Notice of Preparation of a Draft Subsequent Environmental Impact Report for the North Santa Rosa Station Area Specific Plan Update Project (SCH No. ___)

Date	November 18, 2026
To	Responsible and Trustee Agencies, Interested Organizations, and Individuals
Subject	Notice of Preparation of a Draft Subsequent Environmental Impact Report for the North Santa Rosa Station Area Specific Plan Update (SCH No. ___)

The City of Santa Rosa (City) is preparing a Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) for the North Santa Rosa Station Area (NSRSA) Specific Plan Update ("proposed project"). Pursuant to Section 15162 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, the SEIR will update the information, analysis and findings contained in the *North Santa Rosa Station Area Specific Plan Draft Environmental Impact Report* (State Clearinghouse No. 2011122034), dated April 2012 ("2012 Specific Plan EIR"), which previously evaluated potential environmental impacts. The 2012 EIR can be accessed at the links below:

North Santa Rosa Station Area Specific Plan Draft EIR and Appendices

North Santa Rosa Station Area Specific Plan - Final EIR

Since certification of the 2012 Specific Plan EIR, modifications to the NSRSA Specific Plan have occurred, requiring major revisions to the previous EIR pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15162(a)(2). More specifically, the forthcoming SEIR will conduct an environmental review of the proposed modifications to the NSRSA Specific Plan to determine whether the modifications would introduce new significant environmental effects or increase the severity of existing effects previously evaluated in the 2012 Specific Plan EIR. Given the scope of the Specific Plan Update, the City determined that a SEIR is the necessary and appropriate environmental analysis that will also be an important basis for further evaluating specific future development projects within the Specific Plan area.

In accordance with CEQA Section 15082, the City has prepared this Notice of Preparation for the SEIR to provide the public, nearby residents and property owners, responsible agencies, and other interested parties with information regarding the proposed project and its potential environmental effects. Public agencies and members of the general public are invited to provide comments in writing as to the scope and content of the SEIR. Specifically, the City desires to know the views of Responsible and Trustee Agencies as to the potentially significant environmental issues, reasonable alternatives, and mitigation measures that are applicable to each agency's statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project. Responsible Agencies will need to use the SEIR prepared by the City when considering permits or other approvals for the proposed project.

Due to the time limits mandated by State law, responses must be received by the City at the earliest possible date, but no later than the close of the Notice of Preparation ("NOP") review period, which runs as follows: **November 19, 2026 through December 21, 2026**.

Please send written responses to Christian Candelaria, City Planner, at the address shown below. Public agencies providing comments are requested to include a contact person for the agency.

Lead Agency:	City of Santa Rosa Planning & Economic Development 100 Santa Rosa Avenue Santa Rosa, CA 95404	Contact Person: Christian Candelaria Phone Number: 707.543.3232 Email: ccandelaria@srcity.org

PROJECT LOCATION:

The proposed project is located within the City of Santa Rosa, in Sonoma County, California; refer to **Figure 1**, ***Regional Vicinity***. The approximately 987-acre Specific Plan area is located primarily in the incorporated portion of the City, with small portions of the project site laying within unincorporated Sonoma County. The project area is centered on the area approximately one-half mile around the North Santa Rosa Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) Station, which is located at 1500 Guerneville Road, west of US-101 and north of Downtown Santa Rosa. The project area is bisected from the northwest to the southeast by the Northwestern Pacific Rail Corridor and US-101 runs north-south through the eastern portion of the project area. The project is bounded by Paulin Creek (north of West Steele Lane) on the north, US-101 on the east (except for Santa Rosa Junior College and Santa Rosa High School), Ridley Avenue to the west, and just south of West College Avenue to the south. Santa Rosa Junior College and Santa Rosa High School are bounded by Mendocino Avenue on the east, Elliott Avenue on the north, US-101 on the west, and Ridgway Avenue on the south. Refer to **Figure 2**, ***Project Vicinity***.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The primary purpose of the project is to achieve consistency with the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's (MTC's) Transit-Oriented Communities (TOC) Policy. The update of the NSRSA Specific Plan evaluates and implements land use, zoning, development standard, mobility, and policy changes necessary to satisfy applicable TOC Policy requirements within the project area.

The NSRSA Specific Plan Draft EIR (State Clearinghouse No. 2011122034), dated April 2012, and the NSRSA Specific Plan Final EIR and Response to Comments (State Clearinghouse No. 2011122034), dated June 2012, were certified on June 28, 2012. Since adoption of the 2012 Specific Plan, MTC has established the TOC Policy as a key implementation measure of *Plan Bay Area 2050+*. Geographic areas subject to the TOC Policy are categorized by Tier, according to the level of transit service at fixed-guideway station(s), within one-half mile as follows:

- Tier 1: Rail stations serving regional centers (i.e., Downtown San Francisco, Downtown Oakland, and Downtown San José)
- Tier 2: Stop/station served by two or more BART lines or BART and Caltrain
- Tier 3: Stop/station served by one BART line, Caltrain, light rail transit, or bus rapid transit
- Tier 4: Commuter rail (SMART, ACE, Capitol Corridor, Valley Link) stations, Caltrain stations south of Tamien, or ferry terminals.

The NSRSA is designated as a Tier 4 station area under the TOC Policy and currently does not meet the minimum residential density and office floor area ratio (FAR) requirements applicable to Tier 4 locations. Tier 4 areas are expected to achieve average minimum residential densities of 25 dwelling units per acre (du/ac) and average minimum office densities of 1.0 floor area ratio (FAR). The TOC Policy also establishes corresponding average maximum density standards of 35 du/ac for residential development and 3.0 FAR for office development. Accordingly, the update of the North Santa Rosa Station Area Specific Plan is being prepared to evaluate and implement changes necessary to achieve compliance with these requirements while maintaining consistency with local planning goals and community priorities.

The proposed project is a policy document that establishes the framework for future development within the Specific Plan area and does not propose any site-specific development or construction. The project includes amendments to the existing Specific Plan and related amendments to the *Santa Rosa General Plan 2050* and the Santa Rosa City Code (SRCC). The project evaluates a range of strategies intended to achieve consistency with MTC's TOC Policy. Proposed changes are focused on increasing allowable residential densities and office intensities, supporting transit-oriented development, and implementing other measures necessary to satisfy applicable TOC Policy requirements.

The proposed project components include:

- Changes to land use designations, zoning regulations, and development standards necessary to achieve compliance with applicable TOC Policy requirements.
- Opportunities for additional residential, mixed-use, commercial, and employment-generating development needed to support achievement of applicable TOC density and intensity standards.
- Affordable housing production, preservation, and protection strategies.
- Commercial stabilization measures and strategies that support long-term economic vitality.
- Parking management and transportation demand management (TDM) measures.
- Pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and multimodal circulation improvements.
- Complete streets improvements, access gap improvements, mobility hub planning, and other transportation investments intended to improve connectivity between the SMART station and surrounding neighborhoods, employment centers, educational institutions, and community destinations.
- Public realm, infrastructure, urban design, and implementation strategies that support the long-term vision for the project area.

Approvals of the following entitlements are required to adopt and implement the proposed project:

1. General Plan Amendment (GPA)
2. Specific Plan Amendment (SPA)
3. Zoning Code Amendment

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), notice is given to responsible and interested agencies that the City of Santa Rosa plans to oversee the preparation on a Subsequent Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) for the above-described Project. The purpose of this notice is to solicit guidance from agencies and interested parties as to the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the SEIR. Information in that regard should be submitted to this office as soon as possible, but **not later than thirty (30) days** after receiving this notice.

PHYSICAL SETTING:

The City of Santa Rosa is located in central Sonoma County, approximately 55 miles north of San Francisco, within California's North Coast region. Situated along the Santa Rosa Plain and within the Coast Ranges geomorphic province, the City encompasses a combination of relatively flat alluvial valley terrain, rolling hills, oak woodlands, and surrounding mountainous landscapes. U.S. Highway 101 traverses the City in a north-south direction, while State Route 12 provides a major east-west transportation connection. The City of Santa Rosa serves as the economic, governmental, and cultural center of Sonoma County and is surrounded by an extensive agricultural landscape characterized by vineyards, orchards, and open space. Elevations within the Specific Plan Update area range between 120 and 200 feet above mean sea level. Eastern valleys such as Rincon Valley and Bennett Valley are considered the low intervening valleys at 200 to 300 feet above mean sea level with gentle slopes ranging from 0 to 15 percent.

The City is horizontally bisected by Santa Rosa Creek, which originates in the foothills of the Sonoma Mountains and drains from east to west through the City, across the Santa Rosa Plain, and into Laguna de Santa Rosa. Paulin Creek runs along the northern boundary of the Specific Plan Update area, and Steele Creek traverses the center of the Specific Plan Update area. The Specific Plan Update area contains multiple residential developments and other areas with ornamental landscaping, however, the area also contains some areas of undeveloped open space. Seasonal wetlands occur in small drainages in the Specific Plan Update area, in localized depressions, and along the lower banks and in sediments that accumulate in creeks.

LAND USE:

The project area has a mix of uses, including single-family and multi-family residential, office, retail, industrial, public, recreational, and educational facilities. Retail development occurs within and around Coddingtown Mall (southwest corner of US-101 and Guerneville Rd). Most of the office space in the project area is located in the business park along North Dutton Avenue. Industrial uses are concentrated between the rail corridor and Cleveland Avenue, north of College Avenue. There are a number of schools and public facilities in the project area. These include the public library on Guerneville Road, Helen Lehman Elementary School located northwest of Jennings Park, and two major educational facilities—Santa Rosa Junior College and Santa Rosa High School—which are located to the east of US-101. The project area is served by two parks: Jennings Park and Haydn Park. Jennings Park, a neighborhood park located in the southwest corner of the project area, comprises 6.5 acres and is intended to serve the local residents within a half-mile radius. Haydn Park, a 0.1-acre pocket park located off Tammy Way, is intended to serve the local residents within a quarter-mile radius. The remainder of the existing project area is residential.

According to the General Plan Land Use Diagram for the City of Santa Rosa, the project area is designated for Low, Medium, and Medium-High Residential, Mobile Home Park, Retail and Business Service, Office, Business Park, Light Industry, General Industry, Public/Institutional, Parks/Recreation, and Open Space. In addition, the *Santa Rosa General Plan 2050 Draft EIR* identifies the North Santa Rosa Station Area as a Priority Development Area (PDA), which are places near public transit that are planned for new homes, jobs, and community amenities.

The Specific Plan Update area is surrounded on all sides by existing urban development. Specifically, it is surrounded by residential, park, and school land to the west, residential and commercial land to the south, retail and office land to the east, and residential land to the north. US-101 travels north–south along the eastern border of the project site and west of Santa Rosa High School and Junior College), Paulin Creek runs east–west along the northern border of the project site, and the Northwestern Pacific Rail Corridor runs northwest–southeast through the northwestern and southeastern borders of the project site.

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS:

The SEIR for the proposed project will focus on the resource areas/issues applicable to this project. The SEIR 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 Specific 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 SEIR will also identify and evaluate alternatives to the proposed project. The SEIR will evaluate potentially significant environmental effects related to the following environmental issues. The following areas will be included in the forthcoming SEIR:

- Aesthetics
- Agricultural/Forestry Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Energy
- Geology/Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards/Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology/Water Quality
- Land Use/Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Tribal Cultural Resources
- Utilities/Service Systems
- Wildfire

There is reasonable potential that the proposed project would result in less than significant impacts related to the following environmental resource topic areas: Agricultural/Forestry Resources; Biological Resources; Cultural Resources; Hazards/Hazardous Materials; Hydrology/Water Quality; Mineral Resources; Public Services; Recreation; Tribal Cultural Resources; and Wildfire. Thus, it is anticipated that these topics will be discussed in the "Effects Found Not to be Significant" chapter in the SEIR.
In addition, the SEIR will also evaluate potential cumulative and growth-inducing effects of the proposed project, and its alternatives. The CEQA-required No Project Alternative will evaluate the environmental impacts through an assumed future growth pattern and transportation improvements based on the Specific Plan Update. The SEIR 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.

PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING:

A public scoping meeting will be conducted on December 1, 2026 to collect comments from Responsible and Trustee Agencies, Interested Parties, and members of the public, regarding the scope and contents of the SEIR in accordance with Public Resources Code Section 21083.9. The date, time, and location of the public scoping meeting are located below:

Date:	**December 1, 2026**
Time:	**4:00PM**
Virtual Meeting:	**Zoom Meeting Link:** https://bkf.zoom.us/j/91858058718?pwd=W7zPTfTgdLboaqig5zgN903VZxbU8b.1 Meeting ID: 918 5805 8718 Passcode: 429415

For further information regarding this notice or scoping meeting, please contact Christian Candelaria at (707) 543-3232 or via email at ccandelaria@srcity.org.

Christian Candelaria
City Planner

Date

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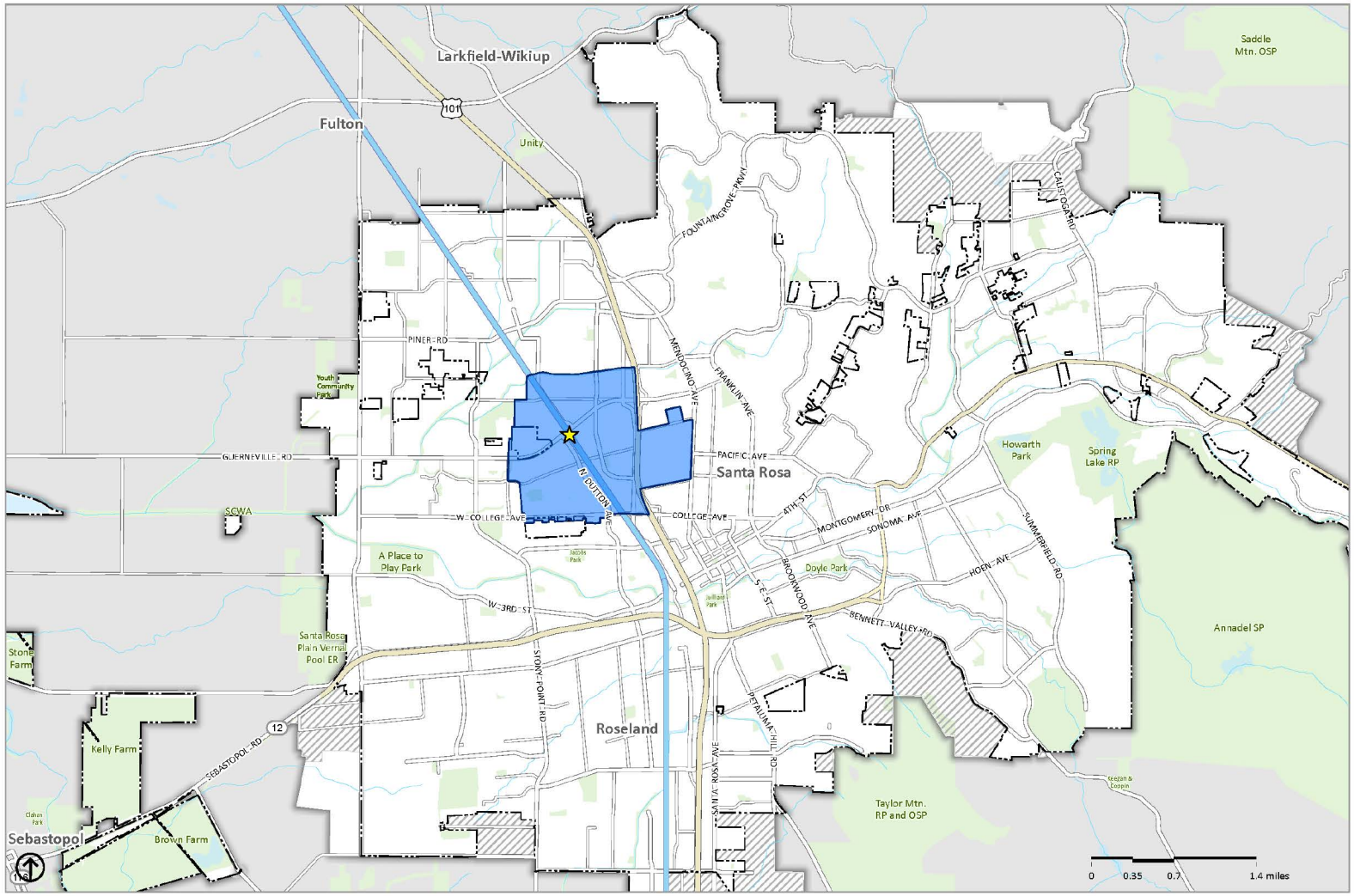
Figure 1, ***Regional Vicinity***



Source: City of Santa Rosa 2026

Figure 1 Regional Vicinity

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Figure 2, ***Project Vicinity***

