

# 2

## Land Use and Economic Development



## 2. Land Use and Economic Development

How land is used in Santa Rosa can make a big difference in how people feel about and interact in local neighborhoods and in how the local economy operates. A successful new business, residential development, or active community use where there was once was a vacant lot can begin transforming a whole neighborhood, improving everything from the safety of kids going to school to new landscaping along streets and supporting local pride and revitalization. Such positive change can also revitalize commercial and industrial areas and bring critical jobs and community amenities to the city, increasing economic access and vitality. Identifying feasible locations for new and expanded educational, vocational, and employment opportunities can start the process to help local youth and adults develop meaningful careers close to home.

Recognizing all this, General Plan 2050 seeks to reinforce local pride, attract new business, retain and grow existing business, and bolster the vitality of the city as a whole. This chapter supports thoughtful land use planning and economic development strategies to enhance and build on neighborhood assets, address current challenges, improve fiscal stability, increase personal opportunity, and improve quality of life for everyone in Santa Rosa.

Santa Rosa began with the establishment of the downtown area as a commerce center for the surrounding agricultural and timber region. The city developed from this central core along a series of commercial corridors into newer, more suburban neighborhoods. The General Plan aims to foster growth that supports existing and developing communities by creating more

complete, walkable neighborhoods with access to grocery stores and other services, particularly in Areas of Change, discussed below. The General Plan also seeks to strengthen connections between the east and west sides of the city, and between the downtown and surrounding neighborhoods. Policies and actions in this chapter and others are intended to create a more cohesive and vital city.

### Chapter Contents

- ➔ General Plan Priority Areas and Populations
- ➔ Land Use
- ➔ Economic Development

The goals in this chapter reflect Santa Rosa's priorities and implement the community's vision for the future. These goals, associated policies, and actions especially support the following statements from the Santa Rosa Vision (shown in full in **Chapter 1, Introduction**):

- **Just:** Social and environmental justice are achieved for everyone—all abilities, ages, ethnicities, gender identities, immigration status, income levels, language speakers, races, religions, sexual orientations and identities, EVERYONE.
- **Sheltered:** A diverse mix of high-quality, safe, thoughtfully designed, efficiently planned, and well-served housing at all affordability levels is available throughout the community to accommodate

everyone, including formerly homeless, immigrants, local workers, multigenerational households, seniors, students, and formerly incarcerated people. With a goal to avoid a concentration of low-income housing and services in any one area of the city.

- **Successful:** Top employers gravitate; Black-, Latino/Latina-, and other minority-owned businesses are in all corners of the community; equitable investments are made in all neighborhoods; local shops, food and beverage establishments, food trucks, and entertainment spaces support a vibrant city; and meaningful work in a thriving economy is available for people of all ages and backgrounds.

**Figure 2-1** illustrates some of the key concepts addressed in this chapter.

Figure 2-1 Visualizing the Concepts





## General Plan Priority Areas and Populations

A number of policies and actions in this General Plan give priority to specific areas or populations in Santa Rosa. Though a policy or action may apply broadly, this prioritization means that the City will first concentrate efforts on historically underserved communities and/or core neighborhoods to advance key aims of environmental justice, social equity, and complete communities. These priority areas and populations are Equity Priority Areas, Equity Priority Populations, and Areas of Change, described in the following sections.

### Equity Priority Areas

Low-income communities and communities of color often bear a disproportionate burden of pollution exposure and associated health risks. Environmental justice seeks to correct this inequity by reducing pollution exposure in these communities and ensuring that their input is considered in decisions that affect them. Senate Bill 1000, the Planning for Healthy Communities Act (codified in California Government Code Section 65302), requires general plans to identify the communities that suffer most from economic, health, and environmental burdens and address environmental justice for these communities. California Government Code Section 65302 calls these “disadvantaged communities,” and the General Plan terms them “Equity Priority Areas” to recognize the immediate importance of addressing these issues.

The California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool (CalEnviroScreen) is the primary method for identifying Equity Priority Areas.

CalEnviroScreen quantifies a range of factors related to pollution burden and population characteristics (e.g., poverty, educational attainment, and age) to derive a composite score for each census tract compared to the rest of the state. In general, the higher the score, the more impacted a community is. Census tracts in the highest quartile of scores (i.e., 75 to 100 percent) are considered Equity Priority Areas, although the law (California Health and Safety Code Section 39711) encourages Cities to work with community members and stakeholders to refine the boundaries of these communities and identify additional communities, if appropriate, to support planning efforts that improve environmental justice. CalEnviroScreen identifies two Santa Rosa census tracts as Equity Priority Areas: one at the southwest intersection of Highway 101 and State Route 12 and another south of Hearn Avenue west of Highway 101, shown on **Figure 2-2**. The City of Santa Rosa has worked with the community to identify additional vulnerable areas with overlapping concentrations of people of color and people living in poverty, shown on **Figure 2-3**. Santa Rosa’s Equity Priority Areas, shown on **Figure 2-4**, include the areas identified by CalEnviroScreen and the areas with overlapping concentrations of people of color and people living below the poverty line. **Figure 2-4** also shows the boundaries of census tracts containing Equity Priority Areas; data on equity considerations for each tract are included in **Table 6-1** in **Chapter 6**.

**Equity Priority Areas** are areas in Santa Rosa where residents suffer most from economic, health, and environmental burdens. Equity Priority Areas are identified following guidance from the State tool, CalEnviroScreen 4.0, and additional input from community members and stakeholders. This General Plan addresses environmental justice needs pursuant to California Government Code Section 65302 and health and equity considerations of Equity Priority Areas with goals, policies, and actions in each chapter that prioritize Equity Priority Areas, as appropriate. **Chapter 6, Health, Equity, Environmental Justice, and Parks**, has the highest concentration of these goals, policies, and actions.

**Environmental Justice** is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of people of all races, cultures, incomes, and national origins with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

*Source: California Government Code, Section 65040.12(e)*

## Equity Priority Populations

Similar to the Equity Priority Area designation, the City of Santa Rosa has identified 10 Equity Priority Populations based on characteristics that contribute to vulnerability and/or the likelihood of being underserved in a variety of areas, including environmental justice, equity, health, and safety. These populations are:

1. Low-income individuals and families
2. Racial or ethnic groups experiencing disparate health outcomes

3. Seniors, children, youth, and young adults
4. Individuals with disabilities
5. Immigrants and refugees
6. Outdoor workers and farmworkers
7. Individuals who have limited English proficiency
8. Unhoused people
9. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersexual, asexual, and other LGBTQIA+ communities
10. Individuals who are incarcerated or who have been incarcerated

Though it is not a requirement of State law, one or more Equity Priority Populations may be prioritized in General Plan goals, policies, and actions, as appropriate.

## Areas of Change

The creation of General Plan 2050 included extensive community engagement to identify a preferred land use and circulation diagram.

**Figure 1-4** in **Chapter 1, Introduction**, details the major circulation network and land use actions programmed in General Plan 2050. Community members favored an approach that did not result in any changes to land use designations from the previous general plan, and instead prioritized development in 21 specific “Areas of Change,” depicted on **Figure 2-5**.

Areas of Change were identified for focus due to the existence of underutilized or undeveloped land or a dated development pattern where new infrastructure, services, and/or amenities would create complete neighborhoods, with more attractive, livable environments. Development in Areas of Change will enhance the immediate area and the city as a whole. The Areas of Change are diverse, including downtown Santa Rosa,

which is planned to intensify with new residential and commercial uses, and the Southeast Greenway, which is anticipated to be a treasured community open space and recreational amenity.

These Areas of Change are places where the City will focus efforts to address housing, services, connectivity, and/or infrastructure needs and help provide complete neighborhoods with goods and services that are easily available. Accordingly, some policies and actions in this and other chapters focus on Areas of Change for implementing actions related to active transportation infrastructure, quality housing, healthy food options, opportunities for social connections, and access to parks and commercial services.

**Areas of Change**, shown on **Figure 2-5**, are places the City will focus efforts to address housing, services, connectivity, and/or infrastructure needs to help make these complete neighborhoods.

**Complete Neighborhoods** are areas with convenient, equitable access to goods and services needed to support daily life, such as grocery stores, recreation opportunities, community gathering places, active transportation infrastructure, and transit. The specific attributes of a complete neighborhood will vary, depending on the unique needs of the local community.

This page intentionally left blank.



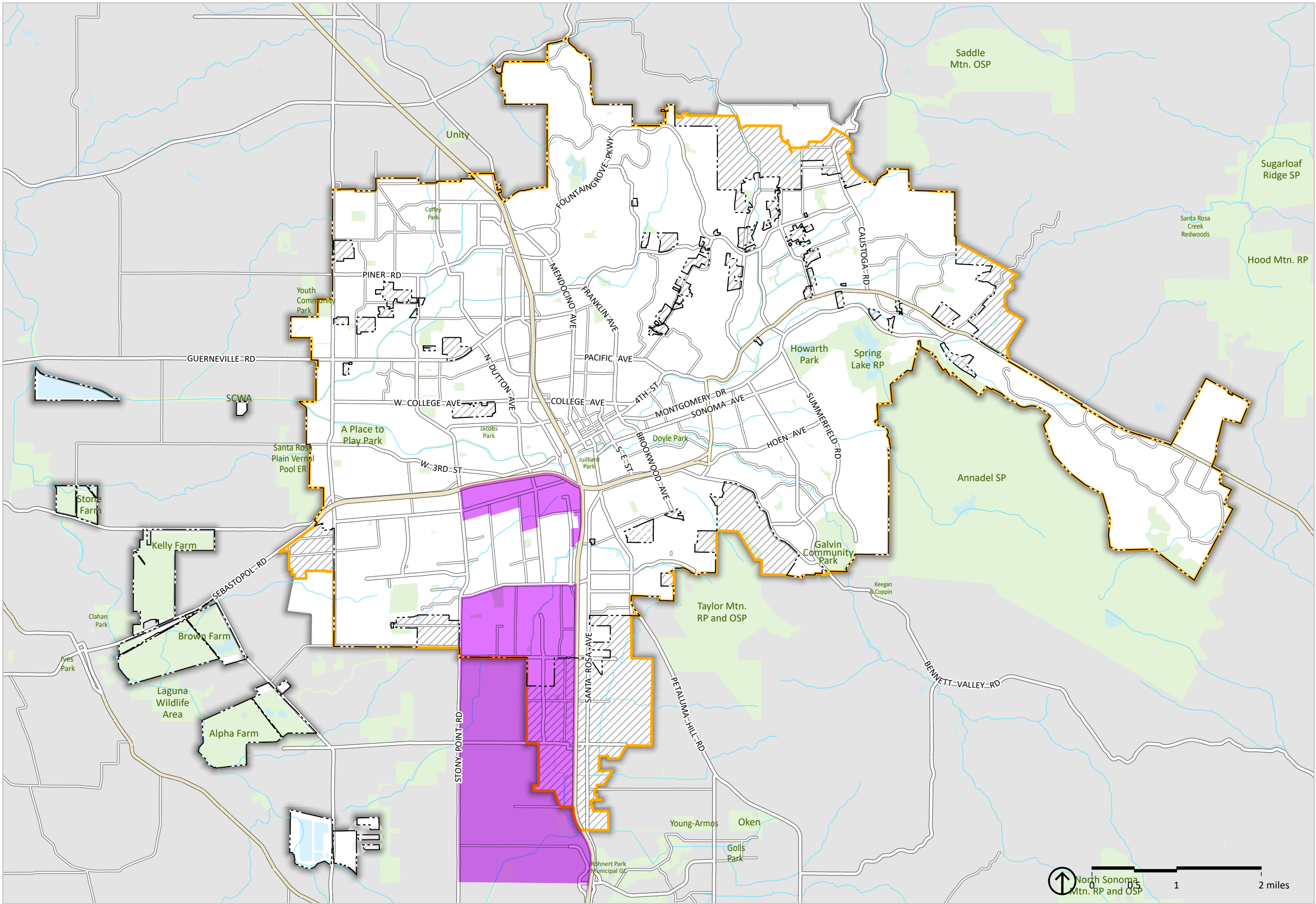


Figure 2-2  
**Disadvantaged  
 Communities  
 Under SB 535**

- City Limits
- Urban Growth Boundary
- City Sphere of Influence
- Planning Area
- Disadvantaged Communities Under SB 535

This page intentionally left blank.

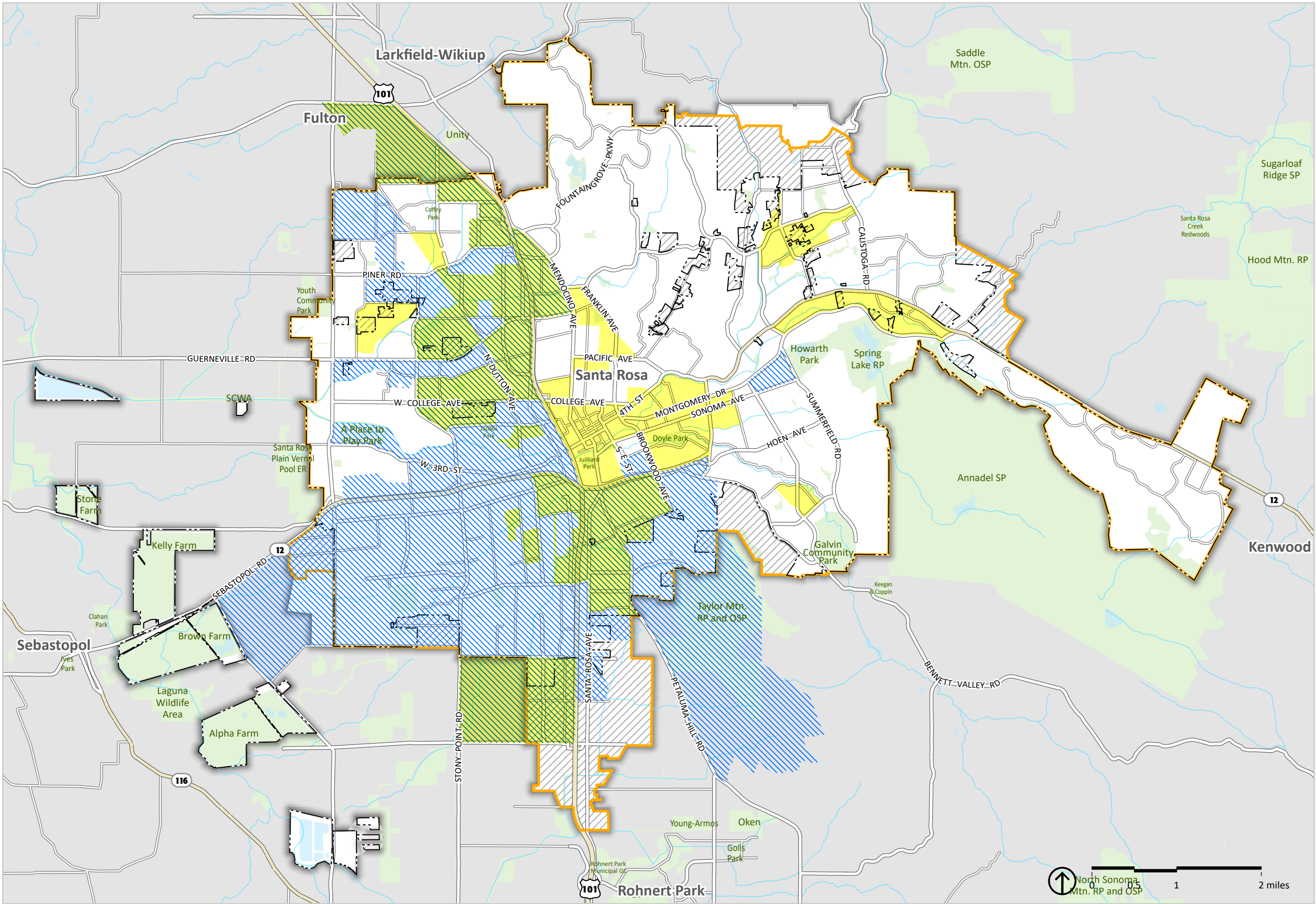


Figure 2-3  
Concentrations of  
People of Color  
and People Below  
the Poverty Line

- City Limits
- Urban Growth Boundary
- City Sphere of Influence
- Planning Area
- Poverty Top 25%
- Minority Top 25%

This page intentionally left blank.



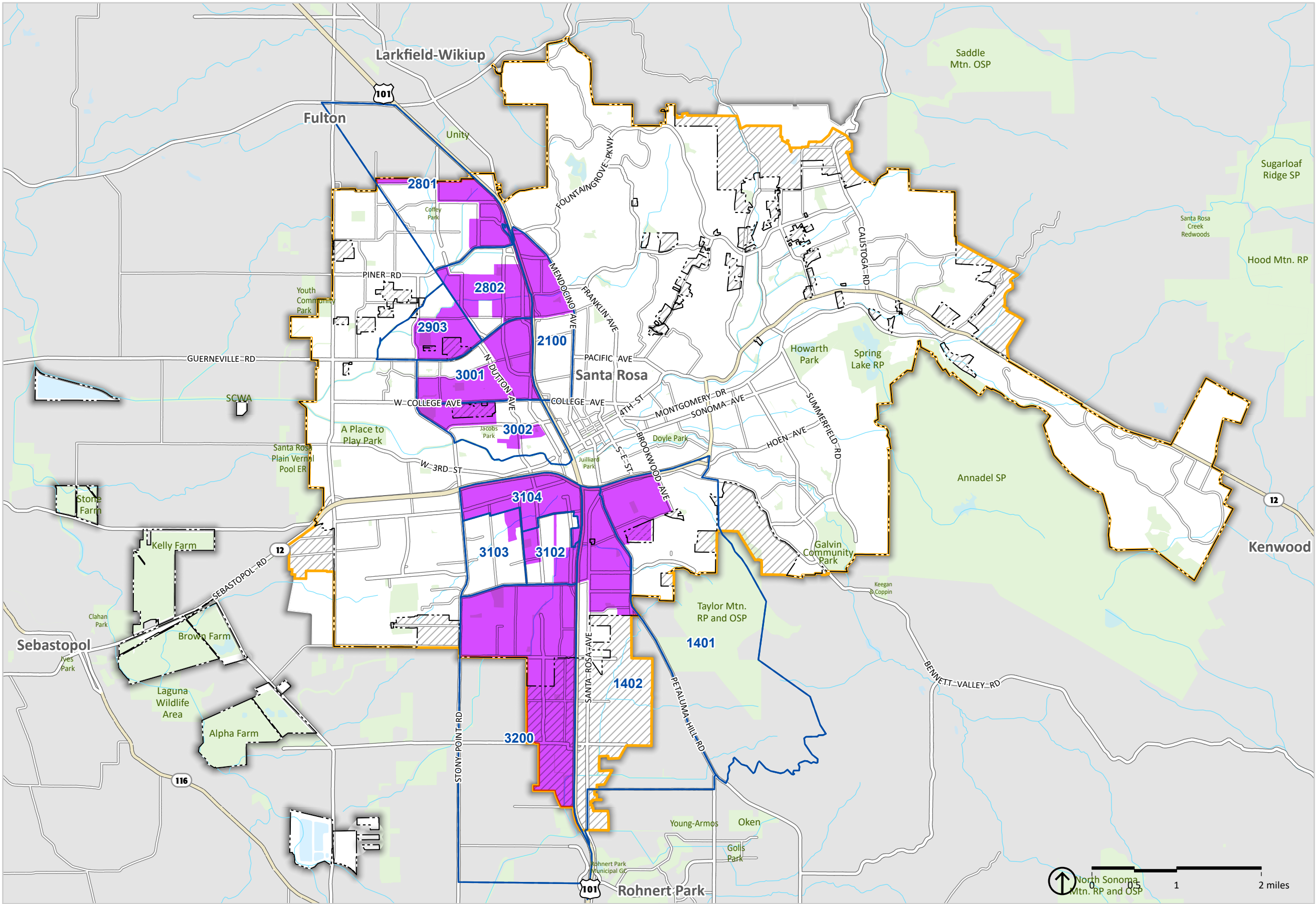
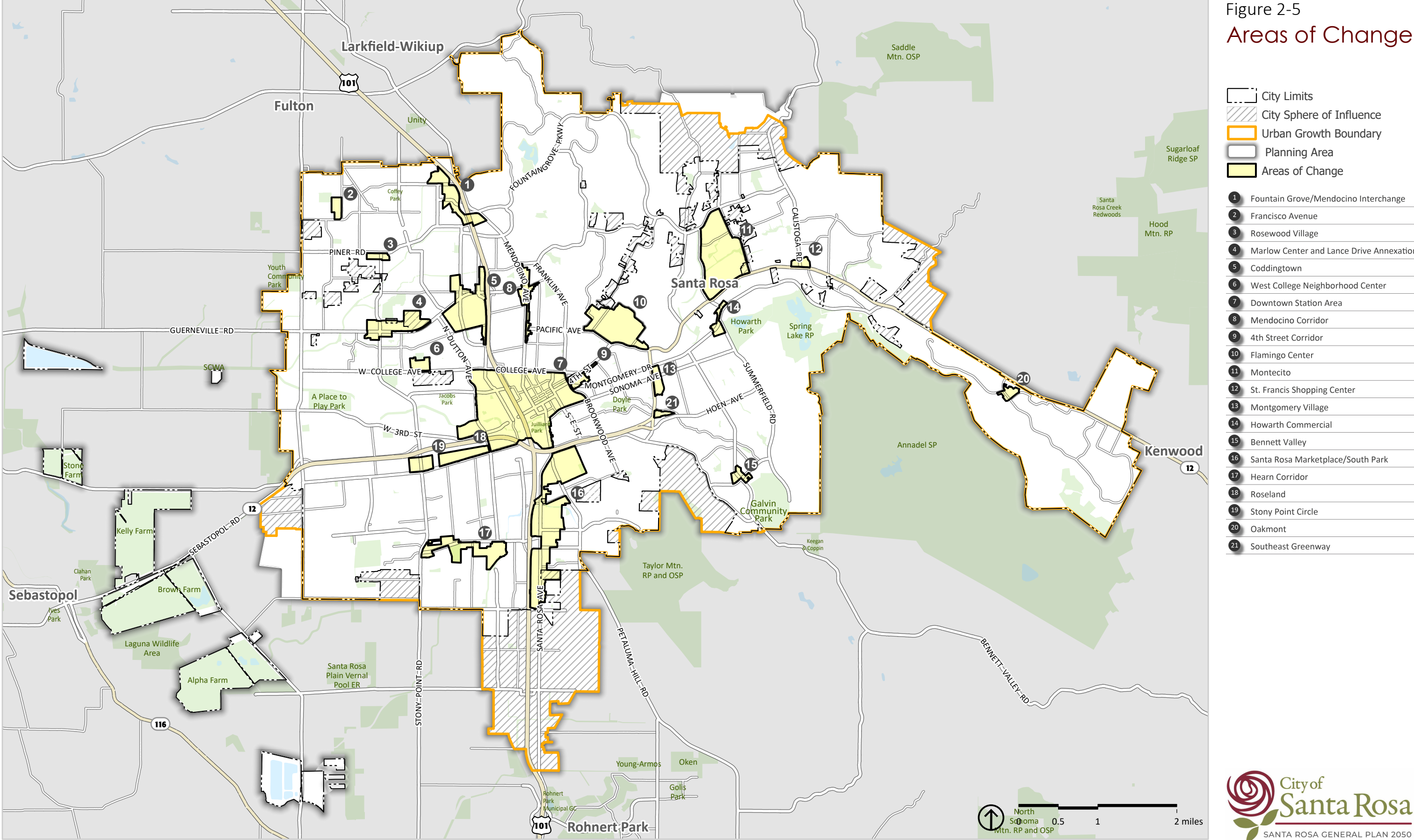


Figure 2-4  
Equity Priority  
Areas

- City Limits
- Urban Growth Boundary
- City Sphere of Influence
- Planning Area
- Census Tracts Containing Equity Priority Areas
- Equity Priority Areas

This page intentionally left blank.

Figure 2-5  
Areas of Change



Source: City of Santa Rosa 2023

This page intentionally left blank.



# Land Use

## General Plan Land Use

---

The citywide land use classifications, shown on **Figure 2-6** and described in this section, represent adopted City policy intended to achieve the community’s vision. They are meant to be broad enough to give the City flexibility in implementation, and clear enough to provide sufficient direction to carry out the General Plan. The City’s Zoning Code has more detailed provisions and standards. More than one zoning district may be consistent with a single General Plan land use classification. **Table 2-1** shows the allowed density and intensity of each land use classification and the zoning districts that correspond to each General Plan designation.

Density and intensity in the Core Mixed Use, Station Mixed Use, Maker Mixed Use, and Neighborhood Mixed Use Areas are controlled by floor-area ratio (FAR), as shown on **Figure 2-7**, except for when density maximums are established in the Core Mixed Use land use designation, as shown in **Table 2-1**.

## Residential

Seven residential land use classifications provide for development of a full range of housing types. Densities are stated in housing units per gross acre of developable land, and at least one housing unit may be built on each existing legal parcel designated for residential use. Gross acreage includes the entire site (as opposed to net acreage, which excludes unbuildable areas). Development must fall within the density range stipulated in the classification.

Some residential use classifications include descriptions of housing types that are permitted. Mobile home developments, if within the stipulated density range of a residential classification, are permitted in all residential categories. In addition to housing type and density standards in this chapter, the Zoning Code establishes development standards, parking, allowed uses, and other requirements.

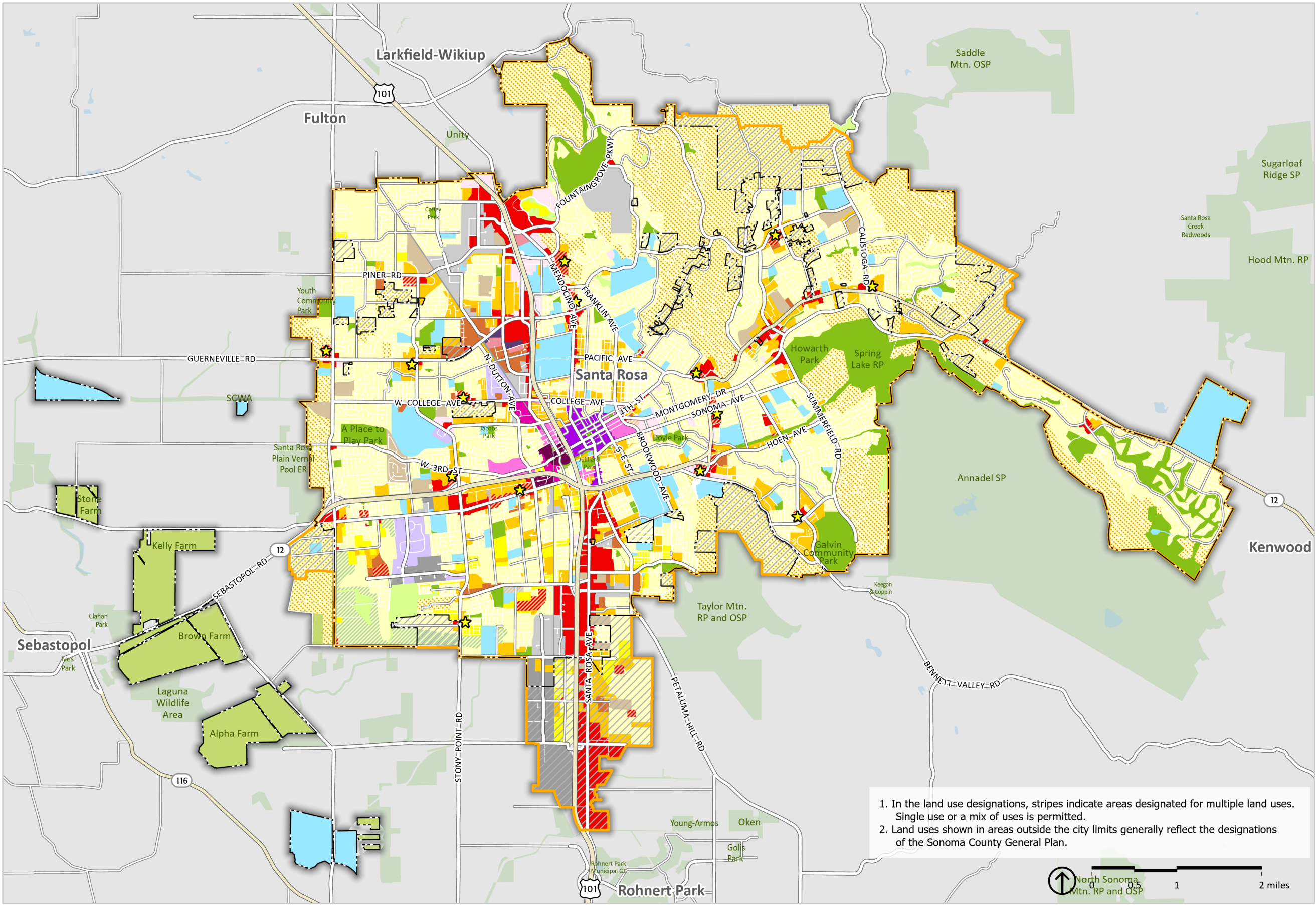
Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and Junior Accessory Dwelling Units (JADUs) are allowed in addition to densities otherwise permitted, in accordance with State regulations. Density bonuses may be approved for projects with affordable housing and housing for elderly residents with specific amenities designated for residents, provided the design and development standards are in conformance with those specified in the Zoning Code. The City also encourages the development of Missing Middle Housing. In Santa Rosa, Missing Middle Housing is compatible in medium-intensity residential

zones (R-2, R 3, TV), mixed-use zones, and some planned development areas.<sup>1</sup>

**Missing Middle Housing** refers to house-scale buildings with multiple units in walkable neighborhoods. Missing Middle Housing adds what is often referred to as “gentle density” because it adds dwelling units without altering the character of neighborhoods. Buildings are generally not more than two and a half stories in height; have multiple units in one building; have amenities such as porches that contribute to the streetscape; have limited off-street parking, generally at the rear of the structure, reached by a narrow (single-lane) driveway; and have some shared open space, often in the form of a courtyard or rear or side yard.

<sup>1</sup> Opticos Design, Inc., October 2021, Missing Middle Housing Initiative, Task 1 Analysis.

Figure 2-6  
General Plan  
Land Use



- City Limits
- Urban Growth Boundary
- City Sphere of Influence
- Planning Area
- Existing Community Shopping Center

- Land Use Designation**
- Very Low Density Residential
  - Low Density/Open Space
  - Low Density Residential
  - Medium Low Density Residential
  - Medium Density Residential
  - Medium High Density Residential
  - Mobile Homes
  - Retail and Business Services
  - Retail/Medium Density Residential Mixed Use
  - Office/High Density Residential Mixed Use
  - Office/Medium Density Residential
  - Public Institution/Medium Density Residential
  - Office
  - Transit Village Mixed Use
  - Transit Village Medium
  - Station Mixed Use
  - Core Mixed Use
  - Neighborhood Mixed Use
  - Maker Mixed Use
  - Business Park
  - Light Industry
  - General Industry
  - Public/Institutional
  - Parks and Recreation
  - Open Space
  - Agriculture

This page intentionally left blank.



**Table 2-1**  
**Permitted Densities/Intensities Under the General Plan**

Land Use	Corresponding Zoning Districts	Residential Density (housing units/gross acre)	Residential Density Midpoint (housing units/gross acre)	Square Feet per Employee
<b>Residential</b>				
Very Low Density	Rural Residential (RR)	0.2–2.0	1.0	–
Low Density/Open Space	Single-Family Residential (R-1)	2.0–8.0	4.0	–
Low Density	R-1	2.0–8.0	5.0	–
Medium Low Density	R-1	8.0–13.0	10.0	–
Medium Density	Medium Density Multifamily Residential (R- 2)	8.0–18.0	13.0	–
Medium High Density	Multifamily Residential (R- 3)	18.0–30.0	24.0	–
Mobile Home Parks	Mobile Home Park (MH)	4.0–18.0	10.0	–
<b>Mixed Use</b>				
Transit Village Medium	Transit Village-Residential (TV-R)	25.0–40.0	–	300
Transit Village Mixed Use	Transit Village-Mixed (TV-M)	40.0 minimum	–	300
Core Mixed Use	Core Mixed Use (CMU)	–	–	–
Station Mixed Use	Station Mixed Use (SMU)	–	–	–
Maker Mixed Use	Maker Mixed Use (MMU)	–	–	–
Neighborhood Mixed Use	Neighborhood Mixed Use (NMU)	25.0–40.0	--	--
<b>Commercial</b>				
Retail and Business Services	General Commercial (CG)	–	–	300
Community Shopping Center		–	–	
Neighborhood Shopping Center		–	–	
<b>Office</b>	Office Commercial (OC)	–	–	250
<b>Industrial</b>				
Business Park	Business Park (BP)	–	–	350
Light Industry	Light Industrial (IL)	–	–	400

**Table 2-1**  
**Permitted Densities/Intensities Under the General Plan**

Land Use	Corresponding Zoning Districts	Residential Density (housing units/gross acre)	Residential Density Midpoint (housing units/gross acre)	Square Feet per Employee
General Industry	General Industrial (IG)	–	–	400
<b>Public/Institutional</b>	Public/Institutional (PI)	25.0–40.0	–	300
<b>Parks and Recreation</b>	OSC, OSR	–	–	–
<b>Open Space</b>	OSC, OSR	–	–	–
<b>Agriculture</b>	Rural Residential (RR)	0.05 maximum	–	–

Notes: In accordance with State law, density bonuses are granted for provision of affordable housing, senior housing, housing for foster youth, disabled veterans, people who are unhoused, and students. These density bonuses are 50% greater than maximum city-wide and, by the City's Supplemental Bonus Ordinance, up to 100% greater than the maximum in the Downtown Station Area and North Station Specific Plan areas. Government Code Section 65915 also provides incentives to build housing for middle-income residents, allowing additional bonuses of up to 50% (not to exceed a combined density bonus of 100% per project).

In addition to the primary residential uses described in each land use, compatible accessory uses are also allowed, as identified by the City's Zoning Code. Some of these may require discretionary review by the City, and some are allowed by right. Such uses include, but are not limited to, certain recreation, education, and public assembly uses; certain medical, community care, and daycare facilities; supportive and transitional housing; and certain neighborhood-serving retail uses.

### ***Very Low Density***

Residential development from 0.2 to 2 units per acre (i.e., 0.5 to 5 acres per unit) accommodates rural and hillside developments in the urban growth boundary (UGB) and is intended for single-family detached units, but clustered single-family attached and multifamily may be permitted.

### ***Low Density/Open Space***

This single-family residential development is at a density of 2 to 8 units per acre and assumed at only 80 percent of each site due to wetlands and similar constraints. The classification is mainly intended for detached single-family dwellings but attached single-family and multifamily units may be permitted.

### ***Low Density***

Single-family residential development has a density of 2 to 8 units per acre. The classification is mainly intended for detached single-family dwellings but attached single-family and multifamily units may be permitted.

### ***Medium Low Density***

Housing has densities from 8 to 13 units per acre. The classification is intended for attached single-family residential development (such as

townhomes), but single-family detached housing and multifamily development may be permitted. Development at the midpoint of the density range is encouraged but not required.

### ***Medium Density***

Housing densities are from 8 to 18 units per 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. Missing Middle Housing types, including Duplex and Triplex units, are also compatible within this zone. New single-family detached housing is not permitted except in historic preservation districts and historic neighborhoods where single-family detached units are allowed.

### ***Medium High Density***

Residential development has densities ranging from 18 to 30 units per 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. Missing Middle Housing types, including Duplex, Triplex and Fourplex, Multiplex (small and large), Courtyard buildings, Townhouses, and Live-Work units are also compatible in this zone. Single-family detached housing is not permitted.

### ***Mobile Home Parks***

Residential mobile-home development of two or more mobile home units, and densities range from 4 to 18 units per acre. Mobile homes and manufactured homes are the only allowed housing type.

## Mixed Use

Mixed-use development is planned downtown and in specific neighborhood and community shopping centers. Transit Village Medium and Transit Village Mixed Use apply to areas around existing and proposed rail as well as bus transfer sites. Transit Village Medium is more residential in nature, but ground-floor retail is desirable. Several areas designated for multiple land uses are distinguished by a striped pattern on the Land Use Diagram. Single or multiple uses are allowed in these areas, consistent with land use designations. Missing Middle Housing is also compatible in mixed-use areas that are designed to create more walkable neighborhoods with complete streets.

**Complete Streets** are streets designed and operated to enable safe use and support mobility for all users. Those include people of all ages and abilities, regardless of whether they are travelling as drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, or public transportation riders.

*Source: U.S. Department of Transportation*

The Downtown Station Area Specific Plan (DSASP), adopted in 2020, regulates FAR without establishing height and density standards (mixed-use development outside downtown is not subject to FAR, but instead is regulated by the combination of setbacks, height limits, and maximum lot coverage standards). FAR is a widely used planning tool that divides total building square footage by lot area. **Figure 2-7** offers examples of FAR and how it is calculated. **Figure 2-8**, reproduced from the 2020 DSASP, shows the maximum FAR allowable for DSASP sites. The allowed maximum FAR excludes parking areas, civic spaces (such as small urban

parks and plazas that are privately or publicly owned, but publicly accessible), and areas of any historic structure to be preserved on-site to maximize the building square footage that can be devoted to housing, employment, cultural, and entertainment uses. These downtown sites are the only areas of the city where FAR is applied; elsewhere, the amount of square footage allowed on a property is regulated by the combination of setbacks, height limits, and landscaping and lot coverage standards.

### ***Transit Village Medium***

This classification is intended to accommodate mixed-use development in approximately one-half mile of a transit facility. Development should transition from less-intense uses at the outlying edges to higher-intensity uses near the transit facility. Residential uses are required, and ground-floor neighborhood-serving retail and Missing Middle Housing types are encouraged, including Triplex, Fourplex, Cottage Court, Multiplex (small and large), Courtyard Buildings, Townhouses (multiple flats), and Live-Work units (multiple flats). Housing densities range from 25 to 40 units per acre.

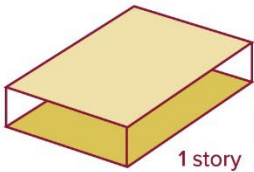
### ***Transit Village Mixed Use***

This classification is intended to accommodate a well-integrated mix of higher-intensity residential, including Missing Middle Housing—such as Multiplex (small and large), Courtyard Buildings, Townhouses (multiple flats), and Live-Work units (multiple flats); office; and commercial uses in one-quarter mile of a transit facility. Development is designed and oriented to create a central node of activity at or near the transit facility. The minimum housing density is 40 units per acre; there is no maximum-density requirement.

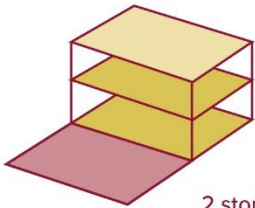
Figure 2-4 Examples of FAR

► **FLOOR AREA RATIO (FAR)**  
*Examples*

**FAR = 1.0**

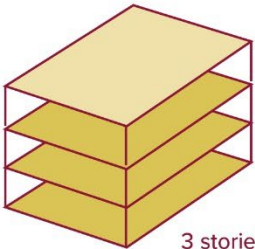


1 story

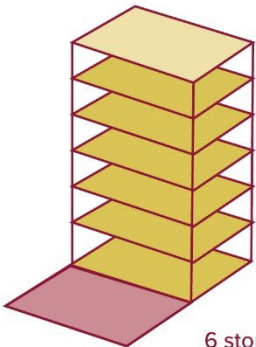


2 stories

**FAR = 3.0**



3 stories



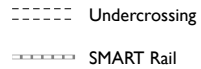
6 stories

*Floor Area Ratio (FAR) does not directly limit the height or number of stories of a building*

This page intentionally left blank.



## Map LU-8: Maximum Base FAR

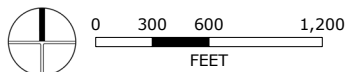
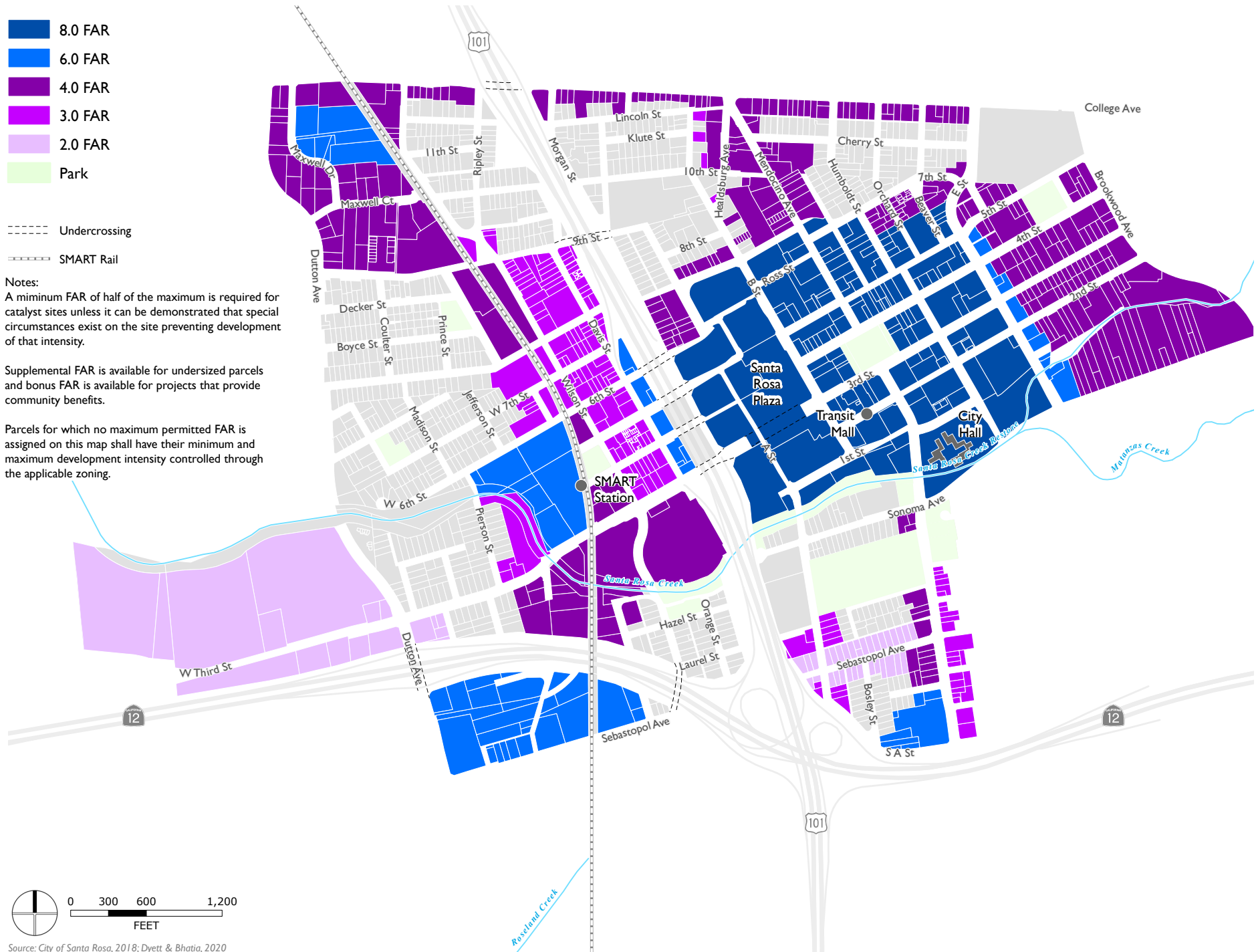


### Notes:

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.



This page intentionally left blank.

### ***Core Mixed Use***

This classification is intended to foster a vital mix of residential, retail, office, governmental, entertainment, sports cultural, educational, and hotel uses to activate the greater Courthouse Square area and key transit corridors. The principal objectives of the Core Mixed Use (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 civic spaces such as plazas, courtyards, or parks and easy access to public transit. The CMU designation has a maximum FAR range of 3.0 to 8.0 except for 12 contributor properties on B, 7th, and 10th Streets, to which height and density maximums apply.

### ***Station Mixed Use***

This classification 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. Though commercial uses are emphasized, new multifamily housing will also be allowed to support daytime and evening vitality in 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 community members, SMART train riders, and visitors from the wider region. The Station Mixed Use designation has a maximum FAR range of 3.0 to 6.0.

### ***Maker Mixed Use***

Areas in and around downtown are designated Maker Mixed Use to support a balanced mix of residential, creative, and maker-oriented uses. These uses include, but are not limited to, artisan shops, studios, distilleries and micro-breweries, cannabis, limited light industrial uses, and home-based businesses. Multifamily residential and live/work units are encouraged in all-residential or mixed-use buildings. Supportive uses that contribute to a vibrant village atmosphere, such as bodegas, restaurants, cafés, theatres, and educational facilities are also permitted.

### ***Neighborhood Mixed Use***

The Neighborhood Mixed Use designation in downtown Santa Rosa allows for multifamily residential development and a variety of uses that primarily serve local residents, such as professional office, retail, entertainment, service, and other neighborhood-scale supporting uses.

## **Commercial**

### ***Retail and Business Services***

This designation allows retail and service enterprises, offices, and restaurants. It includes regional centers, which are large complexes of retail and service enterprises anchored by one or more full-line department stores, and destination centers, which are retail centers anchored by discount or warehouse stores.

Large grocery stores are expressly permitted in Community Shopping Centers and downtown only, and they may be considered through a Conditional Use Permit process on other commercial sites.

### ***Community Shopping Center***

The vision for Community Shopping Centers is a complex of retail services and enterprises anchored by a large grocery store and serving a community clientele. Typical uses include restaurants and shops offering convenience goods. These sites are in areas surrounded by residential development and are intended to be walkable areas with a mix of uses that meet the shopping needs for surrounding neighborhoods and provide housing integrated with commercial development.

Residential uses shall be incorporated into the overall design but may be provided over time as part of a phased development. Existing community shopping centers are not required to include residential uses for minor alterations or re-occupancy but are required to evaluate and demonstrate through site planning that future residential would not be precluded when significant additions or reconstruction are proposed.

### ***Neighborhood Shopping Center***

These are small groups of retail and service enterprises providing shopping and services to satisfy the day-to-day needs of local neighborhoods and workplaces. Typical neighborhood center uses include small grocery stores, restaurants, barber or beauty shops, cleaners, shoe repair, and shops offering convenience goods. Residential development is encouraged but not required. New neighborhood centers are allowed in any land use designation where they can be supported.

## **Office**

### ***Office***

Sites for administrative, financial, business, professional, medical, and public offices are allowed under this designation. There is flexibility in how office space is designed to accommodate changing market conditions.

## **Industrial**

### ***Business Park***

This category accommodates holistically planned, visually attractive centers for businesses that do not generate nuisances (e.g., noise, clutter, noxious emissions, etc.), in campus-like environments for corporate headquarters, research and development facilities, offices, light manufacturing and assembly, industrial processing, general services, incubator facilities, testing, repairing, packaging, and publishing and printing. Warehousing and distribution facilities, retail, hotels, and residential uses are permissible on an ancillary basis. Restaurants and other related services are permitted as accessory uses. Outdoor storage is not permitted.

### ***Light Industry***

This designation supports light industrial, warehousing, and some heavier commercial uses. Uses appropriate to this land use category include auto repair, bulk or warehoused goods, general warehousing, manufacturing/assembly, home improvement and landscape materials retail, freight or bus terminals, research-oriented industrial, accessory offices, employee-serving commercial uses, and services with large space needs, such as health clubs. Professional office buildings are not permitted.

## General Industry

This category provides areas for manufacturing and distribution activities with potential for creating nuisances, along with accessory offices and retailing. Unrelated retail and service commercial uses (which can be appropriately located elsewhere in the city) are not permitted. Uses may generate truck traffic and operate 24 hours a day.

## Public/Institutional

These lands are set aside for governmental or semi-public facilities, such as hospitals, utilities, and government office centers; however, such facilities may also be allowed in areas with other land use designations, provided they comply with applicable Zoning Code standards.

## Parks and Recreation

Parks and Recreation designates lands that are currently used or planned for parks and recreation purposes. Land designated for this use includes publicly and privately owned land and is identified on **Figure 2-6, General Plan Land Use**.

The city's park system consists of neighborhood parks, community parks, trail parks, open space parks, special purpose parks, recreation center sites, and civic spaces. Existing and proposed city parks that are owned and maintained by the City of Santa Rosa are identified on **Figure 6-3, Current and Potential Parks Map**, in **Chapter 6**. In 1978, the City established the parkland service standard of 6 acres per 1,000 residents. This standard and city parks are discussed in greater detail in **Chapter 6**.

## Open Space

These areas feature special environmental conditions or significance; may be subject to wildfire, flood, or geologic hazards; or contain watershed lands or important wildlife or biotic habitat. Where otherwise not excluded by noise, aircraft safety, or other environmental standards, residential development is generally permitted at a density of 1 unit per 40 acres.

## Growth and New Development Considerations

Santa Rosa is a well-established community with many unique assets to be maintained, though there is room for improvement to enhance equity and quality of life, particularly in areas that still have vacant land and/or have historically not received as much investment as other areas of the city. New development in the city limits will follow this General Plan and other applicable City codes and guides to ensure it complements and enhances the existing community. Growth and change in the city will be tailored to support maintenance and development of complete neighborhoods, particularly in Areas of Change, identified on **Figure 2-5**. Development in the UGB beyond the city limits will need to demonstrate that it will not have a negative impact on the city's environmental resources or fiscal health to be eligible for annexation and development.



## Agriculture

The Agriculture designation is applied to the incorporated islands southwest of the city's UGB. Allowed uses include orchards and cropland, grasslands, livestock, and related processing and distribution facilities. Residential density may not exceed one housing unit per 20 acres. The designation provides fewer restrictions on keeping animals than in residential classifications.

## Plan Bay Area and Priority Development Areas

Plan Bay Area is an integrated long-range transportation and land-use/housing plan for the San Francisco Bay Area, prepared by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG). It includes the Bay Area's Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS), in accordance with the California Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008 (California Government Code Section 65080), which requires each of the state's metropolitan areas to prepare an SCS or similar plan to reduce GHG emissions from cars and light trucks.

The SCS provides for the coordination of land use, housing, and transportation to reduce GHG emissions for cars and light-duty trucks. Plan Bay Area directs the majority of housing growth to designated Priority Development Areas (PDAs), with the aim of making more future development walkable, bikeable, and close to public transit, jobs, schools, shopping, parks, recreation, and other amenities. There are six PDAs in the Santa Rosa Planning Area, listed below and shown on **Figure 2-9**.

1. Downtown Station Area PDA, in central Santa Rosa, primarily north of Highway 12 and extending east and west of Highway 101.
2. North Station PDA, in northwest Santa Rosa.
3. Roseland Area PDA in southwest Santa Rosa.
4. Sebastopol Road Corridor PDA in southwest Santa Rosa.
5. Mendocino Avenue Corridor PDA, extending south from Sonoma Avenue through southeast Santa Rosa.
6. Santa Rosa Avenue Corridor PDA, extending north and south along Highway 101.

PDAs are eligible for technical assistance from MTC and ABAG to help further the goals of Plan Bay Area.

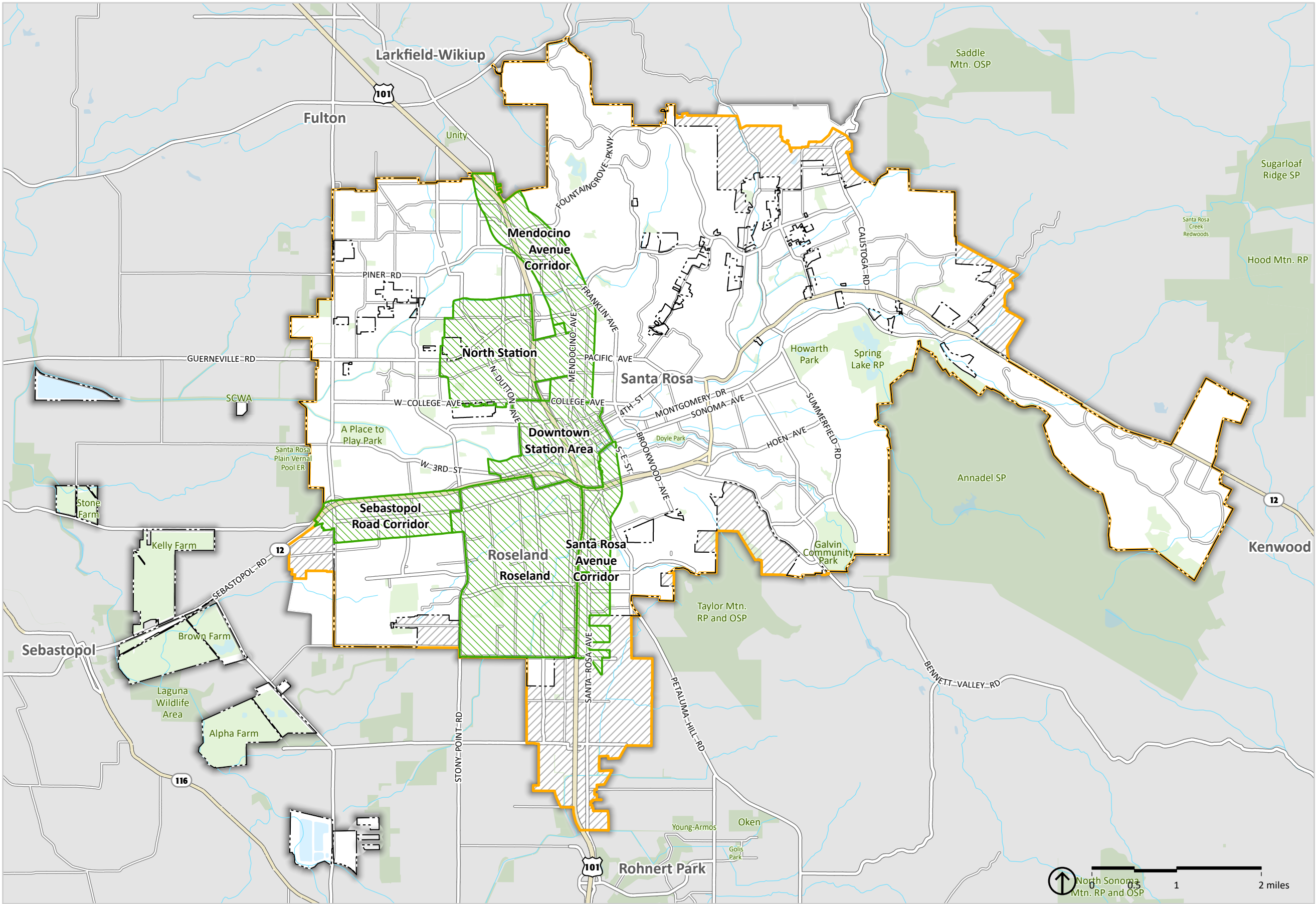


Figure 2-9  
**Priority Development Areas**

- City Limits
- Urban Growth Boundary
- City Sphere of Influence
- Planning Area
- Priority Development Areas

This page intentionally left blank.

## Specific Plans

Santa Rosa has adopted specific plans for three of the PDAs that establish unique zoning and development regulations:

- The **Downtown Station Area Specific Plan** guides future transit-supportive development around the Downtown SMART station. The plan intensifies uses within walking distance to SMART and invests in infrastructure and other public improvements. The plan establishes regulations for land use, development standards, densities, infrastructure improvements, implementation measures, and incentives to promote a diverse mix of uses. The land use designations of the Downtown Station Area Specific Plan establish seven subareas with unique characteristics that supplement the City's Zoning Code and design guidelines.
- The **North Santa Rosa Station Area Specific Plan** supports rail service transit at the North Santa Rosa SMART station by improving pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and auto connections; increasing residential density; promoting economic development; and enhancing aesthetics and quality of life within a half mile of the station.
- The **Roseland Area/Sebastopol Road Specific Plan** supports a unified, vital, and livable Roseland community with a focus on healthy and equitable development. The plan aims to improve connectivity, concentrate areas of activity, and enhance the physical environment.

## Transit-Oriented Communities (TOCs)

Santa Rosa's transit-oriented communities (TOCs) are defined by MTC as locations within a half mile of existing or planned SMART stations, as identified on **Figure 2-10**. TOCs are eligible for priority investment from MTC's One Bay Area Grant (OBAG) program, in an effort to encourage the development of more transit-accessible communities where residents of all abilities, incomes, and backgrounds can live, work, and play.

## Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities

Government Code Section 56430 requires that general plans address the needs of disadvantaged unincorporated communities (DUCs). Local DUCs are to be identified by the Sonoma County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), and generally include areas of Sonoma County with an annual median household income less than 80 percent of the statewide annual median household income and within the City's Sphere of Influence, an island within an incorporated jurisdiction's boundary, or geographically isolated and has existed for at least 50 years. DUCs often lack adequate infrastructure to sustain public health and safety, which can foster economic, social, and educational inequality. Therefore, the law requires that cities and counties analyze infrastructure and fire service needs and deficiencies of identified DUCs and assess potential funding mechanisms for expansions of services and facilities. With each update of its Housing Element, the City evaluates DUC infrastructure and service deficiencies, and assesses potential funding mechanisms to address those

deficiencies. At the time of this writing, Sonoma County LAFCO has not identified Santa Rosa DUCs. If, in the future, one or more Santa Rosa DUCs are identified by Sonoma LAFCO, this chapter will be revised to include policies and actions to address any identified infrastructure and/or service deficiencies in DUCs.



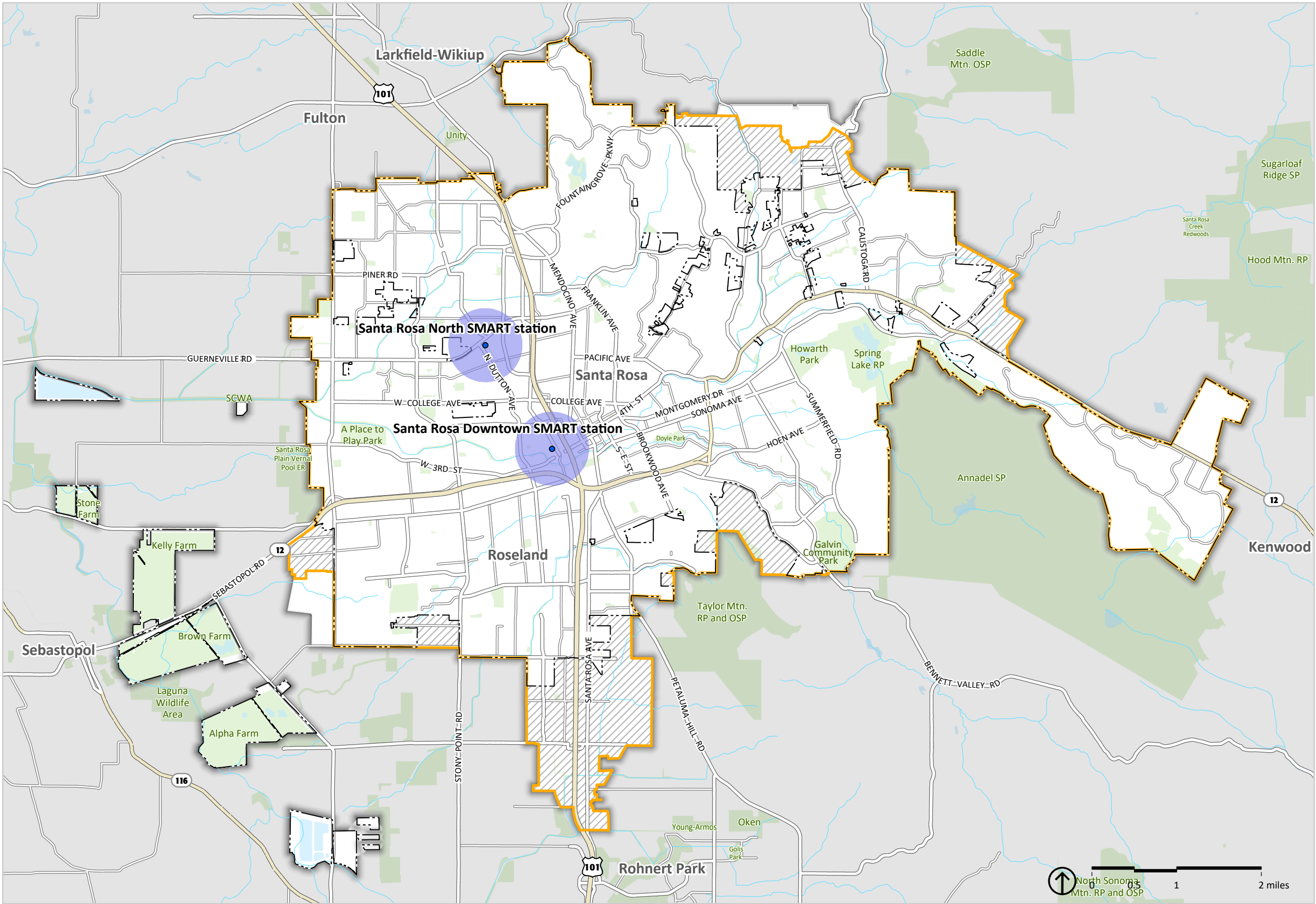


Figure 2-10  
Transit-Oriented  
Communities

- City Limits
- Urban Growth Boundary
- City Sphere of Influence
- Planning Area
- Santa Rosa Transit Oriented Communities

Source: City of Santa Rosa, 2023; Metropolitan Transportation Commission, 2023; Caltrans, 2024.



This page intentionally left blank.

## Goals, Policies, and Actions

**Goal 2-1:** Ensure that growth and change serve community needs, protect the environment, improve the City's fiscal stability, and enhance quality of life for all members of the community.

**Policy 2-1.1:** Encourage development that supports community health and quality of life and fosters complete neighborhoods in both established and emerging neighborhoods.

*Action 2-1.1: Adopt, update, and implement specific plans as necessary to address changing economic and market conditions and/or changing community visions.*

*Action 2-1.2: Work with developers to ensure new development respects the integrity and character of surrounding uses, especially when nonresidential uses are proposed adjacent to residential areas. Consider use of buffers, landscaping, and other types of screening to minimize noise, light, glare, and odor.*

*Action 2-1.3: Support the creative integration of parks, civic spaces, and recreation facilities in public and private development.*

*Action 2-1.4: Address the need for gathering places by providing amenities such as parks, community centers, and cultural facilities for community members in all*

*neighborhoods, prioritizing Equity Priority Areas where these spaces provide vital resources for vulnerable populations and Areas of Change where these spaces support placemaking for neighborhoods that are becoming more complete, pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods.*

**Policy 2-1.2:** Facilitate future annexations with a thoughtfully designed and transparent strategy that ensures the City's ongoing fiscal health and supports a high quality of life for community members.

*Action 2-1.5: Prepare a specific plan prior to annexation of land in south Santa Rosa, south from the current City boundary to the Urban Growth Boundary, including both the east and west sides of Highway 101 to identify and accommodate needs related to City services, such as fire and police, water, wastewater, stormwater, transportation, and parks.*

*Action 2-1.6: Require a fiscal impact analysis for proposed annexations when determined necessary by staff to ensure a full accounting of infrastructure and public service costs and confirm whether revenue enhancement mechanisms are necessary to ensure net fiscal balance.*

*Action 2-1.7: Allow annexations or City utility connections only if they do not adversely impact the City's fiscal viability, environmental resources,*

*infrastructure and services, and quality of life.*

*Action 2-1.8: Work with LAFCO to require all proposed annexations within a county island to prepare a sentiment survey of all property owners in the island to determine the feasibility of annexing the full county island.*

**Policy 2-1.3: Promote and participate in cooperative planning efforts with surrounding jurisdictions and the County, especially related to countywide and regional issues such as transportation, waste management, climate resilience and adaptation, hazard mitigation, and affordable housing.**

*Action 2-1.9: Continue to meet with County of Sonoma staff to coordinate land use issues of mutual concern in the Urban Growth Boundary.*

**Policy 2-1.4: Ensure that City policy, codes, programming, and practices support a range of land uses.**

*Action 2-1.10: Consider updating the Zoning Code to allow for compatible residential and commercial uses in office parks, light industrial areas, and other similar areas.*

*Such compatible uses could include, but are not limited to, live-work units, artisan studios/shops, galleries, brew pubs, coffee shops, tasting rooms, sports and entertainment venues, and event spaces.*

*Action 2-1.11: Maintain access to an inventory of industrial lands and sites zoned appropriately for the attraction, retention, and expansion of key manufacturing and industrial businesses/employers.*

*Action 2-1.12: Maintain sufficient land in areas zoned for industrial uses to accommodate a wide range of production, distribution, warehousing, and repair-oriented light industrial uses, including research and development, manufacturing, and food processing.*

*Action 2-1.13: Identify necessary policy changes to enable the retention of or conversion of sites to light industrial/light manufacturing uses in appropriate areas and implement changes, as feasible and appropriate.*

*Action 2-1.14: Update the Zoning Code to:*

- 1.** *Rezone parcels to ensure consistency with the General Plan.*
- 2.** *Rezone Planned Development communities into appropriate zoning districts consistent with General Plan land uses.*
- 3.** *Create development standards for Missing Middle Housing types.*

**Policy 2-1.5: Provide opportunities to promote existing and new cannabis businesses to succeed in local, national, and international markets and**

**contribute to local economic growth.**

- Action 2-1.15: Apply a uniform regulatory structure for all cannabis uses in the city.*
- Action 2-1.16: Locate commercial cannabis businesses in appropriate commercial and industrial districts designed to support such uses.*
- Action 2-1.17: Facilitate opportunities for the cannabis industry to positively impact the city's economic well-being and contribute to its growth.*
- Action 2-1.18: Support locally owned cannabis businesses' ability to maintain a long-term presence in the community.*
- Policy 2-1.6: Maintain consistency between LAFCO and City of Santa Rosa Disadvantaged Unincorporated Community maps.**
- Action 2-1.19: Continue to coordinate with Sonoma Local Agency Formation Commission regarding mapping of Disadvantaged Unincorporated Communities (DUCs) and update the General Plan as necessary to address needs of identified DUCs within the Santa Rosa Sphere of Influence—consistent with Government Code Section 65302.10.(a). (EIR)*
- Action 2-1.20: Provide a Plan for Services for any future annexations of DUCs. (EIR)*

**Goal 2-2:** Promote city-centered growth and investment with a neighborhood-focused approach to create complete and connected communities that provide community members' daily needs within easy walking or biking distance.

**Policy 2-2.1: Support development of complete neighborhoods, especially in Areas of Change, ensuring they offer convenient, equitable access to goods and services needed to support daily life, such as healthy food, recreation, active transportation infrastructure, and transit.**

- Action 2-2.1: Work with landowners and developers to encourage development that will increase access to goods and services that support daily life, such as access to fresh produce, recreation and sporting opportunities, community gathering places, active transportation infrastructure, and transit.*
- Action 2-2.2: Explore ways to encourage regional and neighborhood shopping centers to integrate amenities, events, and programming that enhance the destination and its attractiveness as a shopping location and community gathering space.*
- Action 2-2.3: Explore ways to support farmers' markets citywide.*

*Action 2-2.4: Allow temporary, community-oriented / community-amenity uses on sites slated for redevelopment that activate those spaces prior to entitlement/construction.*

**Policy 2-2.2: Encourage a compact, rather than a scattered, development pattern for new development proposals, particularly in Areas of Change.**

*Action 2-2.5: Explore ways to encourage development in Areas of Change that include services within one-half mile walking and biking distance of residential neighborhoods.*

*Action 2-2.6: Explore ways to encourage shared parking areas and shared driveways/vehicle access points in private development.*

*Action 2-2.7: Maintain Priority Development Area and Transit-Oriented Community designations in accordance with Plan Bay Area and ongoing ABAG/MTC efforts to ensure consistency with regional planning.*

**Policy 2-2.3: Maintain close land use/transportation relationships to promote multi-modal transportation and discourage travel by automobile in all private development, capital improvement projects, and area plans.**

**Goal 2-3:** Create dense and varied housing types near transit to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote livability.

**Policy 2-3.1: Ensure that residential developments, including subdivisions and neighborhoods, are designed to foster livability, maintain local and historic character of neighborhoods, and offer diverse housing types to satisfy a wide range of needs and retain local character.**

*Action 2-3.1: Update the Zoning Code to permit residential and mixed-use development by right in some nonresidential zoning districts, as mandated by State law.*

*Action 2-3.2: Identify barriers and/or incentives to mixed-use redevelopment in areas that are currently lacking components of a complete neighborhood and mitigate/implement these.*

*Action 2-3.3: Consider expansion of the City's Residential Permit Parking Program or an alternative strategy to address parking impacts to existing neighborhoods from projects outside downtown that qualify for State-mandated parking reductions.*

**Policy 2-3.2: Ensure that residential developments achieve the density potential of the project site and include a variety of housing types with a full range**



**of affordability, in accordance with the General Plan Land Use map (Figure 2-6).**

*Action 2-3.4: Require development at the midpoint or higher of the density range in the Medium and Medium High Density Residential land use designations, unless topography, parcel configuration, heritage trees, historic preservation, safety, hazard, or utility constraints make achieving the midpoint infeasible.*

**Goal 2-4:** Support new development in Areas of Change to enrich and enliven these areas, making them focal points of interest and activity.

**Policy 2-4.1: Encourage compact, attractive development that creates complete neighborhoods.**

*Action 2-4.1: In Areas of Change, evaluate area needs, including parks and open space, streets, bicycle facilities, transit improvements, and other infrastructure, and seek funding for projects that will catalyze and assist future development.*

*Action 2-4.2: Work with developers and landowners to encourage development of mixed-use projects with residential and retail/office uses to provide area amenities, including gathering places, art, and outdoor spaces, that can be used by the public.*

*Action 2-4.3: Create environments with safe, connected streets, sidewalks, and*

*bicycle facilities that include shade trees to establish a pleasant streetscape.*

## Economic Development

### Existing Conditions and Market Outlook

#### Today's Market (2024)

Santa Rosa is the fifth-largest city in the San Francisco Bay Area and is home to roughly one-third of all Sonoma County residents. It is also home to more than 8,400 businesses with retail trade, healthcare, public administration, food, and tech/scientific leading the top industries. The city is the economic center of the region, with approximately 67,000 households, a median household income of \$92,930 annually, and past-year median home sales valued at \$761, 270.

#### Economic Growth Potential

Over the next three decades, job growth and related demand for office, industrial, and retail space will be determined by the rate of local population growth and regional demand. General Plan 2050 accommodates up to 24,000 new homes to house approximately 66,000 additional residents. Combined with regional demand factors, this additional population would support up to:

- 1 million square feet of new industrial development and 1,500 new industrial jobs.
- 650,000 square feet of new community-serving retail, entertainment, and sports venue space and 1,500 new related jobs.

- 2 million square feet of new office development and 5,500 new office jobs.

Long-term job growth opportunities abound and are most likely to be strongest in health care, advanced research, and technical development, as well as dining, food, and beverage. Government and other office-based sectors are anticipated to grow at a moderate pace.

## Goals, Policies, and Actions

**Goal 2-5:** Create a business-friendly, diverse, and sustainable economy through the attraction of new business, and the expansion, retention, and support of existing business.

**Policy 2-5.1:** Encourage growth of existing business clusters as well as new, diverse industries and job types throughout Santa Rosa.

*Action 2-5.1: Develop, maintain, and implement an Economic Development Strategic Plan to lay a foundation for economic vitality throughout Santa Rosa.*

*Action 2-5.2: Ensure the General Plan, Zoning Code, and all City policies, procedures, plans, and strategies are in alignment to support new development and global business values (e.g., productivity, speed-to-market, flexibility, and innovation).*

*Action 2-5.3: Develop and strengthen the entrepreneurship ecosystem and create pathways to successful small business ownership.*

*Action 2-5.4: Identify new program options to allow and support micro-entrepreneurship and home businesses.*

*Action 2-5.5: Strengthen and support partnerships with educational organizations and business associations to align business, land, and workforce development needs.*

*Action 2-5.6: Maintain and expand industrial zoned land close to established transportation corridors, including Highway 101, State Route 12, and the SMART rail line, focusing on areas away from sensitive receptors.*

*Action 2-5.7: Identify and prepare land for expanded industrial and commercial growth.*

*Action 2-5.8: Continue to promote Santa Rosa as the North Bay's premier location for clean/green technologies and entrepreneurial businesses that create new products and business models and attract national and international interest.*

*Action 2-5.9: Work with Santa Rosa Junior College, Sonoma State University, and private educators to provide job training that matches local job opportunities, including housing construction.*

*Action 2-5.10: Meet with immigrant-, Black-, indigenous, and people of color- (BIPOC); and women-owned businesses to identify barriers to*

*success and build pathways for assistance and support.*

*Action 2-5.11: Maintain and disseminate resources directing existing smaller businesses to training, financial assistance, and other supportive services.*

## **Goal 2-6: Create a vibrant and livable city.**

### **Policy 2-6.1: Address infrastructure needs and update policy, as appropriate, in support of economic accelerators.**

*Action 2-6.1: Expand the Downtown Asset Strategy to activate City-owned property for economic development purposes with an emphasis on sustainability and walkable neighborhoods.*

*Action 2-6.2: Establish an Enhanced Infrastructure Financing District in Downtown Santa Rosa.*

*Action 2-6.3: Consider amending the Zoning Code where needed to align with economic strategies and to create flexibility to fill vacant spaces.*

*Action 2-6.4: Conduct a downtown infill housing economic and fiscal impact study to understand the current state of downtown economics.*

*Action 2-6.5: Support development of sports and entertainment as an economic driver to bolster tourism and update the Zoning Code to*

*allow these uses more broadly throughout all areas of the city.*

*Action 2-6.6: Work with property owners, the business community, and others to support efforts to attract new business in vacant business parks, and office, retail, industrial, and commercial space.*

*Action 2-6.7: Support community events and activities through direct programming and grant funding.*

*Action 2-6.8: Implement the Public Art Program Strategic Plan.*

*Action 2-6.9: Support diversity, equity, and inclusion through all economic, planning, and development actions.*

## **Goal 2-7: Create a resilient economy.**

### **Policy 2-7.1: Create a resilient economy through support and community investment.**

*Action 2-7.1: Increase economic opportunity through upstream investment, including advancement of childcare programs and pilot programs addressing childhood poverty.*

*Action 2-7.2: Identify and capitalize on funding opportunities to extend upstream investment pilot programs—such as childcare and façade improvement programs—or develop new ones.*

The term “**upstream investment**” refers to programs and activities that support economic opportunity, including childcare, child bond, and other First 5 programs addressing childhood poverty, as well as mural and façade improvements.

*Action 2-7.3: Work to attract professional, vocational, and technical institutions and engage employers in the development of education and training systems that equip residents with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in an advanced economy.*

*Action 2-7.4: Support the diverse needs of all of the seven City Council districts by coordinating annual district-based surveys to solicit community input from all Santa Rosa districts.*

**Goal 2-8:** Enliven and maintain vibrant, convenient, and attractive commercial centers.

**Policy 2-8.1: Enhance commercial centers.**

*Action 2-8.1: Provide a range of commercial services that are easily accessible and attractive, satisfy the needs of people who live and work in Santa Rosa, and attract a regional clientele.*

*Action 2-8.2: Work with developers and landowners to direct region-serving, high-volume retail outlets*

*to locations within one-quarter mile of Highway 101 to minimize traffic on city streets.*

*Action 2-8.3: Require new buildings in neighborhood centers and commercial corridors to actively engage and enhance the public realm through such techniques as location of parking, façade ground-floor transparency, building orientation, landscaping, and build-to and setback lines.*

The **public realm** consists of publicly owned streets, paths, rights-of-way, parks, publicly accessible open spaces, and any public and civic buildings and facilities. A well-designed public realm can function as the connective tissue of the city.

*Action 2-8.4: Require any proposal to change industrial-designated land to an alternate land use to provide a market analysis that documents the need for such a change, the potential impacts to the city's industrial land inventory citywide, and potential mitigation.*

*Action 2-8.5: Preserve current industrial and business park employment centers by supporting the integrity of industrial zoning and/or allowing consideration of new manufacturing among other uses.*

**Goal 2-9:** Foster sustained, inclusive growth that generates long-term, shared value in the community and creates economic opportunities for all residents.

*to minimize noise, light, glare, and other impacts.*

*Action 2-9.5: Update the Zoning Code to allow for creative mixes of land uses that accommodate compatible manufacturing and maker-type spaces.*

**Policy 2-9.1: Support opportunities to expand economic opportunity to all segments of the community.**

*Action 2-9.1: Promote initiatives to provide work opportunities for high-risk youth and young adults in Santa Rosa.*

**Policy 2-9.2: Encourage home business as a sector of the economy, decrease vehicle miles traveled, and increase the provision of goods and services at the neighborhood scale.**

*Action 2-9.2: Update the Zoning Code to allow mobile food and crafts vendors, farmers markets, art and artisan pop-ups and community gathering events in all nonresidential zoning districts.*

*Action 2-9.3: Update the Zoning Code to allow for micro-entrepreneurial uses in residential zones, as appropriate.*

**Policy 2-9.3: Protect industrial land supply and ensure compatibility between industrial development and surrounding neighborhoods.**

*Action 2-9.4: Require industrial development adjacent to residential areas to provide buffers and institute setback, landscaping, and screening requirements intended*



This page intentionally left blank.