

CITY OF PETALUMA
NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF AN ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
AND
NOTICE OF PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING
City of Petaluma General Plan Update

Date: August 8, 2025
To: State Clearinghouse
Responsible Agencies, Trustee Agencies
Interested Parties
Project Name: City of Petaluma General Plan Update
Project Address: Citywide and within the planning area
Lead Agency: City of Petaluma
Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report for the City of Petaluma General Plan Update

Comment Period: August 8, 2025, to September 8, 2025
Written comments should be submitted no later than 5:00 pm on September 8, 2025.

In addition to the opportunity to submit written comments, a scoping meeting will be held to inform interested parties about the project, and to provide agencies and the public with an opportunity to comment on the scope and content of the EIR.

NOP Scoping Meeting: August 21, 2025, at 6:00 PM
Petaluma Community Center Activity Room
320 North McDowell Boulevard, Petaluma, CA 94954

Notice of Preparation

Notice is hereby given that the City of Petaluma (City), as the Lead Agency, is preparing a programmatic Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Petaluma General Plan Update pursuant to and in accordance with Title 14, Section 15060(d) of the California Code of Regulations, the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and the State of California CEQA Guidelines.

The purpose of the Notice of Preparation (NOP) is to solicit input and feedback from the public and regulatory agencies on the project, including project alternatives, and environmental impacts. The intent of the NOP is to provide sufficient information to enable meaningful comments regarding the scope and content of the EIR.

This NOP and the background documents associated with the General Plan Update (the “project” under CEQA) are available for review on the City’s General Plan Update webpage at: <https://www.planpetaluma.org/>. This NOP has been issued to provide an opportunity for responsible and trustee agencies and interested parties to submit comments on the scope of the EIR, relative to the project description. Agencies should comment on such information as it relates to their statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project.

The City has determined that the proposed project may have a significant effect on the environment; therefore, an EIR is being prepared.

The EIR is intended to be a program-level document that will analyze the effects of the proposed General Plan Update. Program EIRs generally analyze broad environmental effects of the program, with the acknowledgment

that site-specific environmental review may be required for future actions (14 CCR 15168(a)). The purpose of a Program EIR is to allow the lead agency to consider broad policy alternatives and program-wide mitigation measures at a time when the agency has greater flexibility to deal with basic problems or cumulative impacts. Because no specific development projects are being proposed as part of the update to the General Plan, the analysis will not be parcel-specific. Rather, the analysis will focus on the reasonably foreseeable direct and indirect physical environmental effects that could result from the update to the General Plan, including proposed land use designation changes. The analysis will compare the net change of impacts as a result of the General Plan Update compared to existing conditions. Following adoption of the updated General Plan, subsequent projects that are consistent with the General Plan would undergo a streamlined CEQA environmental review and approval process.

Notice of Preparation Public Review Period: August 8, 2025 to September 8, 2025

The City requests your careful review and consideration of this notice, and invites any and all input and comments from interested agencies, persons, and organizations regarding the preparation of the Program EIR. Comments and responses to this notice must be in writing and submitted to the Lead Agency Contact no later than September 8, 2025 at 5:00 p.m. If applicable, please indicate a contact person for your agency or organization. If your agency is a responsible agency as defined by CEQA Guidelines Section 15381, your agency may use the environmental documents prepared by the City when considering permits or approvals for action regarding the proposed project.

Lead Agency Contact:

Heather Gurewitz, AICP
City of Petaluma Community Development Department
11 English Street
Petaluma, California 94952
planpetaluma@cityofpetaluma.org

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS: Public comments may be provided in person at the scoping meeting which will be held on August 21, 2025 at 6:00 PM at the Petaluma Community Center’s Activity Room located at 320 North McDowell Boulevard in Petaluma. Additionally, written public comments may be submitted no later than 5:00 p.m. on September 8, 2025, by one of the following:

- Email: planpetaluma@cityofpetaluma.org
- Regular Mail: Heather Gurewitz, Senior Planner, City of Petaluma, Community Development Department, 11 English Street, Petaluma, CA 94952
- Online Comment Form: www.planpetaluma.org/eir

General Plan Update Project Background: The objective of a General Plan is to provide the City with a roadmap for the future. The City of Petaluma is currently operating under the City of Petaluma: General Plan 2025, which was adopted in 2008. The General Plan serves as the guiding vision document and provides policies and implementation programs to achieve the City’s goals. There are eight mandatory topical areas, referred to as Elements, that must be included in a General Plan including Land Use, Open Space, Conservation, Housing, Circulation, Noise, Safety, and Environmental Justice. Petaluma’s 6th cycle Housing Element was recently adopted by the City Council and certified by the State of California in May 2023.

Developed through a community-based process, the General Plan Update will include goals, policies, and programs to guide the future of Petaluma based on the community’s values and aspirations for the future. Additionally, the update will equip Petaluma with a policy framework to responsibly manage future projects and accommodate the growth and development anticipated to occur in the City of Petaluma over the next 25 years.

Project Location: The Plan Area includes the entirety of the City of Petaluma, California and the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) surrounding the City. Figure 1 shows the regional location of the Plan Area and Figure 2 shows an aerial image of the City of Petaluma City Boundary, Urban Service Area, the Sphere of Influence, and Urban Growth Boundary.

Proposed Project: The proposed project consists of a comprehensive update to the City’s General Plan. The General Plan Update will be Petaluma’s updated long-term framework for future growth and development. The General Plan Update represents the community’s view of its future and contains the goals and policies upon which the City will base decisions in the future. To provide a contemporary plan that will guide the community, the General Plan is being updated to reflect changes in the community, new issues and opportunities (as identified from community input), changes in State law (such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions), and new trends (autonomous cars, impacts of online shopping, and so forth). The Petaluma General Plan Update serves several purposes:

- Express the community’s vision for Petaluma’s future
- Provide a balance between growth and conservation that meets community needs and protects Petaluma’s quality of life
- Inform residents, developers, and decision makers of the policies that guide development
- Ensure that development occurs in an efficient, orderly manner that minimizes costs to taxpayers
- Engage in a comprehensive and inclusive outreach process

The General Plan Update identifies and prioritizes opportunities to preserve the character of the community, conserve natural resources, and direct land use policies that enable sustainable growth and employment opportunities in Petaluma. The General Plan Update will define how and where the city will evolve over the next 25 years including the following strategies:

- Expand open space and access to the Petaluma River
- Reimagine a land use pattern that prioritizes active transportation
- Support new and innovative housing types within city limits and near transit hubs
- Enhance existing neighborhoods by increasing access to daily needs
- Revitalize commercial corridors
- Accommodate Petaluma’s growing needs for a thriving local economy, community gathering space, and high quality housing that is affordable
- Preserve Petaluma’s historic, agricultural, river-oriented identity

Project Alternatives: The EIR will evaluate a reasonable range of project alternatives that, consistent with CEQA, meet most of the proposed project objectives and reduce or avoid potential environmental effects, including a required No Project Alternative.

Potential Environmental Effect Areas: The EIR for the proposed project will focus on the resource areas/issues applicable to this project. The EIR will evaluate the potentially significant environmental impacts of the proposed project and will evaluate whether there are feasible mitigation measures that may lessen or avoid such impacts. As the General Plan Update does not include any specific construction or development, but rather the potential for land use changes and development to be constructed in the future, the impact analysis will be programmatic and cumulative in nature. The EIR will also identify and evaluate alternatives to the proposed project. The EIR will evaluate potentially significant environmental effects related to the following environmental issues:

- Aesthetics
- Agriculture and Forestry Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Energy

- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities and Service Systems
- Wildfire
- Cumulative Effects
- Growth Inducing Effects

When the Draft EIR is completed, it will be available for review at the City's offices located at 11 English Street, Petaluma, California 94952 and online at: <https://www.planpetaluma.org/documents>. The City will issue a Notice of Availability of a Draft EIR at that time to inform the public and interested agencies, groups, and individuals of how to access the Draft EIR and provide comments.

If you have questions regarding this NOP or the scoping meeting, please contact Heather Gurewitz at (707) 294-1697 or via email at planpetaluma@cityofpetaluma.org.



ACCESSIBILITY: Any member of the public who needs accommodations should email the Commission Clerk, Uriel Orozco, at uorozco@cityofpetaluma.org, or by calling 707-778-4319. The Commission Clerk will use their best efforts to provide reasonable accommodations to provide as much accessibility as possible while also maintaining public safety in accordance with the City procedure for resolving reasonable accommodation requests.

Attachments

Figure 1 Regional Location

Figure 2 Project Location

Figure 1 Regional Location



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20-10614 EPS
Fig 1 Regional Location

 City of Petaluma 

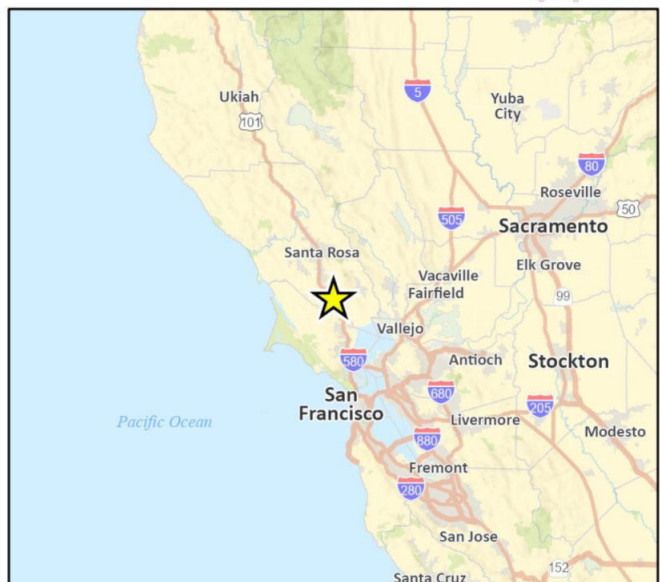
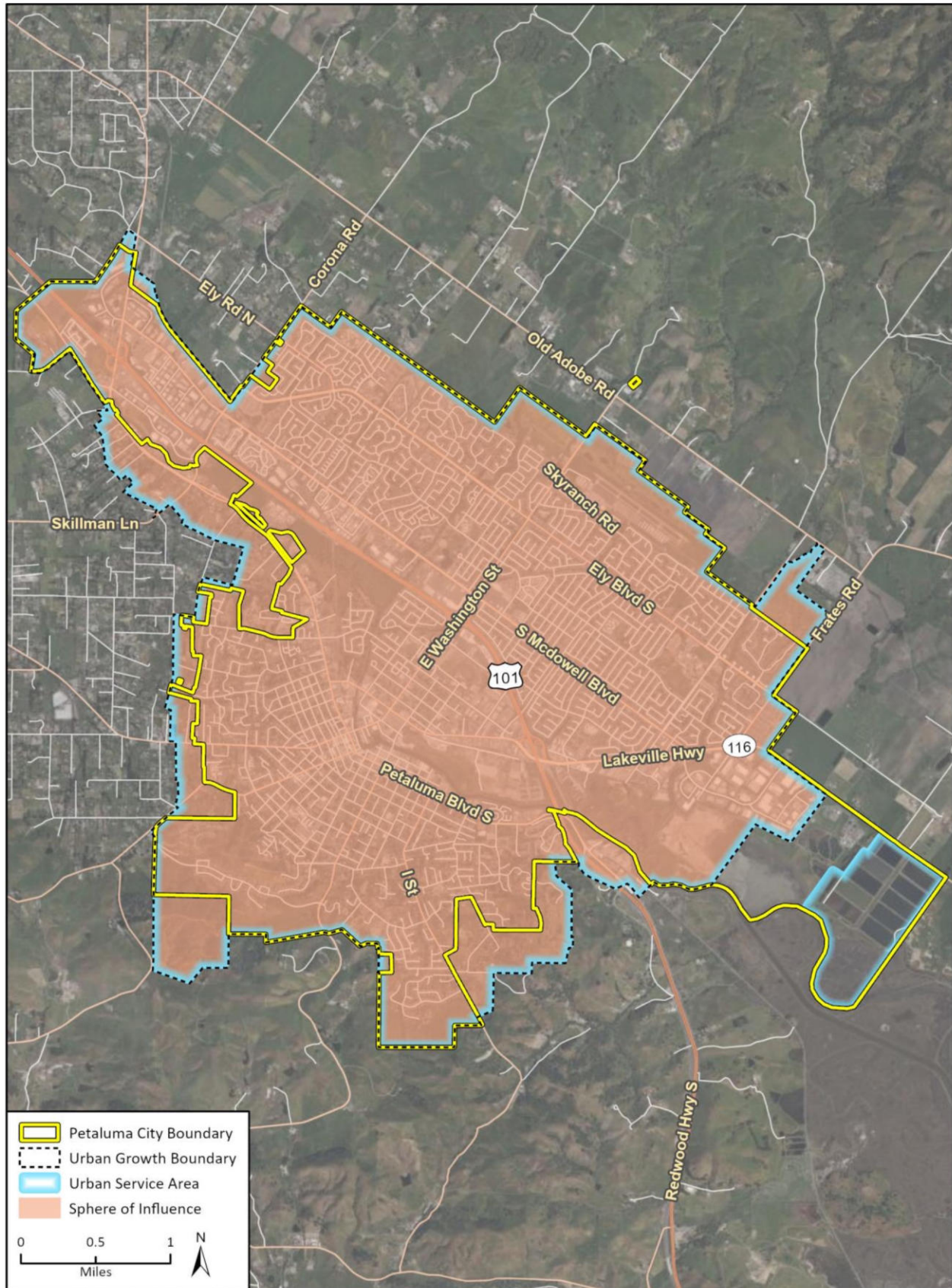


Figure 2 Project Location



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The Urban Service Area was created based from the Urban Growth Boundary and also digitized in some areas from the General Plan Update.

20-10614 EPS
Fig 2 Planning Boundaries