

POPULATION AND HOUSING

4.13 POPULATION AND HOUSING

This chapter of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) describes the potential impacts to population and housing associated with the adoption and implementation of the proposed project. This chapter describes the regulatory framework and existing conditions, identifies criteria used to determine impact significance, provides an analysis of the potential impacts to population and housing, and identifies proposed General Plan 2050 goals, policies, and actions that would minimize any potentially significant impacts.

4.13.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

4.13.1.1 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

State Regulations

California Housing Element Law

California Housing Element Law¹ includes provisions related to the requirements for Housing Elements of local government General Plans. Among these requirements, some of the necessary parts include an assessment of housing needs and an inventory of resources and constraints relevant to the meeting of these needs. Additionally, to ensure that counties and cities recognize their responsibilities in contributing to the attainment of the State housing goals, this section of the Government Code calls for local jurisdictions to plan for and allow the construction of a share of the region's projected housing needs, known as the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA). The City of Santa Rosa needs to accommodate 4,685 residences in total. The City's 2023-2031 Housing Element was adopted on February 14, 2023.

Regional Regulations

Plan Bay Area

As described in Chapter 4.0, *Environmental Analysis*, of this Draft EIR, Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) and Association of Bay Area Government (ABAG) adopted *Plan Bay Area 2050* on October 21, 2021.² *Plan Bay Area* provides transportation and environmental strategies to continue to meet the regional transportation-related greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction goals of the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act (SB 375). The current *Plan Bay Area* projects growth and development patterns through 2050.

As described in Chapter 4.0 of this Draft EIR, *Plan Bay Area* designates Priority Development Areas (PDAs) and Transit Priority Areas (TPAs) throughout the region. PDAs are areas along transportation corridors which are served by public transit that allow opportunities for development of transit-oriented, infill

¹ Government Code Section 65580-65589.8.

² Association of Bay Area Governments and Metropolitan Transportation Commission, October 2021, *Plan Bay Area 2050*, https://www.planbayarea.org/sites/default/files/documents/Plan_Bay_Area_2050_October_2021.pdf, accessed July 21, 2023.

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development within existing communities that are expected to host the majority of future development. TPAs are similar in that they are formed within 0.5 miles around a major transit stop such as a transit center or rail line.

Plan Bay Area 2050 distributes future growth across the San Francisco Bay Area region to meet its GHG emissions reduction, housing, and other performance targets, but it is not intended to override local land use control. Cities and counties, not MTC/ABAG, are ultimately responsible for the manner in which their local communities continue to be built out in the future. For this reason, cities and counties are not required to revise their land use policies and regulations, including General Plans, to be consistent with the regional transportation plan or an alternative planning strategy. Rather than increase regional land use control, *Plan Bay Area 2050* facilitates implementation by expanding incentives and opportunities available to local jurisdictions to support growth in PDAs. In addition to funding transportation and planning projects in PDAs, *Plan Bay Area 2050* sets the stage for cities and counties to increase the efficiency of the development process, if they choose, for projects consistent with *Plan Bay Area* and other State legislation.³

Local Regulations

Santa Rosa City Code

The Santa Rosa City Code (SRCC) includes various directives to minimize adverse impacts to population and housing in Santa Rosa. The SRCC is organized by title, chapter, and section, and in some cases, articles. Most provisions related to population and housing are in Title 21, *Development Requirements*, as follows:

- **Chapter 21-02, Inclusionary Housing.** This chapter aims to enhance the public welfare and assure the compatibility between future housing development and the housing element of the Santa Rosa general plan through increasing the production of housing units affordable to households of lower and moderate incomes. It is the purpose of this chapter to meet Santa Rosa general plan goals to expand the supply of housing available to lower and moderate-income households. The inclusionary requirements of this chapter apply to all residential developments within the City. Section 21-02.090, *Establishment, payment, and use of the housing impact and commercial linkage fees*, requires residential development projects be assessed a housing impact fee as an alternative to provision of on-site allocated units and commercial development projects be assessed a commercial linkage fee to mitigate the impact of the additional demand for affordable housing caused by such activity. All housing impact and commercial linkage fees paid to the City shall be used by the City's Housing Authority only for the development of housing situated within the City limits that is affordable to households of lower and moderate incomes. Housing assisted with such fees shall be subject to a minimum 55-year affordability agreement with the Housing Authority.

³ Association of Bay Area Governments and Metropolitan Transportation Commission, 2023, Frequently Asked Questions: Does *Plan Bay Area* override local land use control?, <https://www.planbayarea.org/2040-plan/quick-facts/faq-page#n4851>, accessed March 10, 2023.

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- **Chapter 21-03, *Growth Management*.** This chapter provides provisions necessary to protect, and will promote the public health, safety and welfare by balancing new residential development with: the City's ability to provide the public facilities and services necessary for such development; the protection of social and economic values in existing residential neighborhoods and in commercial and industrial areas; the conservation of vital open spaces and natural resources; the achievement of decent housing for all income categories; the attainment of community goals for the overall size and character of the City; and the attainment of a stable, moderate growth rate sufficient to support a healthy business economy. Section 21-03.060, *Procedure*, describes the procedure for allotment issuance by the Directory or Community Development and Section 21-03.070, *Requirements for allotments*, lists the requirements for allotments from specific reserves. Section 21-03.150, *Administration*, grants the City Council the authority to adopt procedures, policies, rules and requirements, including the adoption of a processing fee, to implement and administer the provisions of this chapter.

4.13.1.2 EXISTING CONDITIONS

This section describes existing population and housing conditions in Santa Rosa, as well as Sonoma County, to provide context for the implications for the proposed project. The following text provides an overview of population and housing in Santa Rosa and the Sonoma County region.

Population

Santa Rosa is the largest city in Sonoma County, making up 25 percent of the county's population. According to the California Department of Finance, the population of Santa Rosa grew from 167,820 in 2010 to 174,890 in 2019.⁴ As shown in Table 4.13-1, *Total Population, 2010 to 2019*, the city's population grew by approximately 4 percent; this growth was higher than the level of population growth in Sonoma County as a whole, which was 3 percent during the same period.

TABLE 4.13-1 TOTAL POPULATION, 2010 TO 2019

	2010	2019	Total Change	Total Percentage Change
Santa Rosa City Limits	167,820	174,890	7,070	4%
Unincorporated Sonoma County	145,360	139,910	5,450	-4%
Total Sonoma County	483,880	495,920	12,040	3%

Notes: Numbers are rounded from original sources.

Source: State of California, Department of Finance, May 2021, *E-5 Population and Housing Estimates for Cities, Counties and the State — 2011-2020 with 2010 Census Benchmark*, <https://dof.ca.gov/forecasting/demographics/estimates/estimates-e5-2010-2020/>, accessed March 10, 2023.

⁴ State of California, Department of Finance, May 2021, *E-5 Population and Housing Estimates for Cities, Counties and the State — 2011-2020 with 2010 Census Benchmark*, <https://dof.ca.gov/forecasting/demographics/estimates/estimates-e5-2010-2020/>, accessed March 10, 2023.

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Housing

Between 2010 and 2019, Santa Rosa experienced a steady housing growth. As shown in Table 4.13-2, *Housing Units, 2010 to 2019*, the city’s number of housing units grew by approximately 2 percent; this growth was higher than the level of housing growth in Sonoma County as a whole, which was less than 1 percent during the same period.

TABLE 4.13-2 HOUSING UNITS, 2010 TO 2019

	2010	2019	Total Change	Total Percentage Change
Santa Rosa City Limits	67,400	68,930	1,530	2%
Unincorporated Sonoma County	67,970	64,810	3,160	-5%
Total Sonoma County	204,570	204,980	410	Less than 1%

Notes: Numbers are rounded from original sources.
Source: State of California, Department of Finance, May 2021, *E-5 Population and Housing Estimates for Cities, Counties and the State — 2011-2020 with 2010 Census Benchmark*, <https://dof.ca.gov/forecasting/demographics/estimates/estimates-e5-2010-2020/>, accessed March 10, 2023.

Priority Development Areas

As discussed in Chapter 4.0, *Environmental Analysis*, and shown on Figure 4-1, *Priority Development Areas and Transit Priority Areas*, of this Draft EIR, the EIR Study Area has six PDAs, including the Mendocino Avenue/Santa Rosa Avenue Corridor, North Santa Rosa Station, Downtown Station Area, Sebastopol Road Corridor, Roseland, and Santa Rosa Avenue PDAs. Because *Plan Bay Area 2050* anticipates the majority of growth in the Bay Area will occur in PDAs, all of these PDAs are anticipated to experience growth through the proposed project’s 2050 horizon year.

Regional Housing Needs Allocation

As the San Francisco Bay Area’s regional agency, MTC/ABAG calculates the RHNA for jurisdictions in Sonoma County, including Santa Rosa. Table 4.13-3, *Santa Rosa Regional Housing Needs Allocation*, shows the 6th Housing Cycle RHNA for the current planning period, which is the number of housing units the City of Santa Rosa would need to accommodate by 2031. As shown in Table 4.13-3, the housing unit allocations are categorized by household size and income. The household income categories are as follows:

- Very Low Income: Households making less than 50 percent of the area median income.
- Low Income: Households making between 50 and 80 percent of the area median income.
- Moderate Income: Households making between 80 and 120 percent of the area median income.
- Above Moderate Income: Households making more than 120 percent the area median income.

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Household median income is calculated based on household size. In 2019, the median income in Sonoma County for a single-person household was \$65,300. The median income in Sonoma County for a family of three in 2019 was \$83,950, and \$108,250 for a family of six.⁵

TABLE 4.13-3 SANTA ROSA REGIONAL HOUSING NEEDS ALLOCATION

RHNA Planning Period	Dwelling Units by Income Category				Total
	Very Low Income	Low Income	Moderate Income	Above Moderate Income	
2023 to 2031	1,218	701	771	1,995	4,685

Note: RHNA = Regional Housing Need Allocation

Source: City of Santa Rosa, February 2023, *2023-2031 Housing Element*,

https://www.santarosafoward.com/files/managed/Document/762/SANTA%20ROSA_2023-2031%20Housing%20Element_Adopted_2.14.23.pdf, accessed March 10, 2023.

4.13.2 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

The implementation of the proposed project would result in significant population and housing impacts if it would:

1. Induce substantial unplanned population growth or growth for which inadequate planning has occurred, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure).
2. Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.
3. In combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, result in a cumulative impact with respect to population and housing.

4.13.3 IMPACT DISCUSSION

POP-1	Implementation of the proposed project would not induce substantial unplanned population growth or growth for which inadequate planning has occurred, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure).
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The proposed General Plan 2050 is a high-level policy document that will replace the current General Plan 2035 as the overarching policy document that defines a vision for future change and sets the land use and policy framework for growth for Santa Rosa. The proposed project considers growth over an approximately 25-year horizon but does not include specific development proposals. The General Plan is the policy document that plans ahead to accommodate the amount of reasonably foreseeable growth

⁵ California Department of Housing and Community Development, May 6, 2019, *State Income Limits for 2019*, <https://www.hcd.ca.gov/grants-funding/income-limits/state-and-federal-income-limits/docs/income-limits-2019.pdf>, accessed March 10, 2023.

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given past growth trends and the ability of existing services and infrastructure to support future growth. Therefore, the proposed project would not directly induce growth, but rather is a response to growth that is likely to occur whether the proposed project is adopted or not. Because the proposed General Plan 2050 also includes recommendations for future roadway and infrastructure extension, as it is required to do by State law, it has the potential to indirectly induce growth. However, the proposed General Plan 2050 itself is the City’s effort to adequately plan for this growth.

As shown in Table 3-6, *Proposed 2050 Buildout Projections in the EIR Study Area*, in Chapter 3, *Project Description*, of this Draft EIR, the EIR Study Area has a population of approximately 197,980, with 75,850 housing units as of 2019. The proposed project estimates an overall increase of 24,090 housing units and 65,760 residents in the EIR Study Area by 2050. As shown in Table 4.13-4, *Proposed General Plan 2050 Growth Projections*, this equates to a 33 percent increase in total population and 32 percent increase in housing units over the 25-year horizon of the proposed project.

TABLE 4.13-4 PROPOSED GENERAL PLAN 2050 GROWTH PROJECTIONS

	Existing Conditions 2019	Proposed General Plan 2050	Santa Rosa Projected Growth 2019 to 2050 (Proposed Project)	Total Percent Change
Population	197,980	263,740	65,760	33%
Housing Units	75,850	99,940	24,090	32%

Note: Numbers are rounded from original sources.
Source: Sonoma County Transportation Authority and W-Trans, 2023, *Santa Rosa General Plan 2050 Travel Demand Model*.

Approximately 19 percent of the projected residential growth for the proposed project comes from the City’s 2023–2031 RHNA allocation of 4,685 units,⁶ which is dictated by the California Housing Law and not by the City. The 4,685 units required for the 2023-2031 Housing Element represent an 8 percent decrease over the 2015-2022 RHNA, which was 5,083 units. Although the RHNA allocation is not a requirement to build units, the State legislature has enacted increasingly stringent requirements on cities to ensure they are doing everything possible to remove common barriers to housing construction. Furthermore, pursuant to Senate Bill 166, Housing Elements are required to include a “buffer” of additional sites to ensure that if the sites listed in the housing opportunity sites inventory are developed without housing, or are developed with less than the full amount of housing claimed in the inventory, there is remaining capacity to ensure an ongoing supply of sites for the full RHNA during the eight years of the Housing Element cycle. The California Department of Housing and Community Development recommends a buffer of least 15 to 30 percent, but many jurisdictions provide a buffer of up to 50 percent. The proposed land use map, as shown in Figure 3-3, *Proposed General Plan 2050 Land Use Map*, in Chapter 3 of this Draft EIR, includes enough land designated for housing to fulfill the City’s 2023-2031 RHNA as well as future buffer sites identified through the 2023-2031 Housing Element.

⁶ City of Santa Rosa, February 2023, *2023-2031 Housing Element*, https://www.santarosaforward.com/files/managed/Document/762/SANTA%20ROSA_2023-2031%20Housing%20Element_Adopted_2.14.23.pdf, accessed March 10, 2023.

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However, the proposed project extends beyond the end of the 6th Cycle RHNA of the recently adopted Housing Element. Assuming continued eight-year RHNA cycles, and that the proposed General Plan 2050's expected life cycle is until 2050, the proposed General Plan 2050 should designate sufficient residential land to accommodate the future 7th Cycle (2031–2039), the 8th Cycle (2039–2047), and some of the 9th Cycle (2047–2055). The scale of future housing allocations is unknown and difficult to predict. If the 7th Cycle RHNA uses the same percentage change as the 5th to 6th Cycle RHNA, it would call for approximately 4,455 new units. If the 8th and 9th Cycles continue that trend, it could be expected to call for an additional 4,380 new units by 2047 and an additional 4,430 new units by 2055, for a combined total of around 17,950 new units over the 7th through 9th Cycles, covering the years 2031 to 2055. This does not include any additional buffer for the three future RHNA cycles. Table 4.13-5, *Santa Rosa Projected Regional Housing Needs Allocation*, summarizes the projected RHNA for Santa Rosa through 2055.

TABLE 4.13-5 SANTA ROSA PROJECTED REGIONAL HOUSING NEEDS ALLOCATION

Housing Cycle	Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA)
6th Cycle (2023–2031)	4,685
7th Cycle (2031–2039)	4,455
8th Cycle (2039–2047)	4,380
9th Cycle (2047–2055)	4,430
Total Housing Unit Needs	17,950

Note: The 7th through 9th Cycle RHNA is unknown at this time. The numbers provided are rounded estimates based on past RHNA for the City of Santa Rosa based on the assumption that the percentage change from the 5th Cycle to 6th Cycle would not change.
Source: PlaceWorks, 2023.

The Santa Rosa 2023-2031 Housing Element that was recently adopted in February 2023 includes goals, policies, and actions that address population and housing growth over the next eight years. Furthermore, Chapter 2, *Land Use and Economic Development*, of proposed General Plan 2050 contains goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider impacts from potential future growth. The following goal, policies, and actions would serve to minimize impacts related to population growth:

- **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 2-1.2:** 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 2-1.7:** 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.

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- **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 2-1.4:** Ensure that City policy, codes, programming, and practices support a range of land uses.
- **Action 2-1.21:** 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.

Furthermore, the proposed project would accommodate future growth by providing for infrastructure and associated public services to accommodate the projected growth of the city (see also Chapter 4.14, *Public Services, Parks, and Recreation*, Chapter 4.15, *Transportation*, and Chapter 4.17, *Utilities and Service Systems*, of this Draft EIR). All potential future development would be required to comply with any required site-specific infrastructure improvements and to pay any project-specific impact fees.

As discussed, the proposed General Plan 2050 is the policy document that plans ahead to accommodate the amount of reasonably foreseeable growth given past growth trends and the ability of existing services and infrastructure to support future growth. Additionally, buildout of the proposed project would be able to accommodate the next three RHNA cycles. Consequently, while buildout in accordance with the proposed project would serve to accommodate expected population, housing, and job growth in the city, this growth would not represent unplanned population growth for which inadequate planning has occurred, and the impact would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

POP-2	Implementation of the proposed project would not displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.
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Buildout under the proposed project is expected to result in an increase of approximately 24,090 housing units in the EIR Study Area over an approximately 25-year horizon. One of the purposes of the proposed project is to adequately plan and accommodate future growth through the distribution, location, balance, and extent of land uses. Implementation of proposed General Plan 2050 would accommodate population growth through land use designations, goals, policies, and actions that provide a vision and guide growth in the city. Land use changes under the proposed land use map would increase opportunities for housing in the city. The proposed land use map would provide land use designations for a variety of housing types and provide for additional residential opportunities throughout Santa Rosa.

Furthermore, Chapter 2, *Land Use and Economic Development*, of proposed General Plan 2050 contains goals, policies, and actions that require local planning and development decisions to consider impacts from potential future growth. The goal, policies, and actions listed under impact discussion POP-1 would

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also serve to minimize potential adverse impacts related to population and housing displacement. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not displace existing people or housing or necessitate the construction of replacement housing elsewhere and the impact would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

POP-3	Implementation of the proposed project would not, in combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects, result in a cumulative impact with respect to population and housing.
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The context for the cumulative population and housing impacts would be potential future development under the proposed project combined with development on lands adjacent to the EIR Study Area. As described under impact discussions POP-1 and POP-2, implementation of the proposed project would not induce a substantial amount of unplanned population growth or growth for which inadequate planning has occurred, or displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere. The proposed General Plan 2050 goals, policies, and actions would provide adequate planning to accommodate the proposed new increase in growth in the EIR Study Area. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable impact to population and housing, and cumulative impacts would be *less than significant*.

Significance without Mitigation: Less than significant.

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