><strong>Residential Units:</strong> 788 units</td>
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Map LU-5: Maximum Base FAR

Notes:
A minimum FAR of half of the maximum is required for catalyst sites unless it can be demonstrated that special circumstances exist on the site preventing development of that intensity.

Supplemental FAR is available for undersized parcels and bonus FAR is available for projects that provide community benefits.

Parcels for which no maximum permitted FAR is assigned on this map shall have their minimum and maximum development intensity controlled through the applicable zoning.
GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL LU-2: Significant new development is focused in Opportunity Areas and on catalyst sites.

POLICIES

LU-2.1 Regulate building intensity and form based on floor area ratio (FAR). Maximum allowable base FAR prior to application of any bonus shall be as shown on Map LU-5. The following shall be excluded from FAR calculations:

- All areas of a building devoted to parking;
- Crawl spaces, breezeways, attics without floors, below-grade structures;
- All open space (common, public, or private), including porches, balconies, terraces;
- Active ground floor uses in areas where active ground floor requirements apply as shown on Map LU-6; and
- The area of any designated historic structure to be preserved on a specific site, so long as the historic and/or architectural character of the structure is rehabilitated and not adversely affected.

LU-2.2 Pursue public-private partnerships for the redevelopment of City-owned catalyst sites with high-density multi-family housing and other community-serving uses, such as affordable housing, workforce housing, childcare, community-cultural spaces, and publicly accessible outdoor recreational space. Require a minimum FAR equivalent to at least half of the maximum base FAR with redevelopment of these sites.

LU-2.3 For smaller parcels along Fourth and Fifth streets in the Core Mixed Use district where it may not be possible to achieve the maximum base FAR, consider incentives to encourage lot consolidation and optimize development potential.

LU-2.4 Explore opportunities to consolidate City and County facilities in a new civic center complex Downtown and pursue redevelopment of surplus properties that result from consolidation.

LU-2.5 Monitor market conditions and assess opportunities to provide additional incentives for developments that include significant community benefits such as affordable housing, 3-bedroom units, childcare, grocery stores, publicly accessible urban open space, on-site performance space, public art, and green building features. Incentives may include bonus FAR, expedited permitting, fee reductions, and other items.

LU-2.6 Require commercial uses that exceed 15,000 square feet to have a multi-storied format, rather than be spread out horizontally, and integrate other uses. Allow single-story development only if it can be shown to be complimentary and compatible with the vision and desired character for the area where it is proposed.

LU-2.7 Require new development within the Core Mixed Use, Station Mixed Use, Maker Mixed Use, and Neighborhood Mixed Use designations to achieve the mid-point or higher of the maximum FAR in all cases where FAR is established. Exceptions are allowed where parcel configuration, historic preservation or utility constraints make the mid-point impossible to achieve. On properties where no FAR is established the building’s height shall be controlled through the applicable zoning.
ECONOMIC VITALITY

Since its earliest days, Downtown Santa Rosa has been an economic hub for Sonoma County and the North Bay, and economic vitality is integral to its success in the future. The DSASP envisions a critical mass of diverse businesses that create economic opportunity and draw people for work, play, and living. Today, Courthouse Square is home to an important concentration of professional, government, and financial service sector jobs, and the adjacent Santa Rosa Plaza Mall is the premier shopping destination in Sonoma County. Railroad Square features a number of small-scale, locally owned shops and restaurants and is welcoming new hotels as well. The DSASP seeks to build on the existing employment base and attract new employers to the Downtown Station Area in order to enhance daytime vitality and support existing businesses. A focus on creating and attracting jobs in higher average wage industries will also help stimulate demand for market rate housing in Downtown Santa Rosa, address the deficit in achievable rents as compared to other Bay Area communities, and attract more interest from the real estate development community. Equally important is an emphasis on home-based businesses, start ups, creatives, maker-oriented businesses, and jobs in retail and hospitality.

Sense of place is a powerful attractor and a high-quality urban environment will draw new businesses and visitors to the Downtown Station Area. Public and private investment in attractive streetscapes, buildings, park and public plazas will help cultivate a distinctive Downtown character. The DSASP emphasizes a people-scaled approach to development which will translate into a walkable, friendly, safe, and appealing pedestrian realm. As people spend a day or evening Downtown, they’ll observe and experience well-designed and inviting ground floor uses, public programming both celebratory and routine, and urban parks and interesting public spaces interspersed through their urban environment.

Art and culture have an important role to play as well. From the Arlene Francis Center, The Lost Church and Sixth Street Playhouse; to the Sonoma County Museum and Downtown Library; to the SOFA arts district; to beautiful downtown murals and lovable Peanuts sculptures, Downtown Santa Rosa continues to nurture and expand its artistic spirit. The arts not only have a positive impact on Downtown’s quality of life and cultural evolution, but also on the entire social and business environment. The arts support additional investment, beautify and activate spaces, showcase neighborhood history and pride, and draw tourists. As Downtown grows, opportunities to support and infuse culture, arts, and recreation into the fabric of Downtown will ensure that this home to artists and innovators continues to cultivate creativity and support its uniqueness.
**GOALS AND POLICIES**

**GOAL LU-3:** The Downtown Station Area will be economically viable and resilient over the long-term.

**POLICIES**

**LU-3.1** Expand and diversify the Downtown employment base by attracting new employers, including firms active in technology, medical/bio, additive manufacturing, engineering, and media that provide well-paying jobs with potential for career advancement; and by nurturing and retaining small businesses and start-up firms. Ensure that buildings are designed to accommodate these uses.

**LU-3.2** Ensure that development is designed to accommodate flexible uses that can accommodate a pivot in business type to residential as economies evolve.

*(See also the development standards and design guidelines for building design included in Chapter 4, Urban Design and Civic Spaces.)*

**LU-3.3** In collaboration with the area Chamber of Commerce, Downtown businesses, and other business advocacy groups, maintain a Downtown business attraction program to assist with site identification, incentive programs, permitting assistance, and other aspects related to establishing or relocating a business.

**LU-3.4** Preserve some sites in the Courthouse Square area for employment-oriented development to ensure that its role as a regional employment hub is maintained.

**LU-3.5** Encourage the integration of commercial tenant spaces designed to accommodate small businesses within new development.

**LU-3.6** Encourage the creation of visually appealing, comfortable, and memorable places with a variety of amenities and facilities throughout the Downtown area to meet the needs of residents, employees, and visitors. This may include “pop-up” businesses, cultural or artistic exhibitions, public and private events, or other temporary uses for vacant storefronts and parcels in the Downtown Station Area.

**LU-3.7** Establish a Downtown Facade Improvement Basics (D-FIB) program that supports efforts to create attractive facades on existing buildings.

*(See also policies, standards, and guidelines in Chapter 4, Urban Design and Civic Spaces.)*

**LU-3.8** Partner with the area Chamber of Commerce, the Museum of Sonoma County, Sonoma County Library, Downtown businesses, cultural organizations, and arts groups to develop and expand the program of activities and events that activate public spaces Downtown and attract residents and visitors alike. Explore public/private partnerships that could support additional programming. Encourage evening and weekend activities that residents of Santa Rosa and the wider region, including families, students, and seniors, as well as lunchtime events for Downtown Station Area employees and visitors.

**LU-3.9** Support and partner with local businesses on efforts to attract residents and visitors through marketing campaigns that highlight events, programming, and destinations and promote use of transit to access to Downtown Santa Rosa. In particular, events should showcase Downtown merchants, music, and food.

**LU-3.10** Ensure that Downtown zoning allows for home-based businesses in all areas.

**LU-3.11** Expand the availability of infrastructure and services needed to support employment growth, including high-speed broadband communications, fiber and wireless infrastructure, enhanced transit opportunities, and supportive services.

*(See also Chapter 5, Public Services and Sustainability Goal PSS-3 and associated policies regarding utility and telecommunications infrastructure in the Downtown Station Area.)*
HOUSING FOR ALL

HOUSING PRODUCTION

One of the DSASP’s principal objectives is to facilitate housing development, a critical factor in addressing the ongoing housing crisis in Santa Rosa made worse by the devastating Tubbs and Nuns Fires, which resulted in the loss of approximately five percent of the Santa Rosa’s housing stock. In 2019, the Downtown Station Area had approximately 2,445 homes, 65 percent of which are multi-family units. In general, these multifamily units tend to be duplexes, triplexes, or fourplexes, rather than large complexes of five or more units: of the approximately 300 multi-family structures in the Downtown Station Area, 47 percent are two-unit structures, and approximately a third are three or four-unit structures. Construction of new, larger multifamily developments has been limited, which can be largely attributed to market uncertainty, a lack of demonstrated project viability and financing, a perceived lack of policy and process commitment to support development, and high construction costs. Because the Downtown Station Area is capable of accommodating more housing opportunities, the City has taken significant action to address these concerns and promote housing development. This includes development and implementation policies and programs that streamline processes and incentivize higher-density housing in the Downtown Station Area with fee reductions and bonuses.

Building on these efforts, the DSASP seeks to remove regulatory hurdles and support the feasibility of higher-density housing by eliminating residential density limits for key change areas Downtown, establishing instead a map-based system of maximum base Floor Area Ratios (FARs). This approach provides flexibility for developers to build in line with market demand and can potentially also incentivize the construction of smaller, more naturally affordable units. The DSASP also eliminates parking minimums, leaving the number of spaces to be governed by market demand and the requirements of financial lenders. This represents a significant potential cost saving for developers and for tenants and homeowners, as parking costs are usually factored into sales prices or rents. In addition to these strategies, the DSASP supports partnerships with affordable housing developers, major employers, and public agencies to facilitate the development of a variety of housing types.

AFFORDABILITY AND ANTI-DISPLACEMENT

Downtown vitality is inextricably linked to its ability to support diversity. The most vibrant places have a mix of housing and employment types, as well as residents from a variety of demographic, socioeconomic, and cultural backgrounds. Diverse environments promote social and economic inclusion at the neighborhood level and help overcome the kind of mismatch in location of jobs and housing that requires people to commute long distances to work.

Approximately 75 percent of the planning area’s housing units are renter-occupied, a greater share than in the city (53 percent). Housing markets, especially rental housing, are heavily influenced by household incomes, particularly the wages and salaries of the working population. In 2017, the median income of Downtown Station Area residents was approximately six percent lower than the City as a whole. Fifteen percent of Downtown Station Area households had incomes below the poverty line, compared with 12 percent of households citywide. Approximately 33 percent of owners and 44 percent of renters in the Downtown Station Area spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing costs, generally regarded as the benchmark for overburdensome housing costs.
While rent increases in the city and Downtown Station Area have been comparable, home ownership has declined in the planning area by nine percent from 2000 to 2017, despite rising homeownership in the city. To support the current and future residents’ housing needs, the DSASP promotes creation of a mix of housing unit types, sizes, and price points, such as smaller units that are affordable by design, live/work units for creatives and home-based business operators, and larger units for families.

As with any plan, new development without protections and proactive strategies can have direct and indirect consequences, such as gentrification and displacement. The Downtown Station Area’s lower median incomes make it difficult for developers to charge rents or sales prices that people can afford while simultaneously recouping their costs. In creating an environment that is attractive to higher-wage industries and employees to stimulate housing production, there is potential for lower-income residents to be displaced as higher-income residents move in. Long-time residents who are able to stay in newly gentrified areas may feel a reduced sense of belonging or loss of culture as existing neighborhood amenities and services are replaced to serve higher-income demographics. To ensure everyone can enjoy the new amenities that will be created Downtown, enhance quality of life for all, and preserve local culture, the DSASP includes policies to increase availability of affordable housing, monitor indicators that may signal displacement is occurring, and work directly with affected communities to identify gentrification and displacement issues and strategies to address them.

To address the needs of Santa Rosa’s unhoused residents, the DSASP envisions collaboration between the City and County to prioritize development of permanent supportive housing and coordination with a range of local stakeholders to identify and address housing issues on an ongoing basis.

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**GENTRIFICATION AND DISPLACEMENT**

**Gentrification** is the process of neighborhood economic and demographic change in an existing area, which often results from real estate investment and increased demand from higher-income residents.

While increased investment in an area can be positive, gentrification is often associated with displacement, which means that long-term residents are not able to stay to benefit from new investments in housing, transit infrastructure, and other quality of life improvements.

Many neighborhoods vulnerable to the negative effects of gentrification are influenced by past policy and investment patterns that benefited some racial groups and classes over others, such as redlining, urban renewal, and subprime lending.

Other populations at risk of gentrification and displacement’s negative effects include households with low incomes; renters, especially those paying 30 percent or more of their income; elderly households; people with language barriers; residents of affordable housing developments at risk of deed-restriction expiration; people with low levels of formal education; and undocumented people.
GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL LU-4: A diverse range of housing opportunities suitable for people of all incomes, abilities, and stages of life.

POLICIES

LU-4.1 Increase the supply of residential units Downtown and expand the range of housing opportunities available.

LU-4.2 Partner with major employers and facilitate the development of employee and/or workforce housing in the Downtown Station Area.

LU-4.3 Encourage a mix of for sale and rental housing units in all Downtown areas.

LU-4.4 Promote the use of innovative building methods and materials and the development of alternative housing types, including co-housing, accessory dwelling units, tiny homes, single-room occupancy units, and smaller/micro units that are affordable by design.

LU-4.5 Facilitate construction of larger units (with two or more bedrooms) suitable for families with children.

LU-4.6 Continue to partner with Sonoma County and other public agencies to attract developers, blend private financing and public funds, and leverage State and federal grants to facilitate the creation of housing.

LU-4.7 Encourage multi-family developments and live-work units in Maker Mixed Use areas to provide housing options that are affordable for artists, creative entrepreneurs, emerging industries, and home-based business operators.

LU-4.8 Preserve and expand affordable housing Downtown with the following actions:

- Provide funds to renovate older buildings in exchange for rent restrictions; and
- Encourage the integration of deed-restricted affordable units within housing developments; and
- Discourage the conversion of older rental apartments to condominiums.

LU-4.9 Monitor indicators such as change in share of low-income households, average rent and sales price, supply of affordable units, and evictions and foreclosures within the Downtown Station Area. Use this data to identify at risk neighborhoods and target programs and resources.

LU-4.10 Consider creation of a forum for ongoing dialogue on local housing issues and strategies to address them. Include representatives of public agencies, affordable and for profit housing developers, housing advocacy groups, and other community organizations.

LU-4.11 Continue to engage the community in developing new and refining existing affordable housing and anti-displacement strategies.

LU-4.12 Facilitate opportunities to incorporate innovative design and program features into affordable housing developments, such as on-site health and human services, community gardens, car-sharing, and bike facilities. Support the development of projects that serve homeless and special needs populations.

LU-4.13 Continue to partner with County agencies, social service providers community organizations, and others to maintain existing emergency shelters and provide additional shelter capacity both in the Downtown Station Area and Citywide.
MOBILITY

The Downtown Station Area features a walkable street grid, a creekside trail system, and a growing network of bicycle routes, as well as excellent access to the regional transportation system. Service to the Downtown Santa Rosa Station on the Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) line began in 2017 and Santa Rosa CityBus has begun high-frequency service in several key routes that start and end downtown, increasing the range of options available for getting around. As the heart of Santa Rosa grows in the coming years, more and more trips will begin and end downtown. An integrated network of complete streets will provide a range of safe, convenient, and enjoyable options for getting from place to place.

This chapter articulates a strategy to improve connections to and within downtown, with an emphasis on improvements that support other choices beyond the car. It presents a range of transportation improvements and programs to support downtown development and make it safe, easy, and convenient to get to and through the Downtown Station Area.
ROADWAY NETWORK

The Downtown roadway network is based on the General Plan’s roadway classifications, which includes highways, regional streets (boulevards/parkways), transitional streets (avenues/main streets), and local streets as shown on Map MOB-1. The primary links to the regional roadway network include the US 101 and State Route (SR) 12 freeways, with Third Street serving as the primary corridor connecting its east and west sides. College Avenue, another east-west corridor, serves as the Downtown Station Area’s northern boundary. Secondary east-west connections crossing US 101 include Ninth Street and Sixth Street. US 101 bisects downtown: to the west, a continuous north-south surface street corridor is formed by the combination of Cleveland Avenue, Wilson Street, Railroad Street, and Olive Street. To the east of US 101 is a “grid” network of streets, with B Street serving as the primary north-south corridor through the core, and E Street the primary corridor for the eastern portion. Other major north-south connections to other parts of the city include Mendocino Avenue, which extends northward from downtown, and Santa Rosa Avenue which extends southward.

PERFORMANCE METRICS

Within Downtown, there are two performance metrics for traffic movement: Level of Service (LOS) and Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). Level of Service (LOS) measures the relative ease or difficulty of traffic movement at designated points along a roadway using letter-based categories ranging from LOS A to LOS F, with LOS A representing the best conditions with minimal delays, and LOS F representing the most traffic congestion. VMT is a metric that represents the total number of miles driven per day by persons traveling to and from a defined area. From an environmental perspective, development that generates less per capita VMT reflects less auto usage, and correspondingly, lower fossil fuel consumption and production of greenhouse gas emissions. Areas with a diversity of land uses, densities, walking and bicycling networks, and proximity to transit generate less VMT than separated land uses seen in low-density, suburban residential developments, commercial districts, or isolated suburban office complexes.

The Santa Rosa General Plan states that the City will maintain a Level of Service (LOS) D or better along all major corridors but exempts roadway segments within the Downtown area from meeting level of service standards. Two exceptions are College Avenue and Dutton Avenue, which run along the boundary of the planning area rather than being fully contained within the area.
Figure MOB-1: Roadway Classifications

- Highway
- Regional/Arterial Street
- Transitional/Collector Street
- Local Street
- Private Road
- Undercrossing
- SMART Rail

Source: City of Santa Rosa, 2018; Dyett & Bhatia, 2020
While the LOS metric will be retained for operational purposes, it cannot be used to assess transportation-related environmental impacts in these areas, as updates to State law require that jurisdictions switch to a VMT metric in 2020.

RECENT STREET NETWORK CHANGES

The DSASP envisions the transformation of existing fragmented networks into complete and connected neighborhood villages. New street types have been identified to create a finer grained street network while still fitting within the City’s current street classification system. Reconfiguring certain roadways and improving intersections will enhance connectivity and create infrastructure that maximizes multi-modal transportation options. The cost of these improvements can be funded as development occurs through the City’s capital facilities fee (CFF). Roadway additions and improvements are shown on Map MOB-2 and described in the table below.

GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL MOB-1: A well-connected street grid that optimizes multi-modal access, connectivity, and safety for all users.

POLICIES

MOB-1.1 Maintain a roadway classification system as illustrated in Figure MOB-1, with the following segments as Boulevards designed to accommodate transit, bicycles, and pedestrian facilities together with vehicle traffic:

- Santa Rosa Avenue from Sonoma Avenue to South A Street
- E Street from Sonoma Avenue to College Avenue

MOB-1.2 Implement the program of circulation improvements shown in Table MOB-1 to optimize circulation, improve multi-modal connectivity, and enhance roadway safety.

MOB-1.3 In developing the design for the reconfiguration of Mendocino Avenue, assess the feasibility of angled parking in conjunction with sidewalk widening.

MOB-1.4 Conduct an engineering study to determine the appropriate configuration of the Roberts Avenue extension as a local street.

MOB-1.5 Continue to exempt the Downtown Station Area from the citywide level of service (LOS) standard established in the General Plan for the purpose of roadway operations planning.

MOB-1.6 Use technology to optimize transportation system operations, potentially including adaptive signal operations or transit signal priority software.

MOB-1.7 Incorporate traffic calming measures such as bulbouts where feasible at intersections to slow vehicle speeds and increase the visibility of pedestrian crossings.

MOB-1.8 Prohibit cul-de-sacs and interruptions of the street grid in order to promote connectivity.

MOB-1.9 Design the street network to minimize cut-through vehicle traffic in residential areas.

MOB-1.10 Coordinate with Caltrans to identify improvements needed to maintain adequate operations at the US 101/SR 12 interchange, including adjacent on-ramps from City streets.
### Table MOB-1: Roadway Improvements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roadway Network Improvement</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>New Roadways</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roberts Avenue Extension</td>
<td>Reconnect Roberts Avenue as a local street between Third Street and Sebastopol Road via the existing SR 12 freeway overpass that crosses the SMART rail line and multi-use path. The street is also identified in the 2007 Specific Plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donahue Extension</td>
<td>Extend Donahue Street north approximately one block from Ninth Street to Maxwell Court as a local street. The street is also identified in the 2007 Specific Plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMART Extension- North South</td>
<td>Connect Third and Sixth streets via a new local street through the parcel to the west of the downtown SMART Station, to be constructed as part of that site’s development. Install a traffic signal at Third Street and interconnected with the adjacent SMART crossing to maintain safe operation. The street and signal are also identified in the 2007 Specific Plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Roadway Reconfiguration</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E Street</td>
<td>Change the existing two travel lanes in each direction to one travel lane in each direction with a center turn lane and bike lanes between College Avenue and Sonoma Avenue. E Street would maintain its arterial/collector classification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mendocino Avenue</td>
<td>Change the existing dual northbound lanes and single southbound lane to single lanes in each direction with a center turn lane between Fourth Street and Tenth Street.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa Rosa Avenue</td>
<td>Change the existing two travel lanes in each direction to one lane in each direction plus a center turn lane and bike lanes between Sonoma Avenue and Maple Avenue and would remain an arterial/collector street. Create northbound merge transitions between Maple Avenue and Oak Street, and southbound merge transitions between Sonoma Avenue and Charles Street. Modify the block of Santa Rosa Avenue to the north of Sonoma Avenue to include a single northbound lane in order to create sufficient space to stripe bike lanes where they do not currently exist. Coordinate traffic signals on the corridor between the Transit Mall (Second Street) and Petaluma Hill Road.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Modified Intersections</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Avenue/ Dutton Avenue</td>
<td>Add a new northbound right-turn lane, and widen the southbound approach to provide dual left-turn lanes. The northbound right-turn lane is identified in the 2007 Specific Plan, while the dual southbound left-turn lanes are new to the proposed Plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Avenue/ Cleveland Avenue</td>
<td>Add a new northbound right-turn lane.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutton Avenue/ SR 12 West Ramps</td>
<td>Add a second left-turn lane with 300 feet of storage on the westbound off-ramp. The resulting configuration would include a left-turn lane, left-through lane, and right-turn lane.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dutton Avenue/ Sebastopol Road</td>
<td>Reconfigure eastbound Sebastopol Road to include dual left-turn lanes at the intersection. The dual eastbound left-turn lanes are also identified in the 2007 Specific Plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Street/ B Street</td>
<td>Add a new southbound right-turn lane.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Roundabouts</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sixth Street/ A Street</td>
<td>Install roundabout for traffic calming.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seventh Street/ A Street</td>
<td>Install roundabout for traffic calming.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: City of Santa Rosa, 2020; W-Trans, 2020; Dyett & Bhatia, 2020.*
Figure MOB-2: Roadway Improvements

**Proposed Improvements**
- **Intersection Improvements**
- **Roundabout**
- **New Street**
- **Potential Opportunity to Relocate Lanes**
- **Undercrossing**
- **SMART Rail**

*Source: MTC, 2019; City of Santa Rosa, 2018; Dyett & Bhatia, 2020*
BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN NETWORK

Whether riding a bike on the Prince Memorial Greenway, taking a stroll to Old Courthouse Square, or scootering to the SMART Station, Downtown Santa Rosa offers a comprehensive network of trails, bikeways, and pedestrian-friendly streets, shown on Map MOB-3. As more housing, jobs, and desirable downtown amenities are added, improvements that enhance the existing network and make it comfortable, easy, and fun to get around will help to increase the share of people who choose to use modes other than a car.

EXISTING BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN NETWORK

Santa Rosa is currently recognized as a Bronze-level Bicycle Friendly Community by the League of American Bicyclists. The City’s current bicycle network has approximately 115 miles of bikeways and has grown by 40 percent since the last Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Update in 2010. Downtown’s bicycle infrastructure also includes short-term bicycle parking throughout downtown on sidewalks, plazas, and in parking garages. Significant investments and commitments to future improvements will continue to enhance the pedestrian experience in Santa Rosa, including traffic signal improvements, sidewalk installations, pedestrian signal installations, traffic calming, and bikeway improvements. Additionally, Santa Rosa has significant non-infrastructure assets that support walking and bicycling as transportation – relatively flat topography, a pleasant, sunny climate, a strong culture of biking and walking for recreational trips, and a vibrant core that is a short and easy walk or bike ride away for many residents.

Several locations downtown have some of the highest rates of bicycling and walking activity, including Sonoma Avenue and Brookwood Avenue; and Santa Rosa Avenue and Second Avenue. Barriers to active transportation include the city’s highway system, which divides Downtown into four quadrants and creates challenges for way-finding, crossing, and bicyclist/pedestrian comfort. Infrastructure improvements to comfort, attractiveness, and connectivity will further enhance Downtown’s bicycle and pedestrian network.

TRAIL CONNECTIVITY

Downtown also includes significant off-street infrastructure connecting to a network of beautiful natural spaces. The creekside trail system, which includes the Prince Memorial Greenway and the Joe Rodota Trail, provides through-
Figure MOB-3: Creeks, Trails and Bikeways

Existing Bike and Pedestrian Network
- Class I Shared Use Path*
- Class II Bicycle Lane
- Class III Bicycle Route

Proposed Bike and Pedestrian Network
- Class I Shared Use Path
- Class II Bicycle Lane
- Class III Bicycle Route
- Buffered/Upgraded Lanes/Boulevard
- Trail Access Point
- Trail Bridge
- SMART Train
- Planning Area
- Park/Open Space

*Greenway path downstream of Pierson Street is gravel.

Potential Daylight Santa Rosa and Matanzas creeks
ways for both bicycle and pedestrians in a natural setting. The Prince Memorial Greenway, a major component of the city’s efforts to clean up and restore Santa Rosa Creek, originates in Downtown and runs along the creek on the north side of SR 12. The Joe Rodota Trail starts from its connection to the Prince Memorial Greenway on the north side of Santa Rosa Creek just west of Highway 101, passes under SR 12 alongside the SMART right-of-way, and then runs west adjacent to the south side of SR 12. Additionally, the SMART Trail runs parallel to the SMART Station tracks from the North Santa Rosa station to West Sixth Street. Gaps in the trail system prevent a continuous network, especially between the SMART Trail and Joe Rodota Trail. While the trail along Santa Rosa Creek provides a functional east-west connection, it would benefit from more trail access points and improved wayfinding on surface streets. Additionally, existing development tends to face away from the creek or is fenced off, which can make the trail feel uncomfortable or hard to access. Opportunity also exists to “daylight” the creeks that flow under the City Hall complex as that site is developed. An extension of the greenway as redevelopment takes place would provide a continuous path from Prince Memorial Gateway Park eastward to Brookwood Avenue.

EAST-WEST CONNECTIONS

Several elements of the existing development pattern network present barriers to pedestrian and bicycle access. These include US 101 and Santa Rosa Plaza Mall, which divide the eastern and western portions of downtown and disconnect Fourth Street. These barriers require pedestrians to travel via under- and over-passes in some locations and make for routes that are circuitous and unintuitive. Stronger east-west connections, including Santa Rosa’s creekside trails, will help to improve linkages between two of the Downtown Station Area’s main activity centers, Old Courthouse Square and Railroad Square and more broadly between the eastern and western boundaries of the Downtown Station Area.

BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN IMPROVEMENTS

The DSASP builds on the existing Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan and its stated vision: “Santa Rosa is a community where walking and bicycling are comfortable, convenient, and common for people of all ages and abilities.” The Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan provides recommendations for sidewalk extensions, improved crossings, and pathways on corridors likely to serve high volumes, as well as new bicycle facilities throughout the down-town street grid.
The Creek Master Plan includes objectives related to provision of access to creekside trails, creek restoration projects at publicly owned parcels, and implementing policies for development adjacent to waterways that integrates the creek into new and re-developed neighborhoods.

**Pedestrian Improvements**

Optimized signal timing, crosswalk markings and other improvements for better pedestrian connectivity and comfort will occur at several intersections shown on Figure MOB-4, including those recommended in the 2018 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. Specific facility designs for these locations may include pedestrian-priority signals, scramble intersections or other interventions to be developed by the City on a case-by-case basis due to the highly varied context at each intersection or midblock crossing location. Additionally, streetscape enhancements discussed in Chapter 4 Urban Design and Civic Spaces, will occur in the Core and Station Areas. Crosswalk striping, parklets, wayfinding, art or lighting at the locations shown in MOB-5 will enhance the pedestrian experience and improve walkability.
Creek Oriented Development Improvements

The Citywide Creek Master Plan envisions future redevelopment of the City Hall complex into a mixed-use project with high-density housing and community-oriented uses. This redevelopment would present the opportunity to daylight Santa Rosa and Matanza Creeks that run under the site, and bicycle and pedestrian improvements could be added alongside the creeks. Standards and guidelines for new development along the creeks in the Downtown Station Area will ensure “eyes on the creek” as redevelopment occurs and a level of comfort for pedestrians and bicyclists during daytime and evening hours. Improvements to trail connections, such as between Joe Rodota Trail, the SMART Trail, and new development at the SMART site, enhance navigability of the overall system.

East-West Connectivity Improvements

Improvements to east-west connectivity seek to connect Courthouse Square and Railroad Square through enhanced bicycle and pedestrian routes shown in Figure MOB-4. Components include:

- Underpasses at Third, Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, and Olive streets activated with lighting, public art, wayfinding, and space for pop up uses like retail, food, live performances, recreation activities, and other events to strengthen the connection to/from the core and Railroad Square. Improved bicycle and pedestrian connection under US 101 at Sixth Street that strengthens the link between the Railroad Square Sub-Area to the Courthouse Square Sub-Area. These improvements may also connect and improve navigation to downtown’s cultural, historical, and recreational assets. Examples include unique, thematic, or visually consistent signage or art, or informational kiosks.

- A bicycle and pedestrian connection along Fourth Street through the Santa Rosa Plaza Mall to strengthen and facilitate connectivity between Courthouse and Railroad Squares. This will be achieved by exploring different programs with property owners to enhance the existing connection through the Mall, such as extending hours of operation, adding high-visibility wayfinding signage, and locating certain shops to activate the connection.

- Downtown Loop. A strengthened transit connection along Third Street will link Court-house Square and the Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) station and the regional Joe Rodota Trail, whether by way of a trackless trolley, enhanced CityBus service, or on-demand electric vehicle (see Map MOB-5).
Figure MOB-4: Planned Pedestrian Improvements

- Pedestrian Improvements
- New Bike/Pedestrian Connection
- Bike/Pedestrian Improvement
- Streetscape Enhancement (striping, parklets, wayfinding, art, lighting)
- Existing Trail

Undercrossing

SMART Rail

Source: City of Santa Rosa, 2018; Dyett & Bhatia, 2020
GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL MOB-2: A comfortable, convenient bicycle and pedestrian network that is a viable, attractive alternative to the automobile.

POLICIES

MOB-2.1 Establish bicycle lanes and pedestrian routes that connect key destinations by implementing the 2018 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.

MOB-2.2 Connect southbound bicycle infrastructure on B Street between First and Fourth streets with a class II bicycle lane.

MOB-2.3 Collaborate with SCTA on implementation of a bike share program to provide on-demand access to a network of rentable bicycles.

MOB-2.4 Work with SMART and the Sonoma County Regional Parks Department to establish an off-street trail connection between Santa Rosa Creek and West Sixth Street:

- Connect the junction of the Joe Rodota Trail and SMART trail near the Prince Memorial Greenway to West Third Street.
- Locate the West Third Street trail crossing at the future intersection serving the SMART property.
- Establish a bicycle and pedestrian connection between West Third Street and West Sixth Street through the SMART property.

MOB-2.5 Design pedestrian and bicycle trails to be highly visible and accessible from creek-adjacent development:

- Allow and encourage property owners to provide direct access to trails that abut their properties through the installation of access gates where fencing currently exists.
- Any fencing along trails should be as low and visually permeable as possible, such as three-foot high split rail fencing.

MOB-2.6 Require new development adjacent to the creeks to employ Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles and adhere to “eyes on the creek” development standards and design guidelines.

MOB-2.7 Activate bicycle and pedestrian connections under US 101 and SR 12 with enhanced lighting, public art, and wayfinding signage to improve visual quality and perception of safety.

MOB-2.8 Provide bicycle parking as a street amenity throughout the Downtown Station Area and ensure adequate short- and long-term bicycle parking at the Downtown SMART Station and Transit Center.

MOB-2.9 Within the Core and Station Areas, visually highlight crosswalks and heighten pedestrian comfort with curb bulb-outs, changes in paving material or striping, signage, and/or signalization.

MOB-2.10 Close gaps in the sidewalk network and ensure continuous pedestrian access throughout the Downtown Station Area. Currently, short gaps exist along Brookwood and West Third Street, and utility infrastructure on College poses a barrier to pedestrian travel.

MOB-2.11 Conduct a study to assess the feasibility of auto-free corridor within the Downtown Station Area. The study should identify candidate corridors and pilot projects, including temporary street closures.

MOB-2.12 Promote pedestrian and bicycle connections to the Prince Memorial Greenway and Santa Rosa Creek Greenway to provide an east-west connection across the planning area.

MOB-2.13 Identify maintenance needs and funding mechanisms for the Prince Memorial Greenway to improve and maintain the corridor to accommodate a variety of passive and active uses.
GOAL MOB-3: Strengthened east-west connections and links between Old Courthouse Square and Railroad Square.

POLICIES

MOB-3.1 Reconnect Fourth Street to provide bicycle and pedestrian access through the Santa Rosa Plaza Mall. Work with property owners to explore options/programmatic solutions for reconnection that could involve clear and coherent wayfinding and/or extended hours of operation. Solutions should also consider the appropriate tenant mix and surface materials to use along the connection.

MOB-3.2 Work with Caltrans to provide space for and permit pop-up retail, food, and performances in the underpasses at Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Streets.

MOB-3.3 In the event of redevelopment of 10,000 square feet or more at the Santa Rosa Plaza Mall, require new development to provide safe, convenient connections to the pedestrian and bicycle network.

MOB-3.4 Develop and implement a wayfinding strategy to visually and thematically connect key destinations within the Core and Station areas. The strategy should consider elements such as branding, signage, mapping, informational kiosks, and thematic walking tours.

TRANSIT NETWORK

The Downtown Station Area is served by a variety of transit operators providing connections to and from local routes and regional destinations. Employment is densely concentrated in Courthouse Square area, making it a major commute destination and transit hub for Sonoma County.

EXISTING NETWORK

Bus Transit

The Santa Rosa Transit is the busiest transit hub in the North Bay, with over 500 buses entering and exiting each weekday. Transit operators, including Santa Rosa CityBus, Sonoma County Transit, Golden Gate Transit, Mendocino Transit, and Greyhound, provide affordable, accessible and environmentally-friendly connections to jobs, education, shopping and recreation for the region. In addition, the city contracts for paratransit services to provide curb-to-curb transportation for eligible elderly and disabled persons who cannot use fixed route bus services.

CityBus, a division of the City of Santa Rosa’s Transportation and Public Works Department, provides the most rides for local fixed-route bus service and demand-responsive paratransit service among all Sonoma County transit services. CityBus ridership is one of the top ten largest among transit providers in the Bay Area. Nearly all CityBus routes stop at the main Transit Mall, radiating out towards the city’s neighborhoods and residential areas. CityBus is supported by route planning technologies and real-time bus arrival information.

Between March 2015 and August 2016, the City of Santa Rosa completed Reimagining City-Bus, a phased, comprehensive re-design of the CityBus system. Reimagining CityBus details the design approach and guidelines that will drive route changes into the future, including route types, designations and service design principles, spacing between routes and final connectivity. With the implementation of Reimagining Phase I, CityBus started providing 15-minute headways on Mendocino Avenue, Sebastopol Road, and Santa Rosa Avenue. Existing and planned high-frequency routes downtown are shown on MOB-5. Longer-term improvements, part of Phase II, include increasing headway to ten minutes on Mendocino Avenue, and increased headways to 15 minutes further south to Todd Street via Santa Rosa Avenue, east to Mission via Sonoma Avenue and Montgomery Drive, and along the current CityBus Route 10 between the Transit Mall and the Coddingtown Transit Hub. In the future, as population and employment density increase in the planning area, the capacity to support higher-frequency transit will continue to grow.

SMART Station

The SMART train line was completed in 2017 and provides direct connections between North Santa Rosa to its terminus at Larkspur, with planned extensions
To Windsor, Healdsburg, and Cloverdale. SMART operates with 30-minute headways during weekday a.m. and p.m. peak hours, and one-hour headways on weekends. There are two stations within the City limits: The North Station, outside of the Downtown Station Area, and the Downtown Station in Railroad Square. According to a 2018 ridership survey, the Downtown Station ranks in the top three destinations along the SMART corridor, with 13 percent of riders alighting on an average day. That same year, 11 percent of SMART riders boarded at the Downtown Santa Rosa station on weekends and weekdays.

CityBus service connects the SMART Station to Courthouse Square and the Transit Mall on weekdays, with 10 buses an hour between 6am and 8pm. Currently, CityBus routes are accessible at three bus stops, all accessible via a pedestrian path next to the tracks. Despite a ten minute walking distance between the Downtown Santa Rosa and the SMART Station, the lack of wayfinding, discordant development pattern, and unfriendly crossing points constrain a pleasant pedestrian and bicycling experience.

**TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS**

As more people begin to live, work, or commute from downtown, transit can play an increasingly important role in the efficient movement of people to and through the Downtown Station Area. Building on the Reimagining CityBus process, the DSASP seeks to increase future transit ridership by increasing the viability of providing expansions to transit services (including frequencies), locating the highest intensity development near key transit routes, and creating a ridership basis that supports bidirectional service every 15 minutes. Technology such as transit signal priority (TSP) software that optimizes signals for transit vehicles to ensure schedule adherence along the transit corridors is critical for reliable service and efficient traffic flow, which in support increase ridership.

As development and redevelopment increases the number of residents and employees downtown, the feasibility of establishing a fare-free zone within the Downtown Station Area should be explored as a way to further encourage transit ridership and manage mobility effectively. In the long term, the DSASP envisions a high-frequency “people mover” along Third Street to link Courthouse Square and the SMART Station. Planned high-frequency CityBus routes and a conceptual loop for this downtown “people mover” are shown in MOB-5.
Improving intermodal and multimodal connections will make transit a more convenient choice. The DSASP supports development of a transfer facility that is visibly and directly connected to SMART Station. This transfer facility will emphasize pedestrian and bicycle mobility improvements, enhanced streetscapes along transit corridors, and safe, easy connections to other transit options such as buses, taxis, and ride hailing services. More detail on the transfer facility and SMART Station design is included in Chapter 4: Urban Design and Civic Spaces.

**GOALS AND POLICIES**

**GOAL MOB-4:** Frequent, reliable and safe transit service within the Downtown Station Area and to points beyond.

**POLICIES**

**MOB-4.1** Focus the highest intensity development within a 1/4-mile of high frequency transit, including the Downtown SMART station, the Transit Center, and corridors with bus headways of 15-minutes or less.

**MOB-4.2** Collaborate with transit agencies including SMART, Sonoma County Transit, Golden Gate Transit and Mendocino Transit, and Greyhound, on public programs and campaigns to increase transit use for work, shopping, entertainment, and tourism-related trips to and from the Downtown Station Area throughout the week and for special events.

**MOB-4.3** Employ technology to provide real-time system updates that enhance transit predictability and reliability for users. Technological solutions could include a website; a mobile app; digital displays at transit stations and stops; posted and published schedules.

**MOB-4.4** Monitor downtown development trends and implement the following transit improvements as warranted:

- Downtown Loop service, connecting the Transit Mall and SMART Station;
- Rapid Bus, a specialized service for the busiest segments of high-demand corridors that features direct route alignments and limited stops; and
- Expanded paratransit service.

**MOB-4.5** Evaluate the feasibility of establishing a fare-free zone within the Downtown Station Area to incentivize the use of transit.

**MOB-4.6** Pursue electrification of CityBus operations where financially and operationally feasible, including installing transit charging stations at the Transit Mall.

**MOB-4.7** Enhance streetscapes within transit corridors shown on Figure MOB-4 to increase attractiveness for users and promote the use of transit, walking, bicycling, and shared mobility.

**MOB-4.8** Enhance streetscapes within transit corridors shown on Figure MOB-4 to increase attractiveness for users and promote the use of transit, walking, bicycling, and shared mobility.

**MOB-4.9** Study the feasibility of expanding the Transit Mall to accommodate enhanced service, safety, and comfort.

**MOB-4.10** Prioritize pedestrian safety when designing roadways and intersections serving the SMART station and Transit Center.

**MOB-4.11** Ensure sufficient amenities are located at the Downtown SMART Station, Transit Center, and high-frequency bus stops to make the rider experience comfortable and convenient. Amenities may include: seating, lighting, trash receptacles, signage, sheltered waiting areas, public art, clean restrooms, and memorable design features.

**MOB-4.12** Coordinate with SMART to keep the Downtown station vicinity safe, clean, and secure through:

- Regular maintenance and cleaning of the station and nearby public areas.
- Security measures, such as security patrols and/or surveillance cameras in the station and other nearby public areas.
Figure MOB-5: Future High-Frequency Transit Network

- **Downtown Loop**: Existing Trail, Undercrossing, SMART Rail
- **Route 10**: Actual route to be determined.
- **Route 3**: New connection through Santa Rosa Plaza could be through extended hours of operation.

Source: City of Santa Rosa, 2018; Dyett & Bhatia, 2020
TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT (TDM)

In addition to managing CityBus and Santa Rosa Paratransit, the City of Santa Rosa’s Transit Division provides transportation demand management services to employers and the community. Transportation Demand Management (TDM) refers to a set of strategies that result in increased efficiency in a transportation system by changing travel behavior. The implementation of appropriate TDM programs can encourage the use of alternatives to the single-occupancy vehicles as a user’s primary mode, especially for commuting, and transition users into other transportation modes including transit, bicycling, carpooling, and walking.

Santa Rosa’s TDM program, known as the “Free Ride Trip Reduction Incentive Program,” is a combination of services, subsidies, and actions to improve the capacity of existing transportation services and infrastructure. Technical assistance, program support materials, and incentives are offered to employers in Santa Rosa. Bus pass subsidies are also offered through this program. Funding for the TDM program comes partially from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) Transportation Fund for Clean Air. Other County-wide TDM strategies include subsidies, marketing and education, ridesharing programs, and State, and Regional, and Local TDM Participation.

TDM IMPROVEMENTS

The Santa Rosa City Code establishes TDM requirements for employers with over 100 employees, and voluntary programs for employers with less than 100 employees. In the near-term, the existing suite of TDM strategies can be expanded to increase incentives for Downtown employees to use non-auto commute modes, requiring developers to incorporate TDM strategies into their projects to the extent feasible, and encouraging large employers to provide on-site childcare. Exploration of Mobility As a Service (MaaS), a system enabled by combining transportation services from public and private transportation providers through a unified gateway, can also help to integrate different transportation options and facilitate coordinating trip and route planning, mode selection, and payment.

Over the longer term, a comprehensive program of TDM strategies can be developed and administrated in partnership with the City’s Parking Division, downtown businesses, developers, and agencies through a Transportation Management Association (TMA), an independent non-profit organization that works collaboratively with the City and the business community that is responsible for coordinating TDM programs. TMAs are usually more cost effective than programs managed by individual businesses because they are controlled by members and allow small employers to provide commute trip reduction services comparable to those offered by large companies, such as commuter financial incentives, rideshare matching, or Guaranteed Ride Home programs. One successful example of a TMA is Stanford University, whose wide range of TDM program elements have affected a shift in commuter behavior that has resulted in a drop in the percentage of employees commuting in single-occupant vehicles from 72 percent in 2002 to 52 percent in 2007. TDM components include a transit system (including shuttles), local and regional transit subsidies, incentive programs, a structured permit fee based on proximity to campus, and other programs.

Emphasizing a robust and well-designed multimodal infrastructure supported by TDM incentives within the Downtown Station Area will activate street level vibrancy and walkability of the Downtown so that those who drive downtown have other transportation options once they arrive.

Transportation Demand Management strategies can reduce single-vehicle trips.
GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL MOB-5: Reduced reliance on single-occupant vehicles and an increased share of trips made by alternate modes.

POLICIES

MOB-5.1 Expand the Free Ride Trip Reduction Incentive Program to offer additional incentives for employees in the Downtown Station Area who walk, ride their bike, carpool, or take transit to work. Additional incentives could include parking cash-out; unlimited transit passes for districts, employers, or residential developments; bicycle commuter tax reimbursement; carpool and vanpool ride-matching services; or reimbursement for business trips made by bicycle or transit instead of private automobile.

MOB-5.2 Require developers to incorporate Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies to reduce peak hour traffic and on-site parking demand.

MOB-5.3 Encourage large scale employers to provide on-site child-care services within the Downtown Station Area.

MOB-5.4 Establish a Transportation Management Association (TMA) in collaboration with downtown employers, developers, and property managers to reduce single occupant vehicle trips, traffic congestion, and demand for parking. The TMA’s goals should include: establish trip reduction targets and offer a range/menu of programs and services to incentivize alternatives to single occupant vehicle trips, such as car share, carpool or vanpool ride-matching services; app based shared mobility programs (bicycles, scooters); secured bicycle storage facilities; fix-it bicycle repair station(s); bicycle route mapping resources; informational campaigns using brochures, boards/kiosks, or other communication outlets; and technical support to businesses and homeowner associations in the implementation of TDM measures.

PARKING

Downtown Santa Rosa is a hub of business and culture that draws people from throughout the city and the wider region, with 89 percent of the trips staying within Sonoma County, according to the Sonoma County’s Travel Behavior Study. For most people in Sonoma County, the automobile is the primary mode of transportation, and adequate parking is important for the economic vitality of commercial districts. As residential, commercial, and civic activity intensifies downtown, demand for visitor and resident parking will increase; however, Downtown’s transit-rich location, diverse and centralized mix of uses, and pedestrian-friendly public realm mean that most trips can be accomplished on foot or bicycle.

Coupled with the arrival of SMART rail service, the emergence of ride hailing apps like Uber and Lyft, and driverless cars on the horizon, it is likely that need for parking will decrease in the future. Recognizing the valuable role of public parking supply, the DSASP articulates a parking strategy that seeks to support quality of life and business vitality, while avoiding excessive supply that discourages transit ridership and disrupts the urban fabric.

Like many US cities, in the postwar period the downtown development pattern was influenced by the dominance of the car, and today the city has an expansive supply of lots, garages, and on-street parking as a result—over 5,000 public spaces in the Old Courthouse Square and Railroad Square areas. Data collected at different intervals in recent years indicates that a significant portion of the municipal supply is underutilized even during peak periods, especially in parking garages. Despite this underutilization, on-street spaces near popular destinations tend to be the most utilized due to greater visibility and convenience, which can create the perception that there is inadequate parking supply and that the solution should be to build more parking. Improved management of existing supply can ease this mismatch, and the City has already begun to implement a citywide progressive parking management strategy aimed at optimizing use of existing supply with demand-responsive pricing, adjustments to parking meter hours and other actions, which will continue separately but in parallel with DSASP implementation. Additionally, surplus municipal parking supply represents an incentive for development, in line with the DSASP vision.

Current City regulations require that all new development provide a minimum number of spaces per new housing unit or square foot of non-residential space.
The DSASP removes minimum parking requirements for all development in the Downtown Station Area and allows for “unbundled” parking. This will allow greater flexibility by allowing development to construct an amount of parking dictated by market demand. It is anticipated that this will reduce the amount of parking constructed, reducing the development costs, and reducing the cost passed on to future residents.

Unbundled parking also incentivizes participation in the City’s shared parking program, which makes surplus spaces available to residential and commercial developments by way of shared parking agreements to avoid unnecessary construction of new parking spaces. As shown on Map MOB-6, most of the downtown core is within 1,000 feet (or a 5-minute walk) of a City-owned parking lot or garage; however, occupancy count data indicates that a significant portion of the spaces in several municipal lots and garages is available during peak midday hours. These spaces could be made available to adjacent developments through shared parking agreements, potentially offering significant savings that can assist with the financial feasibility of high-density residential projects in the core. As redevelopment of surface lots involves relatively little demolition and displaced demand for parking could be accommodated in other municipal facilities, redevelopment of one more City-owned lots through a public-private partnership is another opportunity to promote housing Downtown.

**UNBUNDLED PARKING**

For decades, zoning in cities throughout the US has required developers to sell or rent multi-family housing units together with parking spaces, even if the residents don’t need them. Unbundled parking allows developers to sell or rent parking spaces separately from housing, which can reduce the cost of housing and avoid construction of spaces that aren’t needed.
Ongoing efforts to use existing municipal parking more effectively will continue. The City is already working to optimize the use of existing spaces with demand-responsive pricing, adjustments to parking meter hours, and other actions as part of the progressive parking management strategy. Additional actions will be implemented on an incremental basis in response to evolving conditions. Technology will play a role in the strategy as well, including smart-phone apps and wayfinding sign-age that direct drivers to open parking spaces in real-time, automated, stacked parking systems, or parking sensors that improve parking efficiency downtown.

Apart from convenience, sense of security plays a role in public preferences for street parking over spaces in parking garages and lots. The City can encourage use of municipal facilities by taking action to enhance sense of safety and security with consistent lighting and the presence of staff on-site. Clean, well-maintained facilities also heighten sense of security.

In Montgomery County, Maryland, the County conducted an inventory and use analysis of existing parking at different times of day to develop a shared parking forecast. This forecast informed shared parking ratios for new development that reduced the number of required spaces.

Under a shared parking arrangement, the minimum number of parking spaces required for a 200,000 square foot mixed-use office and retail development was reduced by approximately 30 percent, a cost savings of $2.7 million.

The experience of Montgomery County indicates that shared parking standards can facilitate redevelopment and/or the construction of amenities by generating cost savings for property owners and can be an effective tool for achieving balance between parking and amenities for shoppers.
### Table MOB-2: Parking Utilization

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<th>Midday Utilization</th>
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<th>% Available&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
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Note: This data represents a single point in time, although recent counts have indicated a similar utilization pattern.

1 “Spaces available” is a measure of how many spaces could still be filled for the facility while still maintaining a 10% functional supply buffer for events and contingencies.

2 “% Available” is the supply above the 10% functional buffer that is available to be leased.

Source: Walker Consultants, Downtown Santa Rosa Current Parking Conditions, December 6, 2019
Figure MOB-6: Areas Within a 5-Minute Walk of City-Owned Parking Facilities

Source: City of Santa Rosa, 2018; Dyett & Bhatia, 2020
GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL MOB-6: A balanced supply of parking that supports both quality of life and business vitality.

POLICIES

MOB-6.1 Eliminate City-mandated minimum parking requirements for all development in the Downtown Station Area and allow unbundled parking.

MOB-6.2 Require that mixed use projects involving development of over 10,000 occupiable square feet share parking between uses in order to minimize the amount of new parking constructed.

MOB-6.3 To incentivize high-density residential and mixed use development downtown, allow projects that offer 50 or more housing units (preferably affordable) located within 1,000 feet of a municipal garage or lot with underutilized parking to fulfill parking need in full or in part through municipal shared parking agreements.

MOB-6.4 Prohibit new stand-alone surface parking lots and encourage the conversion of existing parking lots to increase housing density.

MOB-6.5 Continue to implement a progressive parking strategy in the Old Courthouse Square and Railroad Square areas in order to optimize the use of supply and minimize the need for the construction of new parking facilities. Further implementing actions could include:

• Adjusting parking meter hours and pricing for effective demand management;
• Implementing parking maximums for new development;
• Simplifying regulations so drivers clearly understand how to avoid a citation;

• Improving branding, communications, and wayfinding signage; and
• Expanding the participation of local businesses in the shared parking program through promotional/educational outreach and by identifying and addressing barriers to participation.

MOB-6.6 Implement measures to improve the sense of safety and security in municipal parking garages and lots, including consistent lighting, security presence on-site, and regular maintenance.

MOB-6.7 Apply new technologies that facilitate the efficient management of parking supply, including solutions that facilitate payments and that provide real-time information on the location of available spaces.

MOB-6.8 Allow for the development of City-owned parking lots through a public-private partnership in order to provide high-density housing.

MOB-6.9 Develop and implement a comprehensive “park-once” program that encourages visitors in the Old Courthouse Square and Railroad Square areas to park their cars in municipal facilities and then walk or use transit to get around. This may include providing free transit access within the Downtown Station Area or a reduced parking fee for participants, validated with proof of transit use.

MOB-6.10 Monitor spillover parking in established residential neighborhoods in the Downtown Station Area and expand the Residential Parking Permit Program if needed.

MOB-6.11 Allow flexible use of on-street parking spaces, curb space, and loading areas as appropriate for use of restaurants, cafes, and other businesses that activate and enhance the pedestrian realm.

MOB-6.12 Evaluate the need for additional accessible public parking spots on a biannual basis.
Cover art by Dyett & Bhatia.
URBAN DESIGN AND CIVIC SPACES

The design of streetscapes, parks, plazas, buildings, and the spaces that connect them is critical for how a place is used and experienced. Downtown Santa Rosa is laid out on a walkable street grid, featuring a network of parks and creekside trails and an array of historic buildings that reflect the city’s heritage and distinctive neighborhood identities. This chapter provides a design framework to guide new development in a way that complements these assets and provides a high-quality urban living and working environment. The policies, standards, and guidelines in this chapter seek to integrate new development into the Downtown fabric with a diversity of scales, designs, and textures and to create inviting public spaces that enrich the economic, social, and cultural life of the community.
URBAN DESIGN PRINCIPLES

The following principles form the foundation of the design framework, building upon the previous chapters and advancing the Vision for the Downtown Station Area and shall guide any future revisions to this framework. All projects implementing the DSASP are expected to achieve these principles through site planning and design.

- Create a distinctive sense of place for the Downtown Station Area that balances traditional character with a forward-looking identity, rooted in innovation, environmental sustainability, and quality of life.

- Develop walkable, interconnected, transit-oriented neighborhoods with pedestrian-scaled design features and a safe, engaging public realm.

- Take advantage of the natural amenities and scenic qualities of the Downtown Station Area with site design that incorporates natural features, protects sensitive habitats, promotes physical and visual connections to the creeks, preserves existing view corridors, and creates new vistas.

- Design accessible civic spaces and urban parks that function as focal points for the surrounding neighborhoods with public art, entertainment, and opportunities for passive and active recreation. Recognize that civic spaces that attract residents and visitors Downtown are essential for building vibrancy and sense of place.

- Require building designs to establish both variety and harmony across each single development and throughout the wider Downtown Station Area.

- Incorporate residential design principles that support the needs of families, people with low mobility, seniors, students, and first-time homebuyers.

- Ensure compatibility among existing uses, including resources with significant historic value, and new residential development with respect to design, scale, privacy, light, and noise.

- Design station and transit center facilities that convey a memorable entry into the community and blend with surrounding neighborhoods.

- Foster innovation and flexible design that can accommodate changing market forces and preferences over time.
PUBLIC REALM AND STREETSCAPES

The public realm encompasses all publicly visible and accessible areas in the Downtown Station Area. Memorable and lively downtowns have an inviting and enjoyable public realm, composed of streets that are central to sense of place, movement, and pedestrian comfort. General standards are provided for design of the pedestrian streetscape and create an approach for wayfinding and signage while specific standards establish active ground floor requirements, improving wayfinding and access, and creating new public recreational spaces.

PEDESTRIAN STREETSCAPES

Streets and right-of-way represent 28 percent of the Downtown Station Area and provide some of the greatest opportunities for placemaking. Creating a livable and active Downtown Station Area requires a pedestrian-friendly streetscape, one that encourages people to walk around and experience what the city has to offer. High quality design, neighborhood-identifying elements, and pedestrian safety and security are top priorities of a pedestrian streetscape and include features such as pedestrian-scaled street lighting, crosswalks enhanced for visibility, sidewalk furniture, wayfinding signage, and special event banners. Active ground floor frontages and public spaces are key to creating the vibrant character envisioned for the Downtown Station Area. Within the DSASP, active ground-level frontages are required areas shown in Map UDCS-1. In addition, certain public spaces, such as plazas and transit connection areas, shall be improved with amenities that facilitate an active street life and “eyes on the street.”

STANDARDS

DS-1

New development with frontage on streets in the Active Ground Floor Overlay shown on Map UDCS-1 shall provide design features that optimize the pedestrian experience. To comply with this requirement, developments with up to 90 linear feet of frontage must provide two or more of the following and developments with over 90 linear feet of frontage must provide three or more of the following:

- Awnings or overhangs over all ground floor entrances;
- One piece of street furniture for each 15 linear feet of street frontage, which may include seating, ornamental planting boxes, informational kiosks, bicycle racks, and trash/recycling receptacles integrated into front setbacks where sidewalk width is not sufficient to accommodate street furniture;
- Integrated public art in the form of a mural, sculpture, light display, or other original work of a permanent nature as defined in the City Code;
- At least 600 square feet of publicly accessible active or passive recreational space on-site, or in the form of a curbside parklet;
- A green/living wall of a size equivalent to at least 15 percent of the building façade as measured between 2 and 12 feet above the level of the sidewalk;
- An innovative alternative strategy for optimizing the pedestrian experience along streets in the Active Ground Floor Overlay not included on this list. Proposals shall be evaluated by staff and considered on a case-by-case basis. The proposal shall be permitted provided that, at the recommendation of staff and determination of the review authority, applicable DSASP Urban Design Principles and development standards are being met with the alternative strategy proposed.

Alternatively, this requirement can be satisfied through compliance with Policy LU-1.4 in the Land Use chapter.
Map UDCS-1: Special Design Considerations

- Gateway
- Preservation District
- Park/Open Space
- Downtown Transition
- Neighborhood Transition
- Creek and Trail Activation Area
- Active Ground Floor Overlay

Source: City of Santa Rosa, 2020; Dyett & Bhatia, 2020
**DS-2** Properties with frontage on streets in the Active Ground Floor Overlay (Map UDCS-1) shall provide at least one primary pedestrian entrance or alternative design solution(s) that implements active ground floor goals as described in the 2020 Downtown Station Area Specific Plan, subject to approval by the review authority.

**DS-3** Ground floor facades of non-residential development on streets in the Active Ground Floor Overlay (Map UDCS-1) shall have clear, untinted glass or other glazing material that allows views of indoor space between a height of two and seven feet above grade, shown on Figure UDCS-1.

![Figure UDCS-1: Ground Floor Facade.](image)

**DS-4** On streets in the Active Ground Floor Overlay (Map UDCS-1), parking shall be accessed from a side street or alley whenever possible.

**DS-5** Crosswalk enhancements shall be installed at all intersections along and across streets in the Active Ground Floor Overlay (Map UDCS-1). This may include distinct paving, limited specialty pavers such as “bands” along crosswalk edges, decorative elements, stamped concrete or asphalt, and/or zebra-style paint.

**DS-6** Neighborhood identification banners/signs shall be installed along all streets in the Active Ground Floor Overlay (Map UDCS-1). Special banners advertising events or exhibits shall replace neighborhood identification banners when appropriate.

**DS-7** Buildings, signage, landscaping, street furniture, and on-street parking shall be designed to maintain adequate sight distance for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists at all intersections and driveways.

**GUIDELINES**

**DG-1** Development in the Active Ground Floor Overlay (Map UDCS-1) should incorporate special features such as outdoor dining areas, seating, vendor displays, curbside parklets, and/or public art.

**DG-2** On corner lots where one side is in the Active Ground Floor Overlay, ground floor activating strategies should wrap the building so that they are also applied to the ground floor frontage along the intersecting street.

**DG-3** Along streets in the Active Ground Floor Overlay (Map UDCS-1):

- Loading docks and exposed parking should not be allowed;
- Utilities and vehicular access points should be minimized;
- Curb cuts should be minimized and located where least likely to impede pedestrian circulation.

**DG-4** Flowering plants and plants with bright colors should be incorporated on light fixtures and/or banner poles in the Active Ground Floor Overlay (Map UDCS-1).

**CREEK AND TRAIL ACTIVATION**

Santa Rosa Creek is a defining feature of Downtown Santa Rosa and the creekside multi-use trails that run along both banks provide important east-west connections throughout the Downtown Station Area. Considerable resources have been invested to enhance this important natural amenity for the community, including the completion of the Prince Memorial Greenway and construction of Prince Gateway Park. To further enhance pedestrian and bicyclist safety and comfort along the creek, the DSASP...
identifies locations and strategies that activate the creek corridor by encouraging public activity and placing “eyes on the creek” throughout the day and night.

The length of the creek has varied topography, vegetation, and adjacent land uses that make some areas better suited for creek and trail activation standards. These locations, shown on Map UDCS-1, all have easy access from streets, relatively flat terrain in the lots adjacent to the trails, and clear creek views unencumbered by trees and vegetation. Standards in the DSASP seek to encourage attractive design, improved connectivity, and uses that promote public activity to foster increased enjoyment of the creek corridor.

**STANDARDS**

**DS-8**

New development in the areas identified for creek and trail activation on Map UDCS-1 shall provide at least one activating uses or at least two activating design features fronting the creek and trail as noted in Table UDCS-1 below to promote activity, heighten sense of security, and enhance the creek corridor as a public amenity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setback</th>
<th>OR</th>
<th>Distance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. A public space or plaza up to 5 percent of the total lot size with a minimum width of 30 feet</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>One piece of site furniture for each 100 linear feet of creek/trail frontage, which may include seating, informational kiosks, bicycle racks, and trash/recycling receptacles or outdoor fitness equipment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. A café, restaurant, brew pub, retail space or substantially similar use</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Integrated public art in the form of a mural, sculpture, light display, or other original work of a permanent nature as defined in the City Code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Interpretive signage related to Santa Rosa Creek and its riparian habitat</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DS-9**

New buildings within 200 feet of the creek shall be constructed with at least one pedestrian entrance that faces the creek. Where stoop entrances to residential units are provided, these shall face the creek.

**DS-10**

New development shall provide a pedestrian pathway of a minimum of 15 feet connecting the development to the creekside trail network every 600 feet along the river to enhance connectivity to the surrounding area.

**DS-11**

As development occurs in the creek and trail activation areas shown on Map UDCS-1, lighting should be provided consistent with the Santa Rosa Creek Design Guidelines.

**DS-12**

Blank facades at ground level and above should be avoided. Windows, doors and transparent openings are encouraged to provide “eyes on the creek” and heighten sense of security. To the extent feasible, surface and structured parking should not front onto the creek or trail.

Attractive design and activating uses will foster increased enjoyment of the creek corridor.
To create a vibrant, big city downtown core, the DSASP clusters taller buildings around Courthouse Square, where the tallest buildings exist today. Buildings step down in height from that location to integrate with the scale of surrounding neighborhoods.
WAYFINDING AND ACCESS

Design of the public realm can facilitate access for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists while also enhancing sense of place. Distinctive gateways with design features such as signs, graphics, landscaping, and accent lighting at principal entry points into the Downtown Station Area will help announce a sense of arrival, reinforcing the city’s identity and welcoming visitors and residents alike. While the grid pattern of Downtown’s streets and the visibility of surrounding mountains can help with orientation, the addition of branded directional signage particularly in the Core and Station areas will improve wayfinding and build connections between destinations, including transit hubs, landmarks, and places of interest. Design features which activate pedestrian routes and enhance security are essential, particularly in the vicinity of transit stations and stops. (See also Chapter 3 Mobility for policies related to safety and security.)

GUIDELINES

**DG-5** Special gateway design, lighting, landscaping, signs, and/or structures should be provided at high visibility locations near major entry points into the Downtown Station Area as shown on Map UDCS-1.

**DG-6** Within the Core and Station areas, directional signage should be provided at key intersections in the Active Ground Floor Overlay indicating walking time estimates and the direction to key destinations.

**DG-7** Design of the Railroad Square/Depot Park should accommodate buses, taxis, ride hailing services, and drop-off/pick-up areas, with canopied waiting areas, seating, lighting, and real time bus information. A visible and direct pedestrian connection should be provided from the platform to the intermodal transfer area on the SMART site.

**DG-8** Building entrances, windows, and active uses on the SMART site should be oriented to the public promenade in order to more meaningfully engage with the public space and enhance sense of security.

**DG-9** Crime prevention strategies should be incorporated into the design of active street frontages, particularly in the vicinity of the SMART Downtown Station and the Downtown Transit Center, including lighting and design features which activate the space and minimize “lurking spaces.”

Additional wayfinding signage, such as pylons, can help orient pedestrians to major city attractions and help with placemaking.
Outside of the Core area, a network of interconnected village centers, each with their own character, accommodate new high-density housing, retail, and other uses to create a complete neighborhood. Each village center is oriented around a community focal point, such as a park or public square called a “Civic Space.”
PARKS AND PUBLIC SPACES

It is vital to the health of existing communities and the success of new residential and commercial development that the Downtown Station Area has well-designed and accessible public spaces. While there are currently a number of neighborhood parks in the area, an extensive creek and trail network, and several plazas, more public recreational space will be needed to accommodate the future demands of residents, employees, and visitors to the area. Public spaces strengthen sense of place as an essential expression of the community’s unique character and contribute to a safe walkable and bikeable public realm. The integration of public art into public spaces should play a central role in building that sense of place through reinforcing landmarks and community identity. In addition to new public spaces, another key goal is to open up development and create publicly accessible routes to Santa Rosa Creek and Prince Memorial Greenway.

Because the Downtown Station Area is largely built out, there is limited opportunity to assemble land for new parks large enough to meet the City’s standard for traditional neighborhood parks. The DSASP envisions the creation of new types of public recreational spaces that accommodate a flexible range of activities and amenities. The DSASP envisions the creation of large urban parks, called Civic Spaces, that provide flexible, publicly accessible space for a range of entertainment and activities as well as a network of diverse public spaces in various sizes, which may include: traditional neighborhood parks, multi-purpose plazas, rooftop green spaces, pocket parks, parklets and curbside parklets, and active or passive paseos. These spaces are envisioned on both municipally owned sites and privately owned publicly accessible spaces. Whether publicly or privately owned, all public spaces must collectively create an interconnected system that meets the needs of the surrounding neighborhood. Approximate locations for new urban parks and are shown in Map UDCS-2. Where parks currently exist, such as Courthouse Square or Railroad Depot Park, new programming, park expansion, or enhancements will be added. Together with high-quality, native landscaping and public art, each of these types of spaces can provide much needed opportunities for recreation and social interaction and contribute to the Downtown Station Area’s positive identity and visual character.

GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL UDCS-1: A diverse range of public spaces at different scales and sizes throughout the Downtown Station Area to provide outdoor recreation and relaxation opportunities for residents, workers, and visitors.

POLICIES

UDCS-1.1 Provide for multi-purpose plazas, rooftop green spaces, pocket parks, active or passive paseos, and parklets and curbside parklets to complement existing neighborhood and community parks throughout the Downtown Station Area.

UDCS-1.2 Plan, design, and construct a Civic Space on the Railroad Depot Park site and in Courthouse Square, consistent with the guidelines below.

UDCS-1.3 As private development occurs, explore opportunities to create additional Civic Spaces at the locations shown on Map UDCS-2, consistent with the guidelines below.

UDCS-1.4 Establish a return to source policy and require that all park impact fees collected Downtown are used for park and recreational space facilities in the Downtown Station Area.

UDCS-1.5 Allow residential and multi-family projects in the Downtown Station Area to construct publicly accessible, but privately owned and maintained parks and plazas in lieu of park impact fees provided that the facility:

- has a minimum dimension of 15,000 square feet;
- is accessible to the public from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. seven days per week;
- is restricted for park and recreation purposes by recorded covenant which runs with the land;
- provides a minimum of four of the elements listed in Table UDCS-2.
UDCS-1.6 Require that curbside parklets be designed to National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) standards.

GUIDELINES

DG-10 Design of public spaces should:

- have size and programming as outlined in Table UDCS-1.
- be lined with active uses at-grade and located near building entrances, windows, outdoor seating, patios, or balconies that overlook park spaces, and other areas with strong pedestrian activity.
- be completely visible from at least one street frontage and as feasible, be at least 50% visible from a secondary street frontage.
- be primarily defined by adjacent buildings, which will contribute to the unity and environmental quality of the space.
- be oriented to maximize sunlight access throughout the day and provide uses that take advantage of the sunny location (e.g. cafés and patios). Encourage south-facing parks and plazas, as they maximize the space’s exposure to direct sunlight.
- generally be located at the same grade level as the public sidewalk. Where changes in grade are an important element of the overall design and programming, clear and direct access from the public sidewalk should be accommodated, and universal accessibility provided.
- reflect the design and placemaking elements of the surrounding area through the use of architectural styles, signage, colors, textures, materials and other elements.
- be constructed with low impact and permeable paving materials to efficiently manage the stormwater and minimize the area’s heat island effect.
- connect to bike and pedestrian facilities and be a part of an interconnected pathway or parkway system where feasible.

DG-11 Provide temporary restroom facilities that cater to the needs of families and seniors during public events.

DG-12 Paseos should be open to traffic only for loading and unloading purposes and should include pedestrian-scaled lighting to enhance sense of security.

A system of public spaces, diverse in their size and types, will enhance Downtown’s sense of place.
Improvements would focus new, high-density development along a high frequency transit corridor in order to build connections, increase vibrancy, and promote walking, biking and transit use over single-occupant vehicles. Some streets will be reconfigured as multi-modal streets with priority for transit and an activated public realm featuring bicycle lanes, wide sidewalks, plazas, parklets, and roof-top green spaces. Mid-rise buildings would frame the street, giving it character and scale, with new development seamlessly transitioning to existing neighborhoods.
SITE AND BUILDING DESIGN

The siting of a building and composition of its façade can create visual interest, stimulate pedestrian activity, and contribute to an attractive environment. Building details and articulation can establish both variety and harmony within a single development, among adjacent buildings, and within the Downtown Station Area. New development will complement existing neighborhoods, and a variety of building types and styles will help define the area as an interesting place to live, work, and spend time. Pedestrian-oriented design and a strong relationship with an active public realm will be a defining characteristic throughout the Downtown Station Area. To build cohesive and complete neighborhoods, the DSASP provides standards and guidelines for building placement and transitions; building design; ground level design; environmental sustainability; and trees and landscaping.

BUILDING PLACEMENT AND TRANSITIONS

Building placement and bulk throughout the Downtown Station Area are governed by several factors, including land use, location, adjacent uses and development standards (height, Floor Area Ratio, etc.). Setback standards help establish the desired character of the land use, as described in Chapter 2, without limiting the capacity of private development. Building massing in any infill development must consider the scale and nature of the adjacent uses. This section establishes goals and standards for building placement and bulk, with special attention paid to areas where infill development is near existing residential neighborhoods. Together with intensity limits and other building and site design standards, the standards presented here will ensure context-sensitive design throughout the Downtown Station Area.

Table UDCS-2: Public Space Size and Programming Guidelines

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommended Size</th>
<th>Civic Spaces</th>
<th>Public Plazas</th>
<th>Rooftop/Pocket Parks</th>
<th>Paseos</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Min 25,000 sf</td>
<td>Min 15,000-20,000 sf</td>
<td>Min 2,000 sf</td>
<td>Min 16 feet wide, with min 10-foot travel path</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recommended Elements

- Pop up retail/concession stands: X
- Public art installations: X
- Children’s play facilities: X
- Seating (benches and mobile chairs): X
- Family picnic area: X
- Canopies: X
- Plug and play for music performance: X
- Bandstand/stage: X
- Removable bollards: X
- Power outlets: X
- Water features: X
- Interactive elements (pianos, chess boards, etc.): X
- Trees and landscaping: X
- Edible gardens: X
- Public washrooms: X

4–14
In general, transitional standards apply where development immediately abuts uses designated as Preservation Districts or Low Density Residential, Low-Medium Density Residential, and Medium Density Residential land use designations. The intent of transitional standards is to ensure that new development fits into existing neighborhoods with a cohesive urban form, to provide transition between higher-density and lower-density neighborhoods, and to facilitate new infill development within an existing area that does not have an established cohesive urban character or to improve upon it. Setback and street frontage standards also ensure a continuously active and engaging street frontage in select locations, supporting the vibrancy of the Downtown Station Area’s public spaces. The DSASP establishes two different transition edges ensure that adequate daylight and neighborhood scale are achieved: Downtown Transition and Neighborhood Transition.

**STANDARDS**

**DS-13**

Building placement shall comply with the standards shown in Table UDCS-3.

**Table UDCS-3: Building Placement Standards**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setback</th>
<th>Distance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Front Setback (Non-Residential Ground Floor)</td>
<td>0-10 feet (min/max)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front Setback (Residential Ground Floor)</td>
<td>5-12 feet (min/max)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Street Side Setback</td>
<td>0-10 feet (min/max)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interior Side Setback</td>
<td>0 feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rear Setback(^1)</td>
<td>10 feet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. Where adjacent to residential designations (LDR, M LDR, or M D R), see Map UDCS-1 for applicable standard.
2. Minimum 0-foot rear yard setback, except for 5 feet when abutting LDR or M LDR residential designations.

**DS-14**

The additional standards listed in Table UDCS-4 shall apply for development of properties in the Neighborhood Transition zones shown on Map UDCS-1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table UDCS-4: Neighborhood Transition Standards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Seventh Street, Ninth Street, Riley Street, Cherry Street, B Street, and Sonoma Avenue</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Front setback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stepback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground floors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surface parking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Minimum side setback of 5 feet required if abutting existing low-density residential structure.
GUIDELINES

DG-12 Mid-block connections and walkways should be integrated with building entrances, transit stops, plazas and parks.

DG-13 Locate entrances and upper-story windows such that they look out onto and, at night, cast light onto, sidewalks and pedestrian paths.

DG-14 Primary and side street building facades should incorporate ground floor and upper floor transparency standards consistent with Design Guidelines.

DS-15 Buildings in the Downtown Transition zones shown on Map UDCS-1 shall step back a minimum of 6 feet, or a lesser distance as approved by the review authority, above the fifth floor along the frontage of Fourth and Fifth Streets.

Figure UDCS-2: Neighborhood Transition Stepback. Case shown is Seventh, Ninth, and Riley Frontage.
BUILDING DESIGN

Building design shapes a building’s character and dictates how a building relates to the public realm. The composition of a facade can create visual interest and ensure pedestrian orientation and building details and articulation can both create design variety and establish harmony within a development or among adjacent buildings. While ground floor design has an immediate impact on the pedestrian experience, it is essential that the entire building is designed in such a way that promotes building and neighborhood integrity. Building massing, scale, and overall design must be compatible with its height and use, as well as contribute to the Downtown Station Area's identity and character.

As infill sites are redeveloped and the core expands, the DSASP seeks to establish a diversity in building design and appearance, while retaining the pedestrian scale, compatibility with surrounding neighborhoods, and unified public realm established in recent developments. The following policies, together with the development standards and design guidelines, work to ensure high quality design for the Downtown Station Area.

STANDARDS

DS-16

Buildings shall include architectural design features that create visual interest and avoid a large-scale, bulky or “box-like” appearance, shown in Figure UDCS-3. Different ways that this requirement may be met include but are not limited to those listed below.

1. Variety in Wall Plane. Exterior building walls vary in depth and/or direction. Building walls exhibit offsets, recesses, or projections with significant depth, or a repeated pattern of offsets, recesses, or projections of smaller depth.

2. Variety in Height or Roof Forms. Building height is varied so that a significant portion of the building has a noticeable change in height; or roof forms are varied over different portions of the building through changes in pitch, plane, and orientation.

Buildings shall include a distinct base, mid-section, and top as shown in these images. These buildings also incorporate a variety of façade materials and articulation.
3. Incorporation of Architectural Detail or Vegetative Elements into Façade Design. The building façades incorporate details such as window trim, window recesses, cornices, belt courses, changes in material, or other design elements, including landscaped terraces or green/living walls, in an integrated composition. The use of materials, textures, and colors enhance architectural interest and emphasize details and changes in plane.

**DS-17** Buildings shall maintain the façade’s degree of architectural articulation and consistent finishes on all sides.

**DS-18** Street-facing residential units should be designed such that windows of primary living areas face the street.

**DS-19** Development on lots over 60,000 square feet in size shall comply with tower separation requirements shown on Figure UDCS-4. Residential towers over 100 feet tall shall be separated from other towers by a minimum of 100 feet as measured from the closest point of the face of one tower to the next, while non-residential towers over 100 feet tall shall be separated by a minimum of 80 feet, measured similarly.

**DS-20** Development on First Street or Third Street between A Street and D Street in the Core Area shall not cast shadows covering more than 25 percent of Courthouse Square for more than three hours between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Pacific Standard Time (between late October and early April), or for more than four hours between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Pacific Daylight Time (between early April and late October). See Shadow Study, Figure UDCS-5 on the following page.
**GUIDELINES**

**DG-15**

All buildings should contain the three traditional parts of a building: a base, a mid section, and a top. While a tower (typically above 100 feet) may not have a distinct top feature, the building design should distinguish the pedestrian-oriented base portion from the massing above, as shown in Figure UDCS-3.

**DG-16**

Corner buildings should have distinct architectural features and defined building entrances on both street frontages or an architecturally distinct corner entrance, as shown in Figure UDCS-7.

**DS-21**

For portions of buildings above 100 feet, as shown in Figure UDCS-6, the dimension of the longest building side and the diagonal shall not exceed the following:

- Commercial uses - maximum side: 200 feet; maximum diagonal: 220 feet;
- Residential uses - maximum side: 140 feet; maximum diagonal: 160 feet.

**DG-17**

Window design should be varied to reflect the different components of a building (ground floor lobbies, stair towers, office suites, or residential units).

**DG-18**

Building façades should be constructed of high quality and durable materials such as stone, brick, tile, wood, glass, and metal. Use of stucco should be minimized and aluminum mesh is discouraged as a balcony material. Ground floor should use high quality material with texture.
DG-19 Colors should be harmonious; however, color contrast is encouraged to create contrast and accentuate architectural forms and features.

DG-20 Design spaces that balance privacy and safety with access to air and sunlight. Prioritize south facing green space opportunities.

DG-21 Recessed and projected balconies should be introduced as part of a composition that contributes to the scale and proportion of the residential building façades.

DG-22 Upper-story stepbacks should incorporate features that activate the setback areas, such as balconies, terraces, living roofs, and greenery.

DG-23 Design roofs to be an integral part of the overall building design and to complement neighboring roofs.

DG-24 Incorporate usable outdoor terraces and rooftop gardens that overlook the street and provide visual interest.

DG-25 Coordinate tower placement with other towers on the same block and adjacent blocks to maximize access to sunlight and views; minimize loss of sky view from the public realm; and contribute to an elegant skyline profile.

DG-26 Incorporate creative elements into buildings for both functional and aesthetic purposes, such as vertical gardens, which provide aesthetic interest while aiding in temperature control.

DG-27 The following guidelines should be applied to new development along freeway frontages to avoid a wall-like effect and to reflect the high quality design standards of Santa Rosa.

- Design buildings visible from the freeway to maintain quality architectural articulation and finishes around all visible sides of the building.
- Use articulation to break down the building massing, using upper story step backs and other techniques.
- Avoid light colors for walls and roofs that would create a monolithic appearance and/or result in a stark contrast to the natural environment. Where light roof materials are used, screening shall be incorporated into the building design such that the roof is not visible from the freeway.
- Incorporate iconic architectural elements and corner treatments such as a tower, landmark roof form, or enhanced fenestration creating a focal point on the building façade.
GROUND LEVEL DESIGN

Building design at the ground level is especially critical in an urban area with pedestrian traffic and active uses. New development of all types should support a continuously engaging public realm. Ground level commercial establishments should contribute to the pedestrian oriented nature of the Downtown Station Area and encourage individual storefronts to establish unique identity through façade articulation and creative design. Where residential uses are located on the ground floor, the ground floor building design must engage with public realm and contribute to a comfortable and inviting pedestrian experience while still maintaining privacy for residents. Flexible design that can accommodate both residential and commercial uses at the ground floor, and which can be reconfigured relatively easily from one land use to the other is encouraged, so as to allow for adaptation to economic conditions and/or demographic shifts over time.

Plantings, clear demarcation of private space, and placement of doors and windows are used to activate the ground floor of residential buildings.

STANDARDS

**DS-22** Primary building entries, either individual or shared, shall be prominent and easy to identify; shall face a public street or paseo; and shall incorporate a projection (porch, stoop, bay window, etc.), recess, or combination of porch or recess.

**DS-23** Architectural features at the ground level such as porches and stoops may project up to 6 feet into the required setbacks but cannot encroach into the public right-of-way without a variance. Architectural features such as balconies, bay windows, and awnings may project up to 6 feet over the property line, if located at least 10 feet above sidewalk grade.

**DS-24** Buildings shall be constructed at the required front setback for at least 70 percent of linear street frontage. This build-to-line requirement may be modified or waived if entry courtyards, plazas, entries, outdoor eating and display areas, or mature Heritage trees are located between the build-to line and building, provided that the buildings are built to the edge of the courtyard, plaza, dining, or landscaped area.

**DS-25** The minimum floor-to-ceiling height of the ground floor commercial space shall be a minimum of 12 feet, or a lesser height subject to approval by the review authority, as shown in Figure UDCS-8.

![Image of Facade and Plantings](image-url)

*Figure UDCS-8: Ground Floor Standards*
**DS-26**  The depth of ground floor commercial space shall be sufficient to encourage small scale, or larger, commercial retail tenancies.

**DS-27**  No walls facing streets may run in a continuous plane for more than 20 feet without an opening. Openings fulfilling this requirement shall have transparent glazing and provide views into work areas, display areas, sales areas, lobbies, or similar active spaces, or into window displays that are at least three feet deep. The maximum length of the blank wall may be 30 feet for retail establishments with a gross floor area of 25,000 square feet or greater, as shown in Figure UDCS-9.

**DS-28**  Franchise architecture that is generic in nature, intended to be repeated on a mass-scale throughout a large region without consideration of and adaptation to local visual or cultural context, is prohibited unless doing so would violate State or federal law.

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**GUIDELINES**

**DG-28**  Entrances to residential, office or other upper-story uses should be clearly distinguishable in form and location from ground-floor commercial entrances and must face a street or courtyard.

**DG-29**  In commercial and mixed-use developments, incorporate plazas, awnings, porticoes, and other architectural elements to identify entrances and break up the vertical massing and add visual interest at the street level.

**DG-30**  Incorporate frequent entries and ample transparency with visible activity on all publicly exposed façades of commercial and mixed-use buildings.

**DG-31**  Ground floor retail spaces should be designed to accommodate a variety of uses.

**DG-32**  Opaque windows or windows covered with blinds should be avoided at the ground level in commercial developments.

**DG-33**  Include at least two steps up to a porch or entry to enhance the separation of the private area from the adjacent street public areas, except for units designated for disabled or senior use, which should avoid entry steps.

**DG-34**  Residential ground floor facades and roof forms should be articulated such that individual residential units are differentiated from each other and from the overall massing of the building with stoops, porches, recessed windows, and/or bay windows.

**DG-35**  Incorporate landscaping, fencing, raised or recessed entries, and other features to delineate residential property from the public realm.

**DG-36**  Residential developments should be designed to maximize sunlight, privacy, ventilation, and scenic views from living areas.
DG-37 Townhouse development should incorporate landscaping in the required setbacks.

DG-38 Generally, a minimum of one pedestrian building entry should be provided for each 50 feet of residential street frontage.

DG-39 Minimize the potential for noise disturbances to the greatest extent possible in residential developments by taking into account: window placement of adjoining buildings, the location of balconies and outdoor spaces relative to bedroom windows, and the location of trash collection facilities relative to residences.

DG-40 Common recreational spaces, green spaces, landscaping, and amenities should be designed to encourage interaction among occupants.

PARKING

The design and location of parking, service and loading areas is critical to maintaining the Downtown Station Area’s continuous pedestrian-oriented environment. This section addresses how new development can minimize the impacts of these needed Downtown, both visually and in terms of access. (For policies related to parking management, please see Chapter 3, Goal MOB-6).

STANDARDS

DS-29 Surface parking is not permitted between the sidewalk and building façade on streets in the Active Ground Floor Overlay.

DS-30 Bicycle parking for visitors shall be located as close to the primary entrance as possible and shall be readily accessible and visible from the street level.

DS-3 Loading and service areas shall not be visible from streets in the Active Ground Floor Overlay and shall be located at the rear of a property, in structures, or in the interior of blocks, as shown in Figure UDCS-10.

GUIDELINES

DG-41 Parking areas should generally be below grade, in a podium, or “wrapped” with uses to reduce the visual impact. Where not feasible, surface parking should be located behind buildings.

DG-42 Wherever possible, entrances to parking lots, structures, or podiums should be located along the side of a building and accessed from an alley or a driveway along the side of the property.

DG-43 Design of parking lots, structures, or podiums should prioritize personal safety and security with pedestrian-friendly sidewalks, open stairwells, adequate nighttime lighting, direct sight lines, and regular upkeep.

DG-44 Establish shared parking spaces that serve two or more separate developments, particularly when developments have different operation hours.

DG-45 The minimum distance between vehicular entries along a street frontage should be 75 feet and entries be located in a manner that minimizes pedestrian/auto conflicts.
Encourage curb-space designated for short-term pickup and drop-off in support of delivery, taxi and ride hailing services.

Loading areas should not be more than 30 feet from a building’s service entrance.

**ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

Environmentally sustainable development focuses on a “whole systems” approach to the siting, orientation, design, construction, operation, maintenance, renovation, and demolition of buildings and landscapes. Green building strategies to be employed Downtown include efficiencies in structure design; energy usage and water consumption; reduction of waste; improving and maintaining indoor environmental quality for the comfort and health of occupants; and the optimization of operations and maintenance systems. Benefits of green buildings include natural resource conservation, energy efficiency, improved health of employees and residents, and increased economic vitality.

Life cycle heating and cooling costs for potential building materials to maximize energy conservation. Incorporate screens, ventilated windows, green roofs, shade structures and shade trees along facades, rooftops and surface parking lots to minimize heat gain effects should be considered.

Operable windows that allow natural ventilation and potentially eliminate the need for mechanical ventilation should be provided except where prohibited for the purpose of mitigating human health risk. If mechanical systems are necessary, use energy-efficient and low emission heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems.

Lighting fixtures should be selected to maximize energy efficiency and minimize light pollution through reduced glare, light clutter and poorly directed lighting sources.

Signage and wayfinding should be provided in commercial and residential developments to increase public awareness of electric vehicles and bicycles and support existing users.

“Smart systems” that collect and employ data to control building operational systems, including lighting, heating, ventilation and air conditioning, security, and other systems should be incorporated in all new development.

Evergreen shrubs and trees should be used as screening devices along property lines, around mechanical equipment, and to obscure grillwork and fencing associated with service areas and parking garages.

Tree species planted in or adjacent to the public right of way should be appropriate for urban environments. Shallow root species with the potential to damage sidewalks and utility infrastructure should be avoided, as should trees that drop fruit.
HISTORIC RESOURCES

The Downtown Station Area contains some of Santa Rosa’s most prominent historic resources, which contribute to a distinct sense of place for residents and visitors. Santa Rosa’s rich architectural heritage spans many periods, with nineteenth-century Gothic, Greek Revival and Italianate houses, turn-of-the-century Stick/Eastlake styles, early twentieth century Craftsman and California bungalows, 1920s Spanish Revival, and 1930s Art Deco buildings. Properties that are officially designated on historic registers include Luther Burbank House and Garden, Hotel La Rose, the Old Post Office, Rosenberg’s Department Store, DeTurk Round Barn, the Rosenberg Building, and several other beloved landmarks.

The City’s Cultural Heritage Survey, originally completed in 1977 and updated in 1989, identifies six historic preservation districts and seven historic buildings in the Downtown Station Area. Santa Rosa’s preservation districts are areas that have special historic significance or represent one or more architectural periods or styles typical to the city’s history. The Historic (-H) combining district of the Zoning Code applies to all designated preservation districts, including Railroad Square, Saint Rose, Cherry Street, Olive Park, the West End, and a portion of Burbank Gardens. All properties within the designated preservation districts remain subject to standards for site planning and development, including height limits and setbacks, and directs procedural requirements to the Historic and Cultural Preservation Ordinance.

While the General Plan and City Code provide a robust framework for the protection and preservation of designated historic resources, as shown in Map UDCS-2, there are many properties in the Downtown Station Area that are over fifty years old but have not yet been evaluated for historic significance. Currently, properties are evaluated on a case-by-case basis as development is proposed. The DSASP calls for a comprehensive update to the Cultural Heritage Survey that considers “age-eligible” properties and applies current best practices for evaluation to provide clarity for future Downtown development and streamline the project approval process. Properties designated as historic resources may be eligible for federal tax credits or loans to assist with rehabilitation or adaptive reuse. Historic preservation can also be achieved with other strategies as well, including interpretive programs that celebrate the contributions of local figures, movements, and events.
GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL UDCS-2: Historic resources that enhance Downtown character and sense of place.

POLICIES

UDCS-2.1 Preserve and enhance historic resources within the Downtown Station Area while accommodating significant new development and intensification of uses.

UDCS-2.2 Maintain review procedures for projects that could potentially affect designated historic resources or preservation districts.

UDCS-2.3 Prepare an historic context statement and conduct a comprehensive historic resources survey of age-eligible properties in the Downtown Station Area. The context statement should consider Downtown Station Area development through at least 1980, so that it can remain relevant for some years before requiring an update.

UDCS-2.4 Provide information on incentives to encourage rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of historic properties, consistent with Secretary of the Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties.

UDCS-2.5 Incorporate elements of historic-age buildings into new projects to impart heritage and character where feasible and not in conflict with promoting Downtown development and housing affordability.

UDCS-2.6 Partner with the Museum of Sonoma County and local business, community, cultural, and historic organizations to establish and operate interpretive programs, such as walking/audio tours or a “story pole;” permanent displays and signage; informational pamphlets; banners; and special events celebrating local history.
Environmental and social systems are essential components of Downtown Santa Rosa’s future as a sustainable, healthy, and environmentally friendly hub with a high quality of life. These systems include adequate public services that give everyone the chance to learn, feel safe, and support daily functions; protections from environmental hazards and risks; and preservation of Downtown Santa Rosa’s unique biodiversity and natural features. This chapter’s goals and policies emphasize careful stewardship of these resources and services to ensure that the Downtown Station Area continues to be an attractive place to live, work and play.
PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES

Public safety services rooted in community-based approaches help to ensure neighborhoods remain safe, engaged, and ready to respond in the event of an emergency. This section describes goals and policies for adequate police and fire services in the Downtown Station Area.

POLICE SERVICES

The Santa Rosa Police Department (SRPD) is responsible for the protection of life and property within the city and provides a variety of law enforcement services and programs. The Police Department and Fire Station are both located in the Public Safety Building at 965 Sonoma Avenue. The police and fire stations are also operates a sub-station facility fronting Courthouse Square. The average police response time in 2018 was 6:28 minutes. Sampling from the League of California Cities shows 6-8 minutes as an acceptable range. Beyond providing excellent police services, the City of Santa Rosa can continue to ensure public safety and reduce crime through a variety of community-based approaches in partnership with other social service organizations. As more people live, work, and visit the Downtown Station Area, the DSASP seeks to ensure adequate police services commensurate with this growth.

Planning techniques can also support feelings of safety and well-being. One method, Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), suggests designing for natural surveillance through means such as locating windows to overlook sidewalks and parking lots, increasing pedestrian and bicycle traffic, and selectively installing fencing, landscaping, or lighting to control access. Watchful residents and active streets can create places that feel safer and less isolated, which can serve as a factor in deterring criminal activity.

FIRE SERVICES

Adequate response to fire emergencies is essential in a city like Santa Rosa that frequently faces fire threats. Fire protection and emergency services in the Downtown Station Area are the responsibility of the Santa Rosa Fire Department (SRFD), which operates in 10 fire stations across the city. The Fire Department is working to meet the City General Plan’s goal of the first resource arrival within 5 minutes of dispatch 90% of the time. The Insurance Services Office (ISO) reviews the fire protection resources within communities and provides a Community Fire Protection Rating. In 2016, SRFD received an Insurance Services Office (ISO) rating of 1, the highest level of protection.

According to the SRFD, the Downtown Station Area already has the highest demand for calls for service based on population density, and more staff will be needed to serve an increased population. The DSASP also considers the impact of taller building on fire services: ISO standards call for a ladder truck within 2.5 miles of urban areas containing buildings three or more stories in height. Currently, Fire Station 1 and Fire Station 2 have ladder trucks. A planned new facility to replace Fire Station 1 (the Public Safety Building) could accommodate additional staff and equipment needed to support Downtown Santa Rosa’s future needs.
GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL PSS-1: Responsive police and fire services that ensure a high level of public safety.

POLICIES

PSS-1.1 Ensure appropriate staffing and equipment levels proportionate to population and activity level in order to maintain a safe and livable environment downtown.

PSS-1.2 Partner with the Downtown Community Benefit District, neighborhood associations, and other groups to prioritize safety in public spaces, including the Prince Memorial Greenway, the Downtown SMART Station, and the Downtown Transit Mall.

PSS-1.3 Require that new development adequately addresses public safety considerations in building design and site planning.

PSS-1.4 Monitor the pace of development, and as warranted, relocate Engine Company No. 8 to a new site in the vicinity of Sebastopol Road. Explore the feasibility of acquiring the historic Fitzgerald Building site on Roberts Avenue as a multi-use site for both a Fire Station and neighborhood community facility.

(For additional policies related to safety and security in public spaces, please see Goal MOB-2 in Chapter 3, Mobility and the standards and guidelines in Chapter 4, Urban Design and Civic Spaces).

SCHOOLS AND LIBRARIES

Educational services are important components of civic life. This section discusses goals and policies for the Downtown Station Area’s schools and libraries.

SCHOOLS

The majority of the Downtown Station Area is served by the Santa Rosa City School District (SRCSD), which includes Luther Burbank Elementary School, Santa Rosa Middle School, and Kid Street Learning Center. There are two private schools, New Horizon School, and Stuart Preparatory School. A small part of the Downtown Station Area south of SR 12 is served by the Roseland School District. One preschool, Storybook Village Preschool at 28 Maxwell Court, and one day care center, Burbank Head Start, at 203 South A Street are within Downtown Santa Rosa. Santa Rosa Junior College, a public community college offering more than 100 majors, is just a few blocks north of the Downtown Station Area.

According to the 2018 SRSCD Enrollment Projection Study, the School District experienced a decline in student enrollment from school year 2000/2001 to 2017/2018, and the student enrollment of the School District is projected to continue to decline through school year 2027/2028. The recently adjusted student generation rate used in this study was 0.25 students per housing unit for multifamily attached units. This student generation rate estimates that 1,750 students would result from new development in the Downtown Station Area, an additional 450 students more than the population considered as part of the 2007 DSASP. Based on current enrollment, projected enrollments and capacity for SRCSD, there is adequate capacity to support new student growth in existing schools.

LIBRARIES

The Central Branch of the Sonoma County Library has provided library services to the citizens of Santa Rosa since 1859. It was the fourteenth public library established in the state and received a grant from the Carnegie Foundation to build on the corner of Fourth and E Streets in 1904. In addition to usual library offerings, the Downtown Branch also provides services and programs including a children’s room, computers with internet, discussion groups, and more. An upgrade to the Central Branch has been anticipated for some time, and the DSASP envisions the new facility as one of several catalyst projects with a potential housing component, or as part of a larger community-oriented facility.
GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL PSS-2: Accessible educational and library facilities that contribute to a high quality of life in the Downtown Station Area.

POLICIES

PSS-2.1 Work closely with the Santa Rosa City School Districts to ensure the future student population of the Downtown Station Area can be accommodated adequately in public schools. Support the development of new school facilities downtown to accommodate students of all ages.

PSS-2.2 Support the Sonoma County Library in their planning efforts to either renovate the Central Library branch in its current location or develop a new facility at an alternative site within the Downtown Station Area.

PSS-2.3 Coordinate with Santa Rosa Junior College on new development, programming, and facilities that bolster its mission and contribute to downtown commerce, culture, and living.

PUBLIC UTILITIES

Public utilities ensure people can meet their basic needs. This section includes goals and policies that ensure utilities are sufficient for the current and future population’s needs.

SEWER SYSTEM

Sewage generated from residential, commercial and industrial uses within the city is collected and transported to the Laguna Subregional Wastewater Treatment Plant (WTP) for treatment and disposal. The three sewer trunk mains serving the Downtown Station Area are Benton, Downtown, and Crosstown.

The Sanitary Sewer Management Plan (SSMP) identifies recommended Capital Improvements for trunk mains. The SSMP recommends replacement of portions of Crosstown trunk, as well as analysis of several sewer mains within the Downtown Station Area, including those at A Street and 1st Street, Maxwell Court, Trowbridge Street up to and through the SMART station area, Sebastopol Road under US 101 to Sebastopol Avenue, and Sonoma Avenue from E Street to Brookwood Avenue. These improvements are shown in Map PSS-1 and described in Table PSS-1. No upgrades are recommended for the Downtown and Benton trunks within the Downtown Station Area. There is no immediate need to improve the sewer infrastructure beyond which has already been planned and outlined in the SSMP.

WATER SYSTEM

The majority of the City’s potable water supply is derived from the Russian River watershed and is delivered under contractual agreement by the Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA). The City maintains and operates 20 water pump stations and one well treatment facility for delivery of water and to maintain system pressure. Twenty-four water storage tanks are located throughout the City’s water distribution system. Within the Downtown Station Area, most residential neighborhoods are served by 6- to 10-inch mains. Most of the water distribution in the Downtown Station Area is supplied by a network of 12-inch lines running east west and connected in the north south direction.

The 2015 Urban Water Master Plan and 2014 Final Water Master Plan Update both call for increased recycled irrigation water use in order to reduce potable water demand. While there are currently no active recycled water lines in the
Map PSS-1: Sewer System

- Upsize approximately 1,500' of 6" to 8" (Maxwell Court)
- Upsize approximately 1,600' of 12" to 15" (Trowbridge Street)
- Upsize approximately 1,200' of 6" to 8" (A St & 1st St)
- Upsize approximately 2,500' of 12" to 15" (Brookwood to E St)

Legend:
- Purple: Crosstown Trunk
- Blue: Trunk Replacement
- Brown: Downtown Trunk
- Pink: Benton Trunk
- Green: Sewer main to be studied (potential to increase size)
- Yellow: SMART Train
- Dashed: Planning Area
Map PSS-2: Water System

- 6 inch pipe
- 8 inch pipe
- 10 inch pipe
- 12-16 inch pipe
- Planned 12 inch pipe
- 18 inch Urban Re-use Main
- SCWA Aqueduct

SMART Train

--- Planning Area

Santa Rosa Creek

SMART Train

--- Planning Area
Downtown Station Area, there is an 18-inch urban re-use water main along the north side of Santa Rosa Creek from Santa Rosa Avenue to Pierson Street. Ultimately this will connect to the functioning system fed from the recycled water pond near the Utilities Field Operation building on Stony Point Road. Additionally, the 6- and 8-inch water mains in the Maxwell Court area will be upsized to 12 inches. These improvements are shown in Map PSS-2 and described in Table PSS-1.

The proposed increased population densities associated with the DSASP will be adequately served by existing infrastructure and planned Capital Improvement Projects. Outside of the Maxwell Court area and planned system upgrades, no improvements are necessary to support the increased densities proposed in the DSASP.

**STORMWATER SYSTEM**

The City’s stormwater system conveys runoff from developed areas into creeks to protect against flood hazards or erosion. Runoff is collected and disposed of through an integrated system of curbside gutters, underground pipelines, drainage ditches, and creeks. Santa Rosa Creek provides the primary drainage through the Downtown Station Area. Both Santa Rosa and Matanzas Creeks flow in large box culverts for two blocks from E Street under the City Hall Complex to their confluence on Santa Rosa Avenue at the Prince Memorial Greenway. The Greenway showcases a restored creek with pathways, trail bridges and a Class 1 Shared Use Path. A bare concrete trapezoidal flood control channel was replaced with a more natural channel improved water quality, supports riparian habitat, and yet maintains the desired flood capacity. Long term planning currently calls for the relocation of City offices, removal of the box culvert and subsequent restoration of the confluence of these creeks to a natural condition, including vegetation, bank stabilization, bike paths and community areas.

Development of the Downtown Station Area is not expected to have a significant increase in stormwater runoff. Outside of planned system upgrades, no improvements are necessary to support the increased densities proposed. Current regulations require that new development and redevelopment implement on-site stormwater treatments and hydromodifications, such as vegetated bio-swales, pervious paving and other types of vegetated on-site detention, which should result in a lower runoff factor for the area.

**WASTE SYSTEM**

In 2017, the City conducted a competitive procurement process to select a new hauler for garbage, recycling, and organics collection, and awarded Recology Sonoma Marin (Recology) an exclusive franchise agreement for provision of these services within the City. Part of the agreement specifies diversion requirements that are required to be met based on franchised waste.

In 2019, the City adopted the Zero Waste Master Plan, sets a new goal to reduce landfill disposal to less than one (1) pound per person per day of franchised waste and achieve at least 75% diversion of franchised waste from landfill disposal by 2030. Programs and policies in this plan to further divert waste include a single-use plastics ban; mandatory participation in recycling and composting programs; a Construction and Demolition (C&D) Ordinance Update, targeted technical assistance and education, and a Zero Waste culture change, which includes zero waste event requirements, among other programs.
Table PSS-1: Utilities System Improvements

### Sewer System: Main Improvements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area Description</th>
<th>$/Foot</th>
<th>Length (ft)</th>
<th>Cost ($M)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Street &amp; 1st Street: Upsize from 6” main to 8” main</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maxwell Court: Upsize from 6” main to 8” main</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>1,500</td>
<td>0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trowbridge Street up to and through SMART station area: upsise 12” main to 15” main</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>1,600</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sebastopol Road under US 101 to Sebastopol Avenue: upsise 12” main to 15” main</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>3,500</td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sonoma Avenue – E Street to Brockwood Ave: upsise 12” main to 15” main</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>2,500</td>
<td>0.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Sewer System: Crosstown Trunk Improvements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project ID</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Group Description Upstream</th>
<th>Upstream Manhole</th>
<th>Downstream Manhole</th>
<th>Length (ft)</th>
<th>Cost ($M)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CTTS-10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Brookwood Ave to Brown St upsise aged trunk main in same alignment</td>
<td>II2819MH008</td>
<td>II2817MH005</td>
<td>3,400</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTTS-11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Brown St to Chestnut St upsise aged trunk main in same alignment</td>
<td>II2817MH005</td>
<td>II2816MH030</td>
<td>3,400</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTTS-12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Chestnut St to Roberts Ave upsise aged trunk main in same alignment</td>
<td>II2816MH030</td>
<td>II2816MH032</td>
<td>740</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTTS-13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Iowa St to Apple Creek upsise aged trunk main in same alignment</td>
<td>II2816MH039</td>
<td>II2720MH063</td>
<td>2,100</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTTS-14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Rusch Ct to Amador Dr upsise aged trunk main in same alignment</td>
<td>II2719MH005</td>
<td>II2719MH007</td>
<td>1,100</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Water System: Recommended Fire Flow Improvements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area Description</th>
<th>$/Foot</th>
<th>Length (ft)</th>
<th>Cost ($M)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upsize the 6” main in Maxwell Court to 12” from the 12” main in Cleveland Avenue to the 8” main in N Dutton (including portion under SMART Right of Way)</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>1,000</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upsize the 8” and 6” mains in Maxwell Drive to 12” from the 12” main in College Avenue to proposed 12” main in Maxwell Ct.</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>1,200</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## GOALS AND POLICIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL PSS-3: Adequate utility infrastructure and waste management services to support housing and employment growth.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### POLICIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PSS-3.1</th>
<th>Implement the program of water and sewer improvements outlined in Table PSS-1.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PSS-3.2</td>
<td>Explore a range of financing strategies to fund and maintain public service and infrastructure improvements, including tax increment financing, bonds, assessment districts, grants, development impact fees, and investment of public funds. <em>(See Chapter 6, Implementation and Financing for a discussion of funding sources).</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSS-3.3</td>
<td>Require that all development provide its fair share of funding for necessary improvements to public services and utilities in the Downtown Station Area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSS-3.4</td>
<td>Work with PG&amp;E and other public agencies to underground existing overhead utility lines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSS-3.5</td>
<td>Evaluate options for creating a broadband system and providing wireless internet throughout the Downtown Station Area, either as a municipal enterprise or through cooperation or partnership with a private, competitive provider.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSS-3.6</td>
<td>Promote the use of rainwater harvesting systems in all types of development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSS-3.7</td>
<td>Encourage the regular maintenance of stormwater facilities on private property, including inlets and conduits, in order to reduce the occurrence of localized flooding during heavy storms.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSS-3.8</td>
<td>Work with residents, developers, and businesses in the Downtown Station Area to meet or exceed the 75 percent waste diversion goal established in the Zero Waste Master Plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSS-3.9</td>
<td>Work with Recology, property owners, and developers to create standards for shared trash enclosures.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## NOISE

In an urban environment, noise from everyday human activity is expected, but excessive noise can detract from quality of life and even have harmful effects on health. Noises vary in their scope and volume, ranging from individual occurrences such as leaf blowers, to the intermittent disturbances of overhead aircraft, to the fairly constant noise generated by traffic.

Major sources of noise in Downtown Santa Rosa are largely transportation-related, including freeway traffic on US 101 and SR 12; streets with higher traffic volumes such as Third Street, College Avenue, and Santa Rosa Avenue; and SMART train operation. Noise is also generated from areas associated with commercial and industrial facilities, such as in Maxwell Court or along Sebastopol Avenue.

Land use noise compatibility within Santa Rosa is established by the City’s General Plan and Municipal Code, which impose noise standards based on land use and time of day, as well as limits the location of potentially noise-generating land uses. The intent is to reduce potential nuisances and attenuate impacts on noise-sensitive land uses, such as residential areas, daycare, hospitals, churches, and other establishments. Map PSS-3 shows these projected noise contours within the Downtown Station Area.

To address these potential conflicts, the DSASP includes policies to reduce impacts from increased transportation noise, integrate noise attenuation in sensitive areas, establish feasible noise limits for mixed-use areas, and incorporate other noise-reducing techniques to ensure the Downtown Station Area can accommodate increased activity in a pleasant environment.
GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL PSS-4: A pleasant, healthy sound environment conducive to living and working.

POLICIES

**PSS-4.1** Collaborate with Caltrans, SMART, and other responsible agencies to develop and implement strategies to address noise impacts from permanent sources such as freeways and rail lines.

**PSS-4.2** Require residential and other noise-sensitive land uses to meet interior noise standards. If windows must be closed 100 percent of the time to achieve this standard, a fresh air ventilation system must be utilized. For projects within the 60-65 dBA contour shown on Map PSS-3, standard dual pane windows are acceptable to meet the standard, consistent with the California Building Code. For projects where ambient noise conditions exceed 65dBA as shown on Map PSS-3, require an acoustical study to demonstrate that interior noise standards can be met.

**PSS-4.3** Update Table 3-5 of the Noise Ordinance to establish appropriate and feasible limits for the Maker Mixed Use District.

**PSS-4.4** Require that new and refurbished public parks, plazas, and green spaces and include design and spatial elements to reduce ambient noise levels. This requirement does not apply to pedestrian and bicycle trails.

**PSS-4.5** New commercial uses that create noise, fumes, light, or odors shall be designed to minimize any impacts on adjacent sensitive uses. These commercial uses shall provide adequate ventilation within the structures that house them so that doors and windows are not left open for the purpose of ventilation resulting in nuisance emissions.

**PSS-4.6** Adopt a “right to do business” ordinance that protects the ability of existing business owners, such as bars, nightclubs, or established light industrial businesses, to continue to operate their businesses as new sensitive uses are introduced in mixed use areas.

**PSS-4.7** Require developers to mitigate noise exposure to sensitive receptors from construction activities. Mitigation may include a combination of techniques that reduce noise generated at the source, increase the noise insulation at the receptor, or increase the noise attenuation as noise travels from the source to the receptor (e.g. through the incorporation of barriers).

**PSS-4.8** Reduce vibration impacts associated with construction activities by requiring construction contractors to implement measures to help reduce vibration levels at nearby sensitive receptors. Measures to reduce vibration levels include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Operating heavy equipment as far as practical from residential uses;
- Using smaller bulldozers (operating weight less than 20,000 pounds) when grading must occur within approximately 50 feet of residential uses or other vibration sensitive uses; and
- Using quiet pile driving technology (such as predrilling piles, using sonic or vibrancy pile drivers, or using more than one pile driver to shorten the total duration of pile driving).
HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

While Downtown Santa Rosa generally enjoys good environmental health, its industrial history, geographic location, and transportation patterns can potentially impact its air, land, and water quality. This section provides goals and policies that reduce the causes and effects of polluting factors to create a sustainable and livable urban environment.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Santa Rosa’s history of industrial development has resulted in the presence of materials that are hazardous to environmental or human health. Much of the current contamination is associated with leaking underground fuel tanks (LUFTs), especially older tanks placed in the 1970s and 1980s. These tanks, found at older service stations, automotive repair or maintenance yards, utility plants, cement factories, and even restaurants, may leak petrochemicals, oil, or grease. While most of these sites are closed, a few remain in the Roberts Road area/industrial areas south of SR 12, Park Street Cleaners near Imwalle, at the corner of Santa Rosa and Sonoma avenues, and at the Western Farm Center at West Eighth Street. All of these sites may be subject to use restrictions or warrant additional studies and clean up prior to development. Project-specific investigations will be necessary for projects on or adjacent to these sites to ensure that potential health risks are fully addressed.

In addition to LUFT hazards, lead-based paint and asbestos may be present in older buildings. Hazardous materials and wastes are extensively regulated by federal, State, regional, and local agencies and provide protections for the community and workers on sites with identified hazardous materials issues.

While hazards and hazardous materials would not preclude development of a project, the cost of remediation as part of site redevelopment would be a significant initial cost if the land purchase were for an “as-is” condition. Funds for remediation could include grants and financing tools such as enhanced infrastructure financing districts. These financing tools are discussed in further detail in Chapter 6, Implementation and Financing Strategies.

AIR QUALITY

Air quality in Santa Rosa is influenced by local terrain and ocean breezes from the south and southwest that travel through the Petaluma and Cotati Valleys. These breezes provide relatively clean air to Santa Rosa. The air quality in Santa Rosa has generally improved since the 1980s and 1990s, when data collection began. In 2003, Santa Rosa exceeded federal standards in ozone. Federal standards for PM2.5 and state standards for PM10 were exceeded in 2006.

Santa Rosa may also face air quality threats from wildfire smoke. More frequent and intense wildfires are a growing public health problem in California, contributing to reduced air quality for people living near or downwind of fire. Health problems related to wildfire smoke exposure can be as mild as eye and respiratory tract irritation and as serious as worsening of heart and lung disease, including asthma, and even premature death. One of the main components of smoke is particulate matter (PM2.5), which is a regulated air pollutant, the association between PM2.5 and heart and lung health effects is well documented.

Toxic Air Contaminants

Toxic air contaminants (TACs) are air pollutants that may cause or increase mortality or serious illness or that may pose a present or potential hazard to human health. Diesel exhaust (DPM) from trucks and cars is the predominant TAC in urban air. In winter, smoke from residential wood combustion can be a source of TACs when cold stagnant air traps smoke near the ground. Emissions of TACs in and around the Downtown Station Area are also generated from mobile sources, including vehicle travel along US 101 and SR 12. Sensitive populations and land uses, such as residential uses, hospitals, senior living facilities, and schools, are better located at a distance from TAC sources. Air filtration systems can help to mitigate the impacts of TACs. Map PSS-4 shows the properties that are within proximity to roadways that create a significant amount of TAC and where air filtration mitigation is required.

National and state ambient air quality standards were developed with the intent to protect groups who are particularly susceptible from the adverse impacts of air pollution, known as sensitive receptors. At the regional level, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) is responsible for establishing and enforcing regional and local air quality rules and regulations regarding ambient air quality standards. Future development under the DSASP may be subject to one or more of BAAQMD’s best management practices, depending on the
specific components of the individual project. Some of these measures include alternative fueled (e.g., biodiesel, electric) and EPA-approved construction equipment; local building material sourcing; recycling construction waste; managing dust; and purchasing mitigation credits for construction emissions.

In addition to implementing General Plan policies related to air quality, the DSASP requires any projects that locate sensitive receptors, such as residences, schools, daycares, or nursing and retirement homes within the high risk zones identified near TACs to include indoor air filtration systems or other design and landscaping techniques that reduce health impacts to standard levels.

**GOALS AND POLICIES**

**GOAL PSS-5: Healthy air and water quality and a safe, livable urban environment.**

**POLICIES**

**PSS-5.1** Facilitate remediation of contaminated soil, surface water, and groundwater within the Downtown Station Area and pursue funding for cleanup, including grants and financing tools such as enhanced infrastructure financing districts.

**PSS-5.2** Require projects that would locate sensitive receptors such as residences, schools, daycares, or nursing and retirement homes within the elevated risk zones identified on Map PSS-4 within 100 feet of unremediated hazardous materials case sites or stationary sources of TACs, or within 300 feet of gas stations or perc dry cleaners, to reduce health risks to required levels by either:

- Installing indoor air filtration systems with a minimum efficiency reporting value of 12 or better; or
- Incorporating appropriate measures into the project to meet required standards, as demonstrated through a human health risk assessment completed by a certified professional.

**PSS-5.3** Require new large commercial or light industrial projects to develop and implement a plan to minimize truck idling in order to reduce diesel particulate emissions.

**PSS-5.4** Ensure that development projects within the Downtown Station Area require their contractors, as a condition of contract, to reduce construction-related emissions through the implementation of Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) recommended best practices for mitigating construction-related emissions.

**PSS-5.5** Require that proponents of projects proposed within 1,000 feet of sensitive receptors such as homes, schools, hospitals, and nursing homes consider mass diesel emissions, project phasing, distance to sensitive receptors, and earth-moving quantities among other factors, and consult with BAAQMD regarding the need for construction-phase human health risk assessment.

*The BoDean asphalt plant site will undergo remediation.*
Map PSS-4: Stationary and Roadway Sources

Freeway Health Risk Screening

- Required Buffer from SR 12
- Required Buffer from US 101

Ambient Risks

- Stationary Sources Exceeding BAAQMD Threshold
- Stationary Sources
- Superior Supplies Inc.
- BoDean Inc.
- Roadway
- Downtown Station Area
- Specific Plan
- 1,000 Foot Buffer

Legend:
- Park
- SMART Rail
- Undercrossing

Source: BAAQMD, 2012/2020; City of Santa Rosa, 2018; Dyett & Bhatia, 2020
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Downtown Santa Rosa possesses a remarkable level of biodiversity for an urban area. Its natural habitats, varied vegetation and greenery, and other environmental resources contribute to its sense of place and role as an important ecosystem. The following section describes Downtown's vegetation, wildlife, and creek network and includes policies to protect and enhance these features.

Vegetation and Wildlife

The majority of the Downtown Station Area is developed and urban landscape vegetation is the dominant vegetation type. This urban landscape consists of ornamental trees, shrubs, and lawn. Trees observed in the Downtown Station Area include coast redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*), Monterey pine (*Pinus radiata*), maples (*Acer spp.*), California black oak (*Quercus kelloggi*), coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), valley oak (*Quercus lobata*), and willows (*Salix spp.*). Ruderal vegetation, characterized by non-native grasses and forbs, occurs along the railroad grade, in the old rail yard, and on patches of industrial properties that serve as habitat to several species.

Several federally listed wildlife species have a moderate or high likelihood of occurring in the Downtown Station Area. These include: Central California Coast steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*), California Coastal chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*), Townsend’s western big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii townsendii*), Yuma myotis bat (*Myotis yumanensis*), and Allen’s hummingbird (*Selasphorus sasin*).

Trees and landscaping represent an inherent value to the environment and quality of life Downtown. The DSASP includes several policies to bolster green spaces and natural resources downtown, including native tree planting, green landscaping and infrastructure, and stewardship of the natural elements of the public realm.

Creek Network

Santa Rosa Creek and Mantanzas Creek run through the Downtown Station Area. The creeks are channelized and contain some limited riparian vegetation and woodlands including willows (*Salix spp.*), cottonwood (*Populus spp.*), bigleaf maple (*Acer macrophyllum*), California buckeye (*Aesculus californica*), California bay (*Umbellularia californica*), and box elder (*Acer negundo var. californicum*). Riparian plant communities provide habitat, and the creek serves as an important movement corridor for wildlife. West of Pierson Street, Santa Rosa Creek includes maturing trees that provide shade to migrating steelhead trout and various resident wildlife species.

Recognizing its role as an important ecological and recreational resource, the Citywide Creek Master Plan has guided significant creek improvements, such as habitat preservation and enhancement, restoration projects, and improvements as part of the Prince Memorial Greenway. The General Plan and Creeks Master Plan include guidelines for creekside development, including flood control, setback restrictions, building orientation, and recreational enhancements. The DSASP builds on creek preservation and enhancement efforts and includes a creek daylighting recommendation as part of redevelopment of the City Hall Complex.

The Santa Rosa Creek is habitat for chinook salmon and steelhead, depicted in this creekside mural.
NATURAL HAZARDS

Cities in the Sonoma region are particularly vulnerable to hazards such as earthquakes, wildland fires and power outages, and increasing temperatures, and more. Proper planning for hazard mitigation, recovery, and adaptation is an essential part of a resilient and sustainable Downtown. This section describes natural hazards that may affect the Downtown Station Area and includes policies to guide Downtown’s response to future emergencies.

NATURAL HAZARD RISKS

Earthquakes
The Downtown Station Area is located in a seismically active area and has experienced significant earthquake damage in the past from the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake and 1969 Santa Rosa Earthquake. Though risk of fault rupture is low, ground shaking from nearby faults (shown in Map PSS-5) could result in structural damage and loss of life. The California Building Code, Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) and General Plan help to protect new development from risks pertaining to soil instability, seismic activity, and other geologic hazards.

Flooding
While there are no flood hazard risks within the Downtown Station Area, localized flooding has been known to occur at the intersection of Roberts Avenue and Sebastopol Road. As climate change leads to future distributions in precipitation patterns, with high-intensity storms becoming the norm, flash flood or similar events may become more likely in the future. Risk of flooding and water pollution is minimized through the implementation of stormwater management practices consistent with the Santa Rosa General Plan and the Santa Rosa Storm Water Management Plan.

Fire
Santa Rosa is one of several California communities that has been heavily impacted by wildfire, especially in 2017 and 2019. These major fire years prompted emergency evacuations and were responsible for the loss of homes, damage to public services and facilities, and major economic losses in and around Santa Rosa. Climate change has extended California’s fire season and encouraged the spread of wildfire beyond the rural and heavily vegetated areas.
that were once widely considered to be most vulnerable. Though the Downtown Station Area is not located in a high-risk wildfire area, the DSASP’s emphasis on intensification of downtown residential development may ultimately help reduce development pressure within areas of high fire risk. The adopted Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) addresses wild and urban fire risk for the City and identifies several policies designed to reduce fire risk.

Santa Rosa’s primary energy provider, Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), has implemented Public Safety Power Shutoffs (PSPS), which are preemptive power shutoffs in high-risk fire areas during potentially dangerous weather conditions. PSPS events are intended to reduce wildfire risks, but power outages can pose additional safety hazards. These can include strains on emergency and medical services, especially for vulnerable communities; mobility and circulation concerns as traffic lights go out of service; and other disruptions to daily living.

**Rising Average Daily Temperatures**

Future climate projections and scenarios anticipate that climate change may have significant effects on California’s precipitation, temperature, and weather patterns. These rising temperatures can increase likelihood and severity of wildfires. As a developed urban area, the Downtown Station Area may also face “heat island” effects. A “heat island” describes built-up areas that are hotter than nearby rural areas. On a hot, sunny summer day, roof and pavement surface temperatures can be 50–90°F (27–50°C) hotter than the air, while shaded or moist surfaces remain close to air temperatures. These surface urban heat islands can affect communities by increasing summertime peak energy demand, air conditioning costs, air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, heat related illness and mortality, and water quality. Landscaping, tree planting, and selection of appropriate building materials can mitigate the effects of heat islands.

**EMERGENCY RESPONSE**

The City of Santa Rosa has a robust emergency preparedness, response, and recovery strategy. The Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) is the ultimate authority for coordinating response and recovery operations in the City of Santa Rosa and identifies the City’s emergency planning, organization, response policies, and procedures. The EOP also addresses integration and coordination with other governmental levels when required. The EOP is flexible enough to use in all emergencies and will facilitate response and short-term recovery.

In case of emergency, the City of Santa Rosa has identified several evacuation travel routes in the Downtown Station Area, including College Avenue; Third Street, Brookwood Avenue and West Third Street; Mendocino Avenue; and US 101 and SR 12. The City uses multiple notification and warning systems to make sure emergency alerts are delivered to the people who need the information, including systems that work during cell tower or power outages. These include an emergency alert system, SoCo Alert, Wireless Emergency Alert, Nixle (distributed by police and fire systems), local radio and television, and Hi/Lo evacuation sirens.

As the potential for power shut offs increases with wildfire threat, various options for ensuring emergency power at critical facilities will be evaluated. Microgrids and backup generators that operate autonomously from main power grids could be provided at key facilities like community centers, senior centers, police and fire departments, senior centers, sewer lifts, and others. Expansion of solar energy capture and storage could reduce Santa Rosa’s carbon emissions while creating alternative emergency power supplies.

Neighborhood-level emergency response and resilience plans are also recommended to provide safe and efficient evacuation alternatives. These plans would serve as a supplement to other operational and regulatory requirements that are in place within the City of Santa Rosa.

Santa Rosa’s Red Flag warnings are issued for weather events which may result in extreme fire behavior.
GOALS AND POLICIES

GOAL PSS-7: Effective emergency response and protection from hazards.

POLICIES

PSS-7.1 Minimize the potential for loss of life, injury, property damage, and economic and social disruptions from natural and human-made hazards.

PSS-7.2 Reduce heat island effect through preservation and enhancement of existing tree canopy as well as site planning and selection of landscape and hardscape materials.

PSS-7.3 Provide information on major evacuation routes and notification systems used for emergency alerts to downtown residents and businesses.

PSS-7.4 Evaluate options for ensuring emergency power at critical and community facilities, including microgrids, solar capture and storage, distributed energy, and back up generators. Consider the ability to reduce utility costs and carbon emissions in the assessment.

PSS-7.5 Create neighborhood-level plans to improve initial emergency response, subsequent recovery, and ongoing self-sufficiency within the Downtown Station Area.
Cover art by Dyett & Bhatia.
FINANCING AND IMPLEMENTATION

The DSASP provides a clear vision and a comprehensive framework to guide development and preservation in the Downtown Station Area. Achieving the full development potential of the DSASP will require a range of efforts and actions on the part of the City, property owners, developers and other partners. These include carrying out the necessary regulatory measures, providing infrastructure improvements, and securing needed financing.

This chapter summarizes the identified infrastructure needs of the DSASP, the current landscape of potential funding sources, and the major policies and actions that will ensure effective implementation of the DSASP. As a living document with long-range applicability, mechanisms also exist to permit changes in the DSASP as the need arises to review the document periodically for successful performance.
FINANCING AND IMPLEMENTATION

REGULATORY IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation of the DSASP will require additional regulatory actions by the City of Santa Rosa, including General Plan and Zoning Ordinance amendments to ensure consistency across documents. The primary regulatory actions are described below.

GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT

A General Plan amendment will be approved concurrently with the DSASP that reflects the DSASP’s vision and goals and policies, and recognizes the Downtown Station Area’s development (buildout) potential. Maintaining “vertical consistency” in this way is required by State law.

ZONING CODE AMENDMENTS

While the General Plan establishes a policy framework, the Zoning Code prescribes standards, rules, and procedures for development. The Zoning Code translates DSASP policies into specific use regulations, development standards, and performance criteria that govern development on individual properties. The DSASP provides policies for new and modified land use districts and overlays, use and development standards, and density and intensity limits, consistent with the DSASP’s land use classifications and development standards included in Chapter 2, Land Use. These polices will been incorporated into the Zoning Code and will be adopted at the time of the DSASP approval by the City Council. The City will also adopt Zoning Map amendments to ensure the Downtown Station Area Zoning classifications are brought into conformance with the DSASP.

IMPLEMENTATION AND PHASING

Implementation of the DSASP will require action by several different departments and divisions within the City, including the Housing and Community Services Department, Planning and Economic Development Department, Recreation and Parks Department, Transportation and Public Works Department, and Water Department. During the development process, much of the look and feel of the Downtown Station Area will be determined by the architecture, landscaping, layout, and maintenance of individual developments, as prescribed by the design standards and guidelines articulated in Chapter 4. However, the City must take the lead in coordinating the needed area-wide actions that will enable complete implementation of the DSASP and its vision.

PHASING

The ultimate phasing of development and necessary improvements within the Downtown Station Area will be based on market factors as well as costs and available financing. Many of the infrastructure improvements will occur over time concurrently with new development. A recommended phasing strategy is outlined below, although actual phasing may change based on market conditions, particularly in view of economic and societal changes which may occur in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.
Near-Term

Within the first five years after adoption:

- Continue to use “Express Permitting,” fee reductions and Resilient City Development Measures to fast-track proposed residential projects in the pipeline and facilitate construction of high-density multi-family housing in the Downtown Station Area.

- Actively market development opportunities in the Downtown Station Area as part of a coordinated effort in collaboration with the Santa Rosa Metro Chamber and other groups.

- Pursue a public-private partnership for the redevelopment of one of the City-owned catalyst sites shown on Map LU-2 to help demonstrate the market viability of high-density multi-family housing downtown.

- Complete roadway reconfigurations on Santa Rosa Avenue, Mendocino Avenue, and E Street to help spark redevelopment along these key corridors to promote a multi-modal approach in line with Complete Streets policies.

- Implement shared parking agreements that allow larger high-density residential and mixed use projects in Courthouse Square and Railroad Square to fulfill parking need in part or in full by using underutilized spaces in City lots and garages to optimize the number of spaces constructed and support development feasibility.

- Prioritize access and wayfinding improvements that strengthen the connection between Courthouse Square and Railroad Square, including programmatic solutions for reconnecting Fourth Street through Santa Rosa Plaza Mall and branded directional signage from the SMART station.

- Support expanded programming of events and public spaces to raise the profile of the Downtown Station Area as an entertainment destination, partnering with business, arts, and cultural groups and organizations.

- Prepare a historic context statement and conduct a comprehensive historic resources survey of age-eligible properties in the Downtown Station Area.

- Develop the Downtown Façade Improvement Program (D-FIP) that would support efforts to create attractive facades on new and existing buildings. Consider providing low or no-interest loans for design and implementation and streamline the review process.

Intermediate/Longer-Term

Between 5 and 15 years after adoption:

- Facilitate redevelopment of key privately-owned Catalyst Sites shown on Map LU-2 that can accommodate significant housing development, including the SMART site adjacent to the Downtown Santa Rosa SMART station, the BoDean site in Maxwell Court, the Monroe Tires site on Santa Rosa Avenue, and the former Sears site.

- Coordinate construction of Civic Spaces with private development activities to ensure the provision of vibrant, inviting urban parks and gathering spaces for residents, employees, and visitors to the Downtown Station Area.

- Complete studies to plan for major transportation improvements needed to support full buildout of the DSASP, including an engineering study for the Roberts Avenue extension and route design study for the Downtown Loop shuttle.

- Synchronize the provision of infrastructure and streetscape improvements with new development, coordinating strategic planning, financial capacity, and physical development downtown through the Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

- Monitor progress toward DSASP objectives and the effectiveness of development incentives, adjusting the directives of the DSASP as needed.
INFRASTRUCTURE FINANCING STRATEGIES

This section describes the general approaches for funding and financing both the one-time and on-going costs of providing the public infrastructure improvements and services needed to implement the DSASP. It is designed to support the objective that new development within the Downtown Station Area “pay its way” as much as possible to avoid straining the City’s financial resources.

While the need to improve and expand public infrastructure and services to and within the Downtown Station Area will evolve over time, it is important to identify and seek to secure adequate funding prior to development. Moreover, given that the City does not have the financial capacity to subsidize or finance all the needed improvements and public services and given that the City is working to reduce the financial burden on new development in the Downtown Station Area, a creative approach to financing the improvements is required.

OVERVIEW OF FUNDING NEEDS

Implementation of the DSASP will require a range of near- and long-term public infrastructure and service system improvements, including water and sewer facilities; circulation and streetscape improvements; parks and plazas; and electricity and telecommunications capacity. Table FI-1 provides a summary of the primary infrastructure improvements necessary to support full development of the DSASP at build-out and indicates preliminary cost estimates where available. Full details of the required utility infrastructure improvements are included in Chapter 5, Public Services and Sustainability. Given that the design of roadway reallocations and civic spaces has not been completed and the specifics of those projects cannot be known at this time, cost estimates are not available.

Based on current estimates the cost of identified infrastructure improvements amount to approximately $8.15 million (in 2020 dollars). The amount and type of investment required for the other public infrastructure and amenities referenced in the DSASP will be based on guiding policies and service standards. The cost estimates are provided for illustrative purposes only, and are not all inclusive. Other financial obligations include design and engineering, as well as streetscape and right-of-way obligations and improvements, among others. Table FI-1 excludes the cost of on-going public services needed to serve the land uses in the DSASP, such as public safety and the maintenance of public spaces and right-of-way.

Table FI-1: Infrastructure Improvement Estimates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Improvement Type</th>
<th>Cost Estimate</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Distribution System</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water Main Upsizing</td>
<td>$550,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wastewater Infrastructure</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital Improvements to Crosstown Trunk</td>
<td>$7,600,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sewer main upgrades</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SUMMARY OF FUNDING TOOLS AND MECHANISMS

It is anticipated that the cost of public infrastructure and service system improvements will be covered in part by the expansion of existing City General Fund revenues, which will increase as new development contributes additional tax revenue. The remaining infrastructure obligations may require additional financing, particularly for required levels of service that may exceed the Citywide norm. This can be met through various mechanisms, most commonly impact fees, user fees, and community facilities districts (CFDs) in California. For projects that are public priorities, tax increment financing may also be available in designated redevelopment areas.

The following tools and mechanisms have been identified as particularly applicable for implementation of the DSASP. Each of the funding mechanisms described below can be used separately or in combination with one another. The tools and mechanisms below are presented, not as an exhaustive list, but as a preferred set given the circumstances and information available during preparation of the DSASP. In all likelihood, the appropriate and most effective funding mechanism will vary based on the nature of the improvement or service being delivered. Other factors relevant to these decisions include the timing (e.g., when the funds are needed), level and frequency of costs (e.g., on-going versus one-time costs), who the primary beneficiaries and responsible parties are, and funding availability, among others.
Federal Opportunity Zones

The Opportunity Zones incentive is a community investment tool established by the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017 to encourage long-term investments in economically distressed communities. Opportunity Zones are low income census tracts nominated by governors and certified by the U.S. Department of the Treasury. The program provides three tax benefits for investing unrealized capital gains in Opportunity Zones.

1. Temporary tax deferral on previously earned capital gains. Investors can place existing assets with accumulated capital gains into Opportunity Funds, which are the investment vehicle that invests in Opportunity Zones. Those existing capital gains are not taxed until the end of 2026 or when the asset is disposed of.

2. Basis step-up of previously earned capital gains invested. For capital gains placed in Opportunity Funds for at least 5 years, investors’ basis on the original investment increases by 10 percent. If invested for at least 7 years, investors’ basis on the original investment increases by 15 percent.

3. Permanent exclusion of taxable income on new gains. For investments held for at least 10 years, investors pay no taxes on any capital gains produced through their investment in Opportunity Funds.

Opportunity Funds can help new development become economically feasible by creating tax savings that can offset development costs. They can be used to finance a broad variety of activities and projects, including funds for commercial real estate, housing, infrastructure, and existing and new businesses.

There are two established opportunity zones in the City of Santa Rosa: the Downtown Opportunity Zone (census tract 1520, which includes Old Courthouse Square, the East Side, College, Cherry Street, and St. Rose neighborhoods) and the Roseland Opportunity Zone (census tract 1531.04, which includes the Roberts neighborhood). These tracts are shown in Map FI-1.

Statewide Community Infrastructure Program (SCIP)

The California Statewide Communities Development Authority (CSCDA) manages the Statewide Community Infrastructure Program (SCIP). SCIP is a financing program that enables developers to pay most impact fees and finance public improvements through an acquisition agreement via tax-exempt bond issuance proceeds. The Program could be useful for developers in the DSASP area because SCIP can be used to directly prepay impact fees or, alternatively, to reimburse the developer after fee payment, rather than requiring developers to pay impact fees prior to obtaining a permit. The program can be used to enable developers to pay for, or be reimbursed for, all eligible impact fees or for a single impact fee. Moreover, the program may alleviate the need for fee waivers or for a fee deferral program by providing the City with necessary funds.

The SCIP program has assisted communities and developers throughout California to finance over $500 million in impact fees since 2003. Santa Rosa is a member of the CSCDA and, therefore, is a participating agency. SCIP may also be used in situations where the amount of funding needs is below that needed for a cost-effective bond issuance (i.e., less than $5 million). In these circumstances, the City could make use of the SCIP program, which pools multiple funding requests into larger bond issues.
Enhanced Infrastructure Finance Districts

Enhanced Infrastructure Financing Districts (EIFDs) are forms of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) that currently are available to local public entities in California. Local agencies may establish an EIFD for a given project or geographic area in order to capture incremental increases in property tax revenue from increased assessed value (due to new development and generalized appreciation). In the absence of the EIFD, this revenue would accrue to the City’s General Fund (or other property-taxing entity revenue fund). EIFD funds can be used for project-related infrastructure, including roads and utilities, as well as parks and housing and could be a helpful source of funding to address hazardous material cleanup across multiple parcels. EIFDs cannot be used to finance operations and maintenance expenses.

Unlike prior TIF/Redevelopment law in California, EIFDs require separate approval from all participating jurisdictions (e.g., City Council, Board of Supervisors). Below is a list of the taxing entities in Tax Rate Area (TRA) 004-297, selected as a representative TRA within the DSASP.

Senate Bill 628 established the EIFD as a similar, but more flexible version of Infrastructure Financing Districts (IFDs), where the scope of eligible projects is more expansive and the voter/landowner threshold to pass a bond is 55 percent instead of two-thirds, as is required for IFDs. In 2019, Assembly Bill 116 eliminated the voting requirement to issue bonds but does require three public hearings on the topic of the District’s financing plan.

While any tax increment, no matter how small, will generate revenue that can be reinvested in infrastructure, it is important that in most cases the local property tax available is very limited (California cities typically get between $0.10 and $0.20 of a property tax dollar). In the representative TRA, the Santa Rosa General Fund currently receives approximately $0.124 of each property tax dollar. Moreover, the use of local property tax to support infrastructure financing has fiscal implications for California cities in that dedicating tax revenue to infrastructure limits funding for new public services costs associated with development.

Table FI-3 provides an illustrative example of the level of tax increment that could be generated in the DSASP and the associated bonding capacity. The estimate is calculated using just the City’s increment as well as the City’s plus the County’s.

Table FI-2: Taxing Entities in Representative Tax Rate Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tax Code</th>
<th>Jurisdiction</th>
<th>Pre-ERAF AB8 Factor</th>
<th>ERAF Shift Factor</th>
<th>Post-ERAF AB8 Factor</th>
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Note: This calculation applies the appropriate 2019-20 ERAF shift factors to each jurisdiction and calculates distribution factors that represent the estimated percentage of Prop 13 (1%) taxes received by each area. However, please keep in mind that actual tax distributions are done on a countywide basis using countywide factors and this merely provides a rough estimate.

Source: Sonoma County Assessor.
Table FI-3: Illustrative EIFD Calculation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tr>
<td>Estimated Assessed Value (AV) in DSASP [1]</td>
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<td>Proposition 13 Basic 1% Property Tax Rate</td>
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<td>County</td>
<td>32.23%</td>
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<tr>
<td>@ 4% Avg. annual increase in AV (City Only)</td>
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<tr>
<td>@ 4% Avg. annual increase in AV (City + County)</td>
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<td>Annual EIFD Tax Increment Projection in Year 5</td>
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<td>@ 4% Avg. annual increase in AV (City Only)</td>
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<td>@ 4% Avg. annual increase in AV (City + County)</td>
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<td>Estimated Net TI Bond Proceeds [3]</td>
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<td>@ 4% Avg. annual increase in AV (City Only)</td>
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<tr>
<td>@ 4% Avg. annual increase in AV (City + County)</td>
<td>$13,801,667</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[2] Allocations to the City and the County are based on the tax
[3] Using Year 5 tax increment revenue, bond proceeds estimate assumes a 5% interest rate, 30 year term, 1.25 debt coverage factor, and issuance cost equal to 12% of gross bond proceeds.

Development Impact Fees

Development impact fees are charged to new private development to fund a range of public infrastructure improvements. A development impact fee is an ordinance-based, one-time charge on new development designed to cover a “proportional-share” of the total capital cost of necessary public infrastructure and facilities. The creation and collection of impact fees are allowed under AB 1600 as codified in California Government Code Section 66000, known as the Mitigation Fee Act.

To the extent that required improvements are needed to address both “existing deficiencies” as well as the projected impacts from growth, only the portion of costs attributable to new development can be included in the fee. Consequently, impact fees commonly are only one of many sources used to finance a city’s needed infrastructure improvements. Fees can be charged on a jurisdiction-wide basis or for a particular sub-area of the jurisdiction such as a DSASP area.

The key limitation of development impact fees (in addition to the nexus requirement) is the timing of funding. Infrastructure often is needed “up-front” while fees are paid over time as development occurs. This means that other funding or financing methods are needed to close the timing gap. Fee revenues also are irregular, as they depend on development activity that varies with economic conditions. Additionally, programmed or expected development that does not occur when expected, or never occurs, exacerbates the initial problem.

The City of Santa Rosa has several existing impact fee programs, which fund capital facilities (e.g., street widening, traffic signals, freeway interchanges, bike paths, and storm drains), parks, and affordable housing. The City also charges water and wastewater connection fees to new development. To the extent that impact fee revenue collected from development activity in the DSASP can be reinvested in the area, developers will benefit from the value created by the improved infrastructure. Impact fee programs must be balanced with fee reduction programs, which reduce costs of development. City-implemented fee reduction programs include the Downtown High-Density Residential Incentive Program, which reduces impact fees and defers water and wastewater fees; elimination of development impact and utility connection fees for units that are 750 square feet or less; and reduced fees for units between 750 and 1,200 square feet.

The latest fee schedule is effective January 2020. Not only is it appropriate to review and update fee programs periodically (e.g., every five years), but the DSASP identifies new infrastructure improvements needed to support new growth in the City, and the City’s fee programs may need to be revised to address the proposed improvements. Updating the City’s fee programs does not require a public vote, but it does require the preparation of a nexus study, revisions to the ordinance, and Council adoption. Proceeds may be used to reimburse property owners who pay up-front costs for facilities or infrastructure needed to facilitate development on their property.
**Renewal Enterprise District**

The Renewal Enterprise District (RED) is a Joint Powers Authority (JPA) formed by the County of Sonoma and the City of Santa Rosa to implement the joint goal of creating 30,000 new homes by developing a unifying vision, providing the policy direction necessary, and refining financial tools that can be targeted to Sonoma’s unique circumstances. It is hoped that the RED eventually may streamline permitting and financing tools to help further an aggressive housing production agenda.

The RED will allow the City of Santa Rosa and the County of Sonoma to more easily pool their resources to leverage additional investment, with the potential to generate more funds than either jurisdiction can attract on its own. The RED will seek additional financial resources from investors, funders, planners, and regulators at the regional, state and national levels, which could then be strategically leveraged under the RED construct. Members of the JPA are also pursuing grant funding and reallocation of a portion of funds made available through Senate Bill 2 (Building Homes and Jobs Act), the Governor’s budget, and Assembly Bill 101 (Housing Development and Financing Act) funds.

Once the RED is formed and has access to capital or other incentives, a project should meet specified criteria to access those incentives. There are two steps included in criteria:

- **Step one** requires every proposal submitted to meet threshold criteria, including that the project:
  - be on an infill site;
  - provide mid-to-high density development;
  - be located entirely within a Transit Priority Area, Priority Development Area, Rural Community Investment Area, Specific Plan Area, High-Quality Transit Corridor or Qualified Opportunity Zone; and
  - be residential or mixed use residential.

- **Step two** identifies additional evaluation criteria that will be utilized to rate projects meeting all threshold criteria.

While projects do not need to meet all evaluation criteria; the most competitive applicants will provide the highest level of community benefit by including one or more of the following features: on-site affordable units, on-site childcare, public outdoor space, bicycle or pedestrian connectivity, and other features.

New residential, infill development at mid- to high intensities within the Downtown Station Area could meet the RED eligibility criteria for project funding. Eligible projects are more likely to include features that address the DSASP’s objectives and provide community benefits.

**Developer Dedications, Contributions, and Exactions**

Under the Subdivision Map Act, developers may be required to dedicate land or make cash payments for public facilities and infrastructure improvements required or affected by their project. Dedications are typically made for road and utility rights-of-way fronting individual properties, parkland, and land for other public facilities directly required by their projects (e.g., payments for a traffic signal).

In the case of the DSASP, it is expected that developers will be required, as a condition of approval, to dedicate the right of way adjacent to their properties and make or fund necessary improvements for street frontage and utilities. Additionally, developers may elect to provide dedications or one-time payments for other project infrastructure requirements, improvements, or mitigations in lieu of participation in one or several of the financing mechanisms identified herein. For example, developers may want to dedicate park, plaza and other public space improvements in-lieu of associated impact fee requirements. In such cases, the City will determine and approve the terms and conditions associated with such dedications or contributions.

**Existing City Taxes, Fees, Charges and Related Requirements**

Project area developers and tenants will be responsible for paying existing City taxes, fees and charges, including sales, property, business license and transient occupancy taxes, the Citywide development impact fees, and various utility fees and charges, among others, unless specifically exempted or deferred. The City may want to consider prioritizing DSASP improvements to the extent that revenue from existing taxes, fees, and charges resulting from development and business activity in the Downtown area can be reinvested in the area. The City could also be proactive and deliberate in pursuing various “return-to-source” strategies to support downtown projects and initiatives. Some of these strategies are described below.
Development Agreements

A development agreement (DA) is a legally binding contract between a public agency and a developer that provides developers with assurances that the land use entitlements for a project will not be changed in the future, and that specifies public sector commitments to financing, phasing and other elements of project implementation. In return for these public considerations and assurances, the developer may be asked to make financial commitments beyond those that could be justified through typical subdivision ordinance dedications and exactions and/or impact fees, which are both limited by the “rational nexus” criteria.

A DA can be a useful tool for enabling larger Downtown Station Area projects, especially if publicly-owned land is involved. DAs differ from ordinary rezoning decisions or other public approvals because, in addition to binding the developer to detailed plans and conditions, they also commit public entities to a specified course of action. In addition, DAs usually incorporate vesting provisions that protect the project from future regulatory changes by the City. For the DSASP, a DA and any amendments would need to be approved by the City Council through an Ordinance approval process.

Community Benefit Districts (CBD)

Community Benefit Districts (CBDs) are self-assessment districts that provide funding for both facilities and services sought by property owners and/or tenants within a particular district. The City of Santa Rosa currently has two CBDs – the Downtown CBD and the Railroad Square CBD. Under the City’s enabling ordinance, CBDs may be formed anywhere in the city, though are focused in commercial areas with infill residential potential. The standard CBD assessment formula is based on any or all of the following factors: lot square footage, building square footage, linear street frontage, residential building square footage (excluding affordable housing and parking not open to the public), and public parking spaces. Property owners pay the assessment to enhance services such as:

- private security or case workers to address safety and problems related to homelessness
- maintaining sidewalk cleanliness
- improving landscaping
- installing decorative amenities like lighting & seating
- promoting and protecting Downtown Santa Rosa’s image
- programming events and activities in public spaces
- providing directional signs and services

The funds are controlled by an independent board comprised of property owners paying the assessments and business owners located within each district. CBDs are organized and funded by property owners and/or tenants and can be dissolved by same.

Summary of Potential Funding Sources and Uses

Table FI-4 presents a matrix linking the infrastructure and public service needs within the DSASP to the most applicable funding sources described above. As shown, there are multiple options for funding many of the DSASP improvements. In addition, funding sources can be combined and/or used to replace others (e.g., "buy-down") over time. The most appropriate funding source(s) will depend on the unique circumstances that apply to individual projects and may evolve over time. In addition, the approach will be guided by the funding policies and implementation actions described in the table.
### Table F1-4: DSASP Potential Funding Sources and Uses Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infrastructure Funding Type</th>
<th>Utilities</th>
<th>Circulation</th>
<th>Civic Spaces</th>
<th>Operations &amp; Maintenance</th>
<th>Implementation Considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Developer-Based Funding</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact Fees (e.g., updated water and wastewater connection fees)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>Must correspond to the “nexus” findings, consistent with the Mitigation Fee Act (i.e., the fee must be reasonably related to the cost of the improvement and the impact created by new development). Can be linked to the state’s SCIP program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dedications and Exactions</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>Typically required as project-specific mitigations, or may be based on policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Agreements</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Requires a market strong enough to incentivize developer investment beyond fair share. DA’s are legally binding contracts between developers and public agencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Land-Secured Tax Revenue</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Tax or Assessment District (e.g., CFD, CBD, BID, Special Assessment Districts)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Requires voter approval and sufficient scale/participation to achieve yield and implementation efficiency.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>City-Based Funding</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhanced Infrastructure Financing District - SB 628 Tax Increment Financing</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>Diverts incremental increases in tax revenue from the General Fund, creating a trade-off between General Fund revenue and funding for project or area wide purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Obligation Bond</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>Limited to funding capital improvements and must be secured by legally available resources like property tax revenues. If for non-education purposes, requires a two-thirds voter approval.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revenue Bond</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Limited to enterprise-related expenditures and requires a stable source of revenue. Does not require voter approval.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other City Funding (Other Special Tax Measures, etc.)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Requires voter approval to increase local taxes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City’s General Fund</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>Creates trade off between projects and programs that are currently funded by General Fund revenues and new initiatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional, State or Federal Grant Funding</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Can require significant Staff time to apply for and administer qualifying projects.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Another important aspect of implementation has to do with the project permitting and approval process. Clear application requirements and a transparent approval process can facilitate development under the DSASP and support private developers in delivering feasible projects consistent with the DSASP. Various State laws and City policies seek to streamline the project approval process and boost housing production. These laws and policies are summarized below.

**Environmental Review**

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), a programmatic Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was prepared for the 2007 Specific Plan (SCH# 2006072104) and the Final EIR certified by the City Council in June 2007. In parallel with preparation of the Draft DSASP, a Draft Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) was prepared to address the new or substantially more adverse environmental impacts that could result from implementation of the DSASP, as amended in 2020. When a public agency has prepared an EIR for a specific plan, State law provides that residential, commercial, or mixed-use projects undertaken in conformity to the specific plan are exempt from CEQA, subject to certain requirements. These provisions include, Section 15182 of the CEQA Guidelines, Section 21155.4 of the Public Resources Code, which applies to projects in transit priority areas that are also consistent with a sustainable communities strategy, and Government Code 65457, which applies only to residential projects. Further, Section 15183 of the CEQA Guidelines mandates that projects consistent with existing zoning or general plan policies for which an EIR was certified shall not require additional environmental review, except as needed to project- or site-specific significant environmental effects. Residential projects that are eligible include, but are not limited to, subdivisions, zoning changes, and residential or mixed use planned unit developments.

Pursuant to Section 15152 of the CEQA Guidelines, projects will also be eligible to “tier” from the SEIR, incorporating the prior analysis of that document by reference and concentrating solely on the specific environmental issues germane to the project in order to streamline environmental review. In addition to the policies and standards of the DSASP and other applicable regulations, individual projects shall implement and demonstrate compliance with the mitigation measures in the Final SEIR.

The City intends to rely on these provisions for exemptions and tiering to the maximum extent feasible in order to streamline environmental review of projects subsequent to the DSASP.

**State Housing Law**

Government Code Section 65913.4, as updated to reflect Senate Bill (SB) 35, SB 330, and other legislation, includes provisions for streamlined processing of residential infill projects intended to expedite and facilitate the construction of affordable housing and to mandate a ministerial review and approval process for residential development projects that meet a variety of specific requirements. In Santa Rosa, these provisions apply to proposed multi-family developments that contain two or more residential units with at least 10 percent affordability. Eligible projects are exempt from environmental review under CEQA and the process does not allow public hearings, other than design review strictly focused on assessing compliance with criteria required for streamlined projects, as well as any reasonable objective design standards that were in effect before the application was submitted.

Government Code Section 65589.5, known as the Housing Accountability Act (HAA), restricts cities and counties from denying or imposing conditions on residential projects that would require a reduction in density of a development that complies with “objective” general plan, zoning, and subdivision standards without making specified findings that the project would have a “specific adverse impact” on public health or safety. Recent amendments to the HAA require cities and counties to reduce the time it takes to process housing applications with an EIR to no more than 90 days for most market-rate housing developments (from 120 days) and to 60 days (from 90 days) for affordable developments, after a project application is deemed complete. In addition, the new provisions require communities to either approve or disapprove the application at any of the five allowed hearings. The new provisions codified into law with the passage of SB 330 will expire on January 1, 2025.
Other City Actions

The City has put in place Resilient City Development Measures, adopted into the Zoning Code, to fast-track housing development following the Tubbs and Nuns fires of October 2017. The measures, which expire on May 11, 2021 unless renewed, allow most residential uses by-right throughout the Downtown Station Area, with the exception of properties located east of E Street that were not included in the 2007 Plan. Further, design review for new development and major remodels is delegated to the Zoning Administrator, with the exception of projects located in the H-combining district, established for historic preservation purposes. These measures have streamlined design review and reduced timelines by up to 70 percent since implementation. The City has also set up an Expedited Permitting Program, cutting time for planning, engineering and building review from 18 to 6 months.

BIENNIAL REVIEW

Conducting periodic reviews is important to ensure the DSASP’s proper functioning over time. Technological innovations and changing economic and demographic conditions may also affect the effectiveness of implementing actions. Reviews offer an opportunity to examine the directives of the DSASP, check in on the planning process to see whether goals and objectives are being achieved, and make changes in the case that they are not.

State legislative requirements do not necessitate a mandatory review cycle for specific plans; nevertheless, given the influence of market factors on development feasibility and the magnitude of transformations envisioned, a biennial review should be conducted to make sure the DSASP is on track.

Regular review should focus on the following items of particular importance:

- Review the maximum base Floor Area Ratio (FAR) standards and development incentives identified in Chapter 2: Land Use to evaluate if they are providing the intended results;
- Ensure that the affordability mix and range of housing types constructed is consistent with the objective of promoting vital and resilient downtown neighborhoods;
- Ensure an appropriate balance of residential and non-residential development downtown, with commercial tenant spaces designed to accommodate a range of small, medium and large businesses;
- Monitor market conditions and assess optimal timing for pursuant of public-private partnerships for the redevelopment of City-owned catalyst sites;
- Re-prioritize, if needed, roadway, utility, and park/plaza infrastructure improvements in the CIP, given spatial patterns of development;
- Determine whether development standards and design guidelines are resulting in projects that reflect intended DSASP goals, including goals for the preservation and enhancement of historic resources; and
- Assess the effectiveness of parking management strategies in view of changing demographic, economic, and technological developments.
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