

6

Health, Equity, and Environmental Justice



6. Health, Equity, and Environmental Justice

Like many communities, Santa Rosa faces long-standing inequities and health disparities between certain areas and groups in the city. The General Plan aims to name these issues and present meaningful solutions.

The focus of this chapter is on promoting physical and mental health; creating equity across all aspects of the built, economic, and social environments; and fostering environmental justice. Awareness about equity and environmental justice is increasingly common, with consensus building around definitions like the ones here.

Equity is the state, quality, or ideal of being just, impartial, and fair. It involves providing people what they need to enjoy full, healthy lives.

Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2023

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)

Health, equity, and environmental justice are key priorities for the Santa Rosa community. With the passage in 2016 of California Senate Bill (SB) 1000, the Planning for Healthy Communities Act, Environmental Justice is now among the mandatory elements in a general plan, to advance environmental justice for the areas that suffer most from a combination of economic, health, and environmental burdens. As introduced in Chapter 2, Land Use and Economic Development, in Santa Rosa these are termed Equity Priority Areas (EPAs). Santa Rosa's EPAs are depicted on **Figure 2-4** (Chapter 2).

The City used the California Communities Environmental Health Screening Tool (CalEnviroScreen) to help identify significant community health factors impacting each EPA. CalEnviroScreen (discussed in detail in Chapter 2) scores a range of factors related to pollution burden and population characteristics. **Table 6-1** shows the scores for select factors for each census tract with an EPA. The factors in the table are those in which any of the identified EPA tracts has a score of 75 or greater (marked by an asterisk), indicating that it fares worse in that category than 75 percent or more of all census tracts in the state. Each tract with an EPA scores in the top quartile of several factors.

Equity Priority Areas or EPAs are areas in Santa Rosa where residents suffer most from economic, health, and environmental burdens. Environmental justice needs and health and equity considerations of EPAs have priority in some of the goals, policies, and actions in this and other chapters of the General Plan.

Goals, policies, and actions in all chapters of the General Plan address the top factors impacting environmental justice (see **Table 6-1**), health, and equity, prioritizing the needs of EPAs and selected Equity Priority Populations, as appropriate. Similarly, some goals, policies, and actions prioritize implementation in the Areas of Change that the community identified for focus of City resources.

Areas of Change are places the City will focus efforts to address housing, services, connectivity, and/or infrastructure needs to help make these complete neighborhoods. Some goals, policies, and actions throughout the General Plan prioritize Areas of Change for activities that promote complete neighborhoods, such as active transportation infrastructure, quality housing, healthy food options, opportunities for social connections, and access to parks and commercial services.

Areas of Change are depicted on Figure 2-5 and discussed in more detail in Chapter 2, Land Use and Economic Development.

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- ➔ Health for All Residents
- ➔ Food Access and Urban Agriculture
- ➔ Violence Prevention, Safety, and Equitable Policing
- ➔ Parks
- ➔ Youth, Family, and Seniors

This chapter is organized around key goals intended to implement the community’s vision for Santa Rosa. These goals and their associated policies and actions are especially pertinent to the following components of the Santa Rosa Forward Vision Statement:

- **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.
- **Inclusive:** Everyone is welcome and actively encouraged to join in neighborhood and citywide decision making, and barriers to participation are identified and eliminated.
- **Healthy:** All neighborhoods have low pollution level and good air quality, are vibrant, connected, full-service communities, with the resources to be civically organized, and anchored by inclusive and accessible public outdoor spaces and buildings offering safe and welcoming places for everyone. Every person has the opportunity to attain their full health potential.
- **Equitable:** Everyone has what they need to enjoy long, fulfilling, healthy lives, including affordable access to meet their daily needs—including healthy food, recreation, education, childcare, employment opportunities, reliable internet, and physical and mental health services.
- **Safe:** Streets are safe; public safety services are provided by caring and thoughtful community members who are representative of and familiar with the neighborhoods, groups, and individuals they serve; and everyone, including immigrants and people of color, can safely access these services.

- **Educated:** Life-long education, enrichment, and supportive services and resources engage and empower young people, strengthen families (of any family structure), connect and activate seniors, and foster the success and well-being of everyone.

Figure 6-1 illustrates some of the key concepts addressed in this chapter.

Relationship to Other Chapters

In addition to the goals, policies, and actions in this chapter, other elements and chapters of the General Plan have goals, policies, and actions that are relevant to health, equity, and environmental justice:

- The Housing Element includes goals, policies, and programs to address the community's housing needs, including housing quality and affordability.
- Chapter 2, Land Use and Economic Development, and Chapter 3, Circulation, Open Space, Conservation, and Greenhouse Gas Reduction, have policies that support reduced exposure to GHG emissions from vehicular traffic and emissions reductions overall.
- Chapter 3, Circulation, Conservation, and GHG Reduction, also includes policies and actions supporting increased opportunities for physical activity with improvements to the city's active transportation network.
- Chapter 5, Climate Resilience, Safety, Noise, and Public Services, addresses safety from hazardous waste exposure and brownfield site cleanup.

TABLE 6-1
CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Rankings of Santa Rosa's Census Tracts with EPAs

Equity Priority Area (by Census Tract)	3104	3200
Overall Percentiles		
CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Percentile	75*	73
Exposures		
Diesel Particulate Matter	96*	31
Traffic	78*	73
Lead from Housing	87*	47
Environmental Effects		
Groundwater Threats	98*	89*
Hazardous Waste	47	76*
Solid Waste	36	98*
Sensitive Population		
Asthma	80*	80*
Cardiovascular Disease	89*	89*
Socioeconomic Factors		
Education	82*	74
Linguistic Isolation	81*	56
Poverty	78*	62
Housing Burden	88*	83*
Source: CalEnviroScreen 4.0, 2023.		
* Top 75 percent of all census tracts in California.		

Equity Priority Area (by Census Tract)	2801	2802	2100	2903	3001
Overall Percentiles					
CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Percentile	44	46	47	34	51
Exposures					
Diesel Particulate Matter	66	57	88*	22	64
Traffic	74	78*	85*	33	79*
Lead from Housing	23	47	62	56	53
Environmental Effects					
Groundwater Threats	78*	91*	96*	72	97*
Hazardous Waste	96*	59	88*	56	65
Solid Waste	36	0	59	13	91*
Sensitive Population					
Asthma	64	66	42	66	48
Cardiovascular Disease	60	62	36	62	50
Socioeconomic Factors					
Education	54	81*	49	80*	54
Linguistic Isolation	N/A	79*	62	74	44
Poverty	37	73	45	70	63
Unemployment	N/A	41	65	47	78*
Housing Burden	32	62	61	47	64
Source: CalEnviroScreen 4.0, 2023.					
* Top 75 percent of all census tracts in California.					

Equity Priority Area (by Census Tract)	3002	3103	3102	1402	1401
Overall Percentiles					
CalEnviroScreen 4.0 Percentile	51	48	61	74	43
Exposures					
Diesel Particulate Matter	66	66	83*	77*	34
Traffic	77*	37	86*	85*	41
Lead from Housing	62	61	72	36	46
Environmental Effects					
Groundwater Threats	98*	86*	92*	97*	82*
Hazardous Waste	57	46	46	76*	54
Solid Waste	91*	51	12	87*	12
Sensitive Population					
Asthma	64	80*	80*	51	48
Cardiovascular Disease	71	89*	89*	56	53
Socioeconomic Factors					
Education	69	83*	79*	73	77*
Linguistic Isolation	56	75*	64	74	45
Poverty	51	68	69	78*	62
Unemployment	31	58	56	55	73
Housing Burden	40	26	41	68	46
Source: CalEnviroScreen 4.0, 2023.					
* Top 75 percent of all census tracts in California.					

Figure 6-1: Visualizing the Concepts

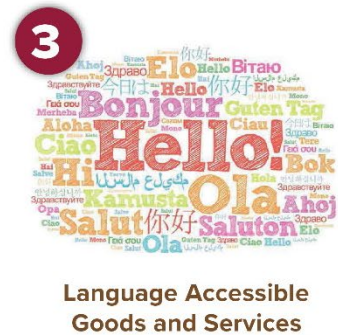
HEALTH, EQUITY, AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE



Fresh Food Access



Affordable Housing



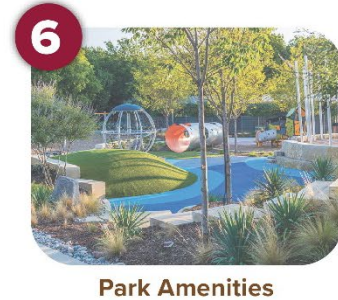
Language Accessible Goods and Services



Clean Air



Economic Opportunity



Park Amenities

Health for All Residents

The City of Santa Rosa is committed to maintaining and enhancing the health and quality of life for the community by integrating “Health in All Policies,” a practice that incorporates community and individual well-being into decision-making across all City government sectors and policy areas. This philosophy recognizes that a variety of environmental, social, and socioeconomic factors impact health outcomes, which are collectively called “social determinants of health.”

Social determinants of health are the conditions in which we live, learn, work, and play. These conditions include a broad range of socioeconomic and environmental factors, such as air and water quality, the quality of the built environment (such as housing, land use, transportation access and availability; street, park, playground, and workplace safety), opportunities for employment, income, early childhood development and education, access to healthy foods, health insurance coverage and access to health care services, safety from crime and violence, culturally and linguistically appropriate services in all sectors, and protection against institutionalized forms of racism and discrimination.

Source: Let's Get Healthy California

Residents in Santa Rosa EPAs suffer from high rates of asthma and cardiovascular disease (as shown in **Table 6-1**). Leading causes of these diseases include environmental factors like air pollution, as well as factors such as poor diet and smoking. Many EPAs have lower life expectancies than other local communities, as shown on **Figure 6-2**. Once an individual has a health issue requiring medical assistance, addressing the issue necessitates access to affordable care, which is not currently available to all community members.

Social determinants of health impacting community outcomes in Santa Rosa are best understood and addressed by working in partnership with impacted community members, engaging EPAs and Equity Priority Populations in the planning and decision-making processes. Unfortunately, these processes have often overlooked or excluded low-income populations and people of color. To overcome this historical pattern and meaningfully address health, equity, and environmental justice, the City of Santa Rosa must take proactive measures to eliminate barriers to participation in these processes.

Goals, Policies, and Actions

Goal 6-1: Improve health and well-being for all community members by emphasizing community health in all City policies, programs, actions, and activities.

Policy 6-1.1: Promote efforts to improve community health outcomes and ensure that City investments support community health goals whenever possible.

Action 6-1.1: Apply for grants to fund programs and projects to improve community health outcomes.

Action 6-1.2: Work with health service organizations, including Sonoma County Health and Human Services, to identify environmental risk factors for asthma, especially in EPAs and areas where more than 10 percent of adults have asthma.

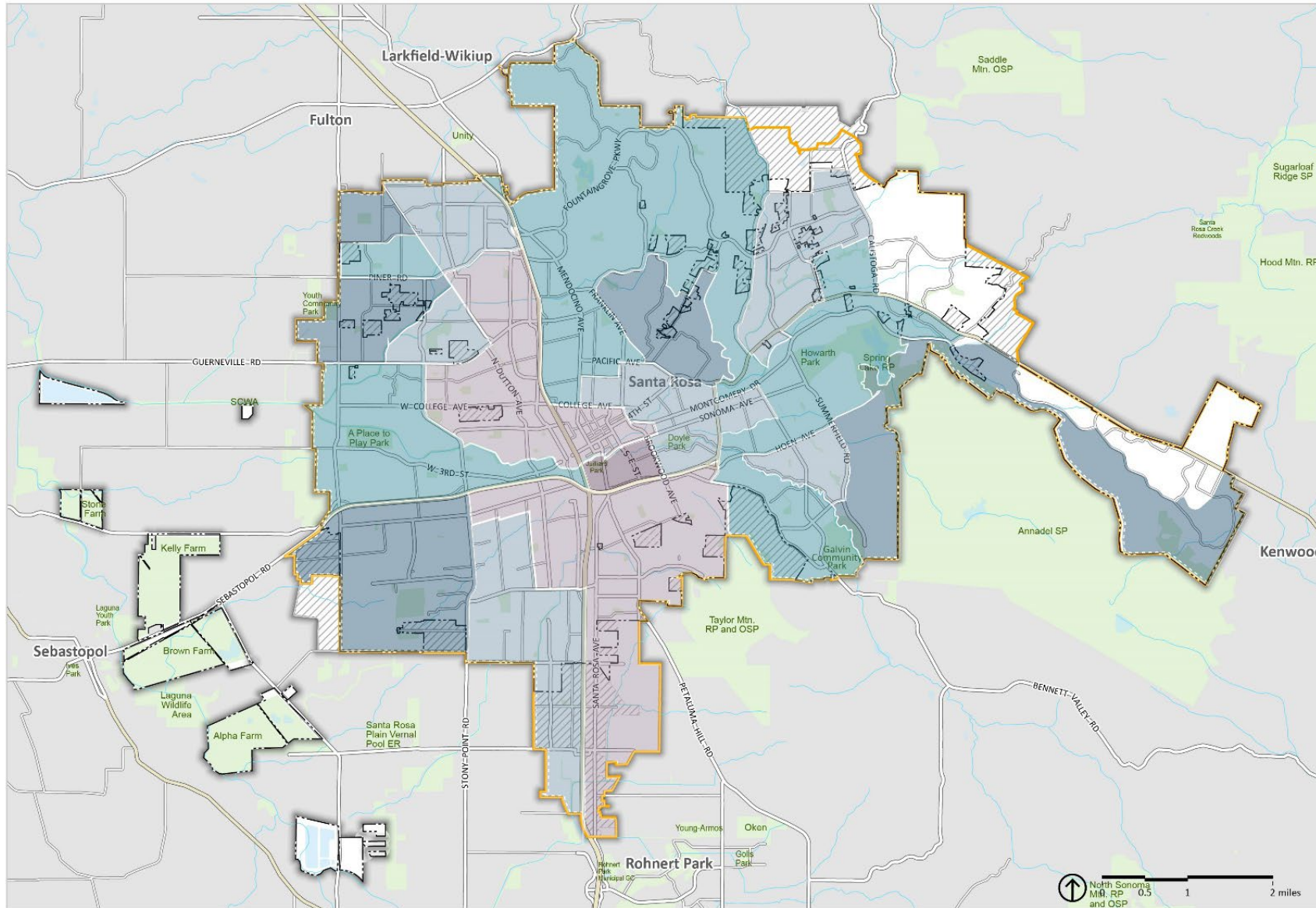


Figure 6-2
Life Expectancy

City Limits

- City Limits
- Urban Growth Boundary
- City Sphere of Influence
- Planning Area
- Creeks and Waterways
- Parks and Open Space
- Outside of Planning Area

Life Expectancy by US Quantile

- 56.9 - 75.1 Years
- 75.2 - 77.5 Years
- 77.6 - 79.5 Years
- 79.6 - 81.6 Years
- 81.7 - 97.5 Years

Source: City of Santa Rosa 2023



Action 6-1.3: *Adopt a Health in All Policies ordinance and strategy to institutionalize a collaborative approach to improving the health of Santa Rosa residents by incorporating health, sustainability, and equity considerations into City decision making across all sectors and policy areas.*

Action 6-1.4: *Apply Health in All Policies criteria to all capital projects to ensure that they promote health equity (e.g., supporting safe and active transportation).*

Action 6-1.5: *Develop a channel or protocol for Health in All Policies City inter-departmental collaboration, including task forces, training, and formal and ad hoc working groups to coordinate implementation of the General Plan and other City initiatives.*

Action 6-1.6: *Provide training for City staff and officials about how the built environment and transportation choices affect health equity, economic opportunity, well-being, and quality of life.*

Action 6-1.7: *Maintain at least one City staff position that bridges planning, transportation, health, and equity.*

Action 6-1.8: *Adopt healthy development guidelines or checklists to track and monitor how new developments are incorporating health-promoting features (such as opportunities for physical activity, healthy food, drinking water, urban farming, quality affordable housing, and sustainable design).*

Action 6-1.9: *Update the Zoning Code to require health impact*

assessments for nonresidential developments of 100,000 square feet or more in EPAs to identify and mitigate any potential negative health implications of the project.

Health Impact Assessments help evaluate the potential health effects of a plan, project, or policy before it is built or implemented. They provide practical recommendations to increase positive health effects and minimize negative health effects.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2016

Action 6-1.10: *In annual reports on General Plan implementation, include updates regarding community-wide health, such as changes in life expectancy and other relevant metrics related to social determinants.*

Action 6-1.11: *Distribute social and economic resources equitably throughout the city so EPAs enjoy equal benefits of the city and are not disproportionately burdened by environmental pollution or other hazards.*

Action 6-1.12: *Prioritize funding for services, amenities, and infrastructure in EPAs.*

Policy 6-1.2: Ensure that all Santa Rosa residents can easily access primary and emergency health care facilities and medical services.

Action 6-1.13: *Evaluate whether the circulation network or transit system needs changes to improve access to medical facilities, including by active transportation modes, for everyone in Santa Rosa, including transit-dependent people, low-*

income community members, seniors, and people with disabilities.

Action 6-1.14: *Explore incentives for the establishment of neighborhood-serving health clinics and facilities.*

Action 6-1.15: *Implement any necessary changes to the circulation network or transit system to ensure accessibility to medical facilities, prioritizing EPAs.*

Action 6-1.16: *Participate in collaborative efforts with Sonoma County, State agencies, and health organizations to provide information and outreach about options for accessing medical coverage and care, prioritizing EPAs and Equity Priority Populations likely to have trouble accessing care, including low-income individuals and families, racial or ethnic groups experiencing disparate health outcomes, individuals who have limited English proficiency, and people who are unhoused.*

Goal 6-2: Advance health equity by understanding and addressing key social determinants of health.

Policy 6-2.1: **Promote awareness and recognition of the role of social determinants of health and health inequities, and ensure that City policies, services, programs, and actions can improve the lives and well-being of everyone in the community, especially in EPAs and among Equity Priority Populations at a higher risk for health inequities, including low-income**

individuals and families, racial or ethnic groups experiencing disparate health outcomes, individuals with limited English proficiency, and people who are unhoused.

Action 6-2.1: *Evaluate and adjust City policies, programs, and services, including budget allocation, to ensure that they promote fairness, equity, and justice, including within EPAs.*

Action 6-2.2: *Modify City processes, programs, and materials, as needed, to address social determinants of health and support the needs of EPAs.*

Action 6-2.3: *Identify resource distribution gaps and provide and distribute internal and external City resources in ways that are equitable and transparent.*

Action 6-2.4: *Participate in Health Action Together, the nonprofit public-private partnership leading and supporting cross-sector efforts to reduce inequities across Sonoma County identified in the 2021 Portrait of Sonoma report on well-being and access to opportunity.*

Action 6-2.5: *Implement and update, as needed, the Santa Rosa Equity Workplan, to advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in the City as an employer and in the plans, policies, and practices that the City institutes for the benefit of all who live, learn, work, or play in Santa Rosa.*

The **Equity Work Plan** comprises 30 recommendations from City employees to improve equity, diversity, and belonging in City operations. These include better recruiting among underrepresented groups, promoting people equitably, decreasing workplace isolation, forming an employee task force, and hiring a Diversity, Equity, and Equal Employment Officer.

Action 6-2.6: *Coordinate with Sonoma County Health and Human Services and other health organizations to provide public outreach and education on how lifestyle changes can affect health through newsletters, the City website, and social media.*

Policy 6-2.2: **Encourage community, social, and emotional health—the ability to understand and manage emotions and to form social connections and relationships—for everyone in Santa Rosa, eliminating health inequities due to race and income.**

Action 6-2.7: *Develop and implement standards, policies, strategies, and practices that value and foster an internal culture of employee well-being, transformation, and belonging throughout the City organization, as well as wellness strategies and trauma care programs to support physical, mental, and emotional health.*

Action 6-2.8: *Implement policies, programs, and actions that increase social and emotional health and self-care for everyone in Santa Rosa.*

Action 6-2.9: *Partner with Sonoma County Health and Human Services and*

criminal justice, school, faith-based, and other organizations to create public awareness and sensitivity to the needs of people with behavioral health challenges and provide support for those needing services, particularly in EPAs and among Equity Priority Populations.

Action 6-2.10: *Develop and promote opportunities for Santa Rosa community members to experience or participate in arts, cultural, and related activities that can enhance mental health and connection with other community members.*

Action 6-2.11: *Implement regional, State, and national policies and best practices that promote racial equity.*

Action 6-2.12: *Continue to build organizational and institutional skills and commitment to advance racial equity and eliminate institutional and structural racism.*

Action 6-2.13: *Partner with other public and private organizations to create public awareness of the existence of various forms of racism and discrimination, explicit and implicit bias, and the health inequities they exacerbate.*

Policy 6-2.3: **Prevent, disincentivize, and reduce harmful addictive behaviors.**

Action 6-2.14: *Restrict tobacco and alcohol retailers near schools, youth-populated areas, and senior facilities, and in areas with a high density of existing tobacco retailers, particularly in EPAs.*

Action 6-2.15: *Partner with local, regional, and State organizations to promote*

public awareness about the potential risks of opioid abuse, and the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs that affect Santa Rosa community members.

Action 6-2.16: *Update Zoning Code sections governing nonconforming uses to consider phasing out nonconforming uses over time.*

Policy 6-2.4: Address conditions contributing to risk of asthma and adverse air quality.

Action 6-2.17: *Work with Sonoma County Public Health Division to reduce risk of asthma through land use planning and programs across the city.*

Action 6-2.18: *Evaluate the efficacy of the City’s existing Breathe Easy program to minimize exposures to tobacco and consider program modifications, if appropriate.*

Action 6-2.19: *Work with Sonoma County, surrounding agricultural producers, and farmers to protect areas with sensitive populations from pesticide drift by restricting the use of pesticides in these areas. Promote alternatives such as integrated pest management and regenerative agriculture.*

Action 6-2.20: *Disseminate information to tenants and property owners about methods to reduce asthma and other health issues by improving indoor air quality, including by adding air conditioning and reducing and preventing indoor mold growth.*

Goal 6-3: Promote meaningful community engagement and empower residents through inclusive communication, outreach, and capacity-building to participate in City planning and decision making.

Policy 6-3.1: Ensure meaningful public engagement processes and events that make it possible for everyone—especially EPAs, low-income populations, and limited-English proficient individuals—to participate and influence outcomes.

Action 6-3.1: *Engage all community members—prioritizing EPAs, low-income populations, and individuals with limited English proficiency—in the planning and decision-making processes by using culturally appropriate and accessible channels, including:*

- Provide translation services relevant to the area.
- Provide childcare.
- Hold engagement opportunities in different locations throughout the community, at different times of the day and week, and use different channels (e.g., in person and online).
- Use participatory facilitation techniques.
- Provide healthy food and water for people who attend in person meetings.
- Meet in ADA-compliant locations.

Action 6-3.2: *Explore developing City guidelines and best practices to compensate low-income residents for engaging in City planning and decision making to eliminate barriers to participation.*

Action 6-3.3: *Identify, evaluate, and eliminate existing barriers—such as age, income, and voter registration*

status—for Santa Rosa residents to serve on and engage with City council, boards, committees, and commissions, and prioritize addressing barriers impacting EPAs.

Action 6-3.4: Establish a Communication and Public Participation Working Group that includes staff from all City departments to collaborate on how to engage community members to be part of planning or decision-making efforts, leverage resources, avoid duplication of efforts, and enhance effective and meaningful public participation, particularly EPAs.

Action 6-3.5: Develop City communication standards and style guidelines addressing writing style and translation protocols and including guidance for web, social media, and printed documents, so they are accessible to all residents.

Action 6-3.6: Create City of Santa Rosa community engagement standards, including guidance for different City departments, to engage with all residents considering the unique needs of districts, EPAs, and those most affected by a specific issue under consideration.

Action 6-3.7: Implement an engagement system/method to track issues and priorities identified at the neighborhood level to inform the development of policies, programs, projects, and services and to share information across departments.

Action 6-3.8: Consider establishing advisory committees and commissions

that consist of EPA community members to review policy considerations and advise the City Council. Consider creating ad hoc committees to study issues and report findings to the City Council.

Action 6-3.9: Identify and implement strategies to ensure that the composition of City committees, boards, and commissions reflect the diversity of the community, with particular attention to include EPA community members.

Action 6-3.10: Create an equity evaluation framework for the annual budget and all policies and programs considered by the City Council to ensure policy decisions respond to and are accountable to EPA residents and needs.

Policy 6-3.2: Inform, engage, and collaborate with residents, organizations, the private sector, and public agencies to develop and implement plans and projects that improve community health.

Action 6-3.11: Support the establishment of neighborhood associations in EPAs. Consider providing grants to neighborhood groups for block parties and other neighborhood events.

Action 6-3.12: Establish formal and ongoing relationships with individuals or organizations that represent and work with EPAs to build trust with and create reliable channels for community participation and input, including engagement outside of specific projects or policy processes.

Action 6-3.13: Partner with community-based organizations that have

relationships, trust, and cultural competency with non-English-speaking and English-as-a-second-language EPAs and stakeholders to reach out on local initiatives and issues.

Policy 6-3.3: Empower every resident of Santa Rosa, prioritizing EPAs, to participate in local decision making and engage meaningfully in planning efforts.

Action 6-3.14: *Develop bilingual educational content and provide training programs and workshops about civic involvement and processes for Santa Rosa residents, including how to participate in City Council, board, committee, and commission meeting, as well as how to apply for City jobs and become a City Council member.*

Action 6-3.15: *Support local organizations in collaborative engagement efforts and their specific missions by providing technical assistance, meeting spaces, funding, data, and other assistance, as resources allow.*

Action 6-3.16: *Seek opportunities to involve young people, meaningfully and authentically, particularly those in EPAs, to develop their confidence and leadership skills.*

Action 6-3.17: *Maintain and expand existing City internship programs and fellowships so younger community members can get exposure to careers in the public sector while gaining professional experience.*

Policy 6-3.4: Ensure the City has the necessary resources to conduct equitable, inclusive, and meaningful community

engagement, including staff, technology, funding, and systems.

Action 6-3.18: *Require each public-facing department of the City to maintain staff to engage with and empower residents to be part of planning and decision-making activities.*

Action 6-3.19: *Develop flexible but sustained infrastructure for two-way information sharing between City and partner agencies and community members.*

Action 6-3.20: *Require that all meetings, materials, and other engagement opportunities that use technology are accessible by mobile devices and support access for people with disabilities.*

Action 6-3.21: *Expand digital access and engagement opportunities by working with other public and private partners to invest in high-speed internet in communities that have low access to internet, prioritizing access for EPAs.*

Action 6-3.22: *Provide free internet access in public facilities, particularly those in EPAs.*

Goal 6-4: Maintain and enhance a culture of language access and justice in City communications and public participation in planning and decision-making processes.

Policy 6-4.1: Ensure access to information by identifying language diversity gaps to continue engaging the community in City projects, programs, and services.

Action 6-4.1: *Establish a Language Access and Justice Working Group that can identify barriers to language*

access and justice in communications and public participation and define policies and practices for translation and interpretation for the City of Santa Rosa.

Action 6-4.2: *Identify public documents, forms, and events that require translation and/or interpretation and develop yearly budgets, including staff time for in-house services.*

Policy 6-4.2: **Continue to provide interpretation and translation services as well as assistance to access community meetings, services, and programs, and direct engagement with EPAs, low-income individuals, limited English proficiency individuals, and other vulnerable populations that request additional support.**

Action 6-4.3: *Develop and implement a Language Access and Justice Plan to recognize and address the city's language diversity; define policies and practices for translation and interpretation for every department in the City that engages with the public.*

Action 6-4.4: *Implement language assistance measures for front desks or counters, meetings, telephone lines, services, events, documents, forms, materials, website, apps, and other points of contact with community members.*

Goal 6-5: Minimize risk of displacement and gentrification while ensuring housing is safe and sanitary for all residents.

Policy 6-5.1: Minimize displacement and gentrification in Santa Rosa.

Action 6-5.1: *Identify strategies to ensure that future improvements in EPAs will not result in a net loss of affordable housing or significant preventable displacement of residents.*

Action 6-5.2: *Identify opportunities to preserve the affordability of federal- and State-subsidized units at risk of conversion to market rate or other affordable housing resources.*

Policy 6-5.2: Ensure that housing in Santa Rosa provides safe and sanitary environments for residents.

Action 6-5.3: *Prompt property owners to repair and rehabilitate all substandard housing, especially in EPAs.*

Action 6-5.4: *Expand the focus areas addressed by the City's Neighborhood Revitalization Program to include EPAs, with the mission to improve living conditions and safety and increase property values.*

Action 6-5.5: *Seek grants and support current efforts to improve conditions in older homes that may have mold, mildew, and other contaminants.*

Action 6-5.6: *As the City's housing stock ages, pursue all available federal and State funds to assist with housing preservation and rehabilitation.*

Action 6-5.7: *Investigate and implement programs that incentivize landlords to maintain properties free of Municipal Code violations.*

Action 6-5.8: *Require applicants for residential remodel and rehabilitation projects to remediate environmental health hazards,*

such as lead-based paint, mold, mildew, and asbestos, as a condition of approval.

Action 6-5.9: *Seek funding for identifying and remediating lead and other environmental hazards for low-income residents of EPAs.*

Food Access and Urban Agriculture

Access to fresh foods, whole grains, and other unprocessed or minimally processed foods is essential to people's health. In addition to retail stores, Santa Rosa currently features five active community gardens that help provide healthy food options to community members.

Community gardens play a critical role in the city, sometimes serving as the primary food source when costs of and/or access to retail stores are limiting factors.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture maps census tracts where a significant number or share of residents is more than a specified distance from the nearest supermarket. **Figure 6-3** shows the tracts in Santa Rosa where residents are low income and a half mile or more from the nearest supermarket. The City designates such areas "Healthy Food Priority Areas" to target efforts to meet the nutritional needs of these communities.

Goals, Policies, and Actions

Goal 6-6: Ensure that all households and individuals have convenient, daily access to affordable healthy food, including fresh produce.

Policy 6-6.1: **Attract and support a range of healthy food retailers, prioritizing EPAs and Healthy Food Priority Areas, so that all residents live within one mile of a full-service grocery store, fresh produce market, or others offering fresh produce.**

Action 6-6.1: *Partner with Sonoma County Health and Human Services to encourage stores in Santa Rosa to participate in the Federal Food Assistance Program.*

Action 6-6.2: *Require convenience stores, supermarkets, liquor stores, and neighborhood and ethnic markets to carry fresh produce, especially in EPAs and Healthy Food Priority Areas.*

Action 6-6.3: *Update the Zoning Code to allow farmers markets in all nonresidential zoning districts by right with standards.*

Action 6-6.4: *Consult with the local hospitals, clinics, local school districts, Santa Rosa Community College, and the California State University Extension to produce and provide educational materials and programs aimed at promoting and facilitating healthier lifestyles.*

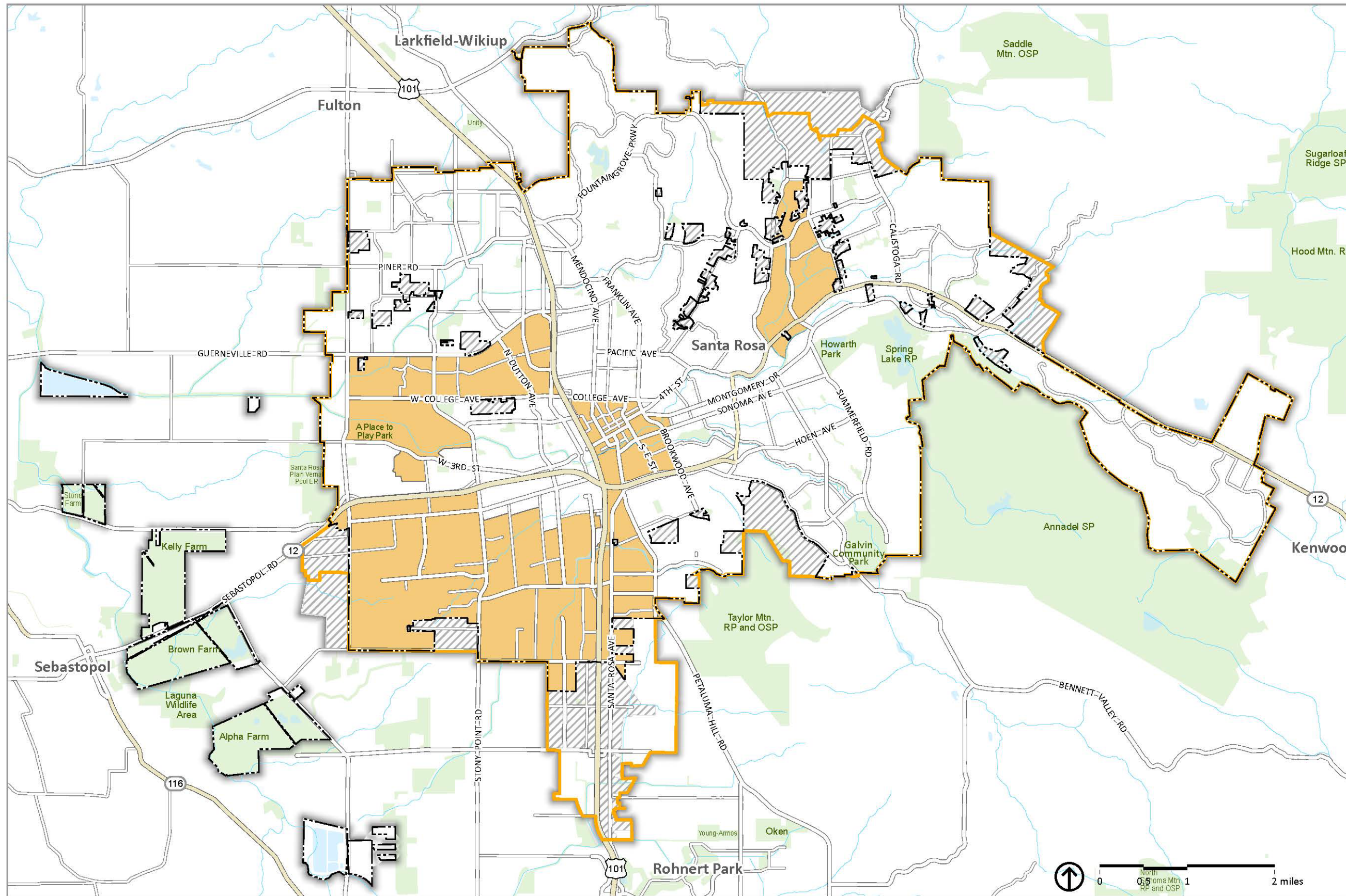


Figure 6-3
Healthy Food
Priority Areas

- City Limits
- Urban Growth Boundary
- City Sphere of Influence
- Planning Area
- Creeks and Waterways
- Parks and Open Space
- Low-income areas 1/2 mile or more from a supermarket

Source: USDA Food Access Atlas, 2023.

Action 6-6.5: *Explore programs with the Santa Rosa City School District, Sonoma County Public Health Division, community garden groups, and other advocates to provide healthy foods in schools and other public institutions.*

Action 6-6.6: *Distribute information and educate low-income families and people experiencing homelessness about food assistance programs.*

Policy 6-6.2: Encourage the establishment of local restaurants and businesses that serve healthy food.

Action 6-6.7: *Update the Zoning Code to require conditional-use-permit review for any chain restaurant with more than five outlets in the nine-county Bay Area.*

Action 6-6.8: *Require at least 300 feet between any two fast-food chain operations.*

Action 6-6.9: *Seek resources to facilitate establishment of “microenterprise home kitchen operations”—that is, restaurants operated out of a private residence—in EPAs, as allowed by Assembly Bill 686.*

Action 6-6.10: *Develop a program to provide fast-track permitting for healthy food and grocery stores in Healthy Food Priority Areas and underserved areas, as well as areas identified for increased residential development and mixed use.*

Policy 6-6.3: Facilitate urban agriculture, farming, gardening, and local food production, especially in EPAs and Healthy Food Priority Areas.

Action 6-6.11: *Provide the necessary resources to retain the city’s existing community gardens.*

Action 6-6.12: *Support the creation of additional community gardens or other urban agriculture opportunities, particularly in EPAs and Healthy Food Priority Areas.*

Action 6-6.13: *Consider updating the Zoning Code to allow all forms of urban agriculture by right in all zoning districts where appropriate, including community, yard, rooftop, indoor, and other gardens; community food production (as defined by the State); and on-site exchanges and sales.*

Action 6-6.14: *Develop an Urban Agriculture ordinance that includes strategies to increase access to healthy food—particularly in EPAs and Healthy Food Priority Areas—and standards for operation and soil mitigation.*

Action 6-6.15: *Explore the feasibility of enacting an Urban Agriculture Incentive Zone (per Assembly Bill 551) to allow landowners to receive tax incentives for putting land into agricultural use.*

Action 6-6.16: *Partner with the County, nonprofits, school districts, neighborhood organizations, faith-based organizations, and others to identify and develop sites for urban agriculture potential, and support all urban agriculture types in schools, parks, hospitals, correction facilities, and other public land and spaces suitable for urban agriculture development, including public easements and rights-of-way.*

Action 6-6.17: Evaluate the potential presence of contaminants that may be harmful to human health on land proposed for urban agriculture, including by performing site history assessments and soil testing.

Action 6-6.18: Identify financial resources for soil testing and remediation on identified sites for urban agriculture.

Action 6-6.19: Work with the County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District to establish food hubs throughout the city where community members can meet and exchange excess home-grown produce.

Action 6-6.20: Partner with the County Department of Health Services, local schools, and nonprofit organizations to provide education about the nutritional, social, economic, and environmental benefits of urban farming and locally grown and ecologically sound foods; urban agriculture opportunities; food production safety; food literacy; cooking; and food waste reduction.

Action 6-6.21: In accordance with the Neighborhood Food Act (Assembly Bill 2561), educate landowners, apartment complexes, and homeowners associations (HOA) about the benefits of urban gardening and edible landscaping, and work with them to remove any barriers that renters and owners with an HOA face when trying to grow food for self-consumption, exchange, or sale.

Action 6-6.22: Establish incentives for private property owners and developers to provide opportunities for residential gardening and urban agriculture, and similar opportunities to food producers who are emerging, have limited resources, and/or are people of color.

Action 6-6.23: Require public development projects to provide access to sustainable food for residents.

Action 6-6.24: Work with the County to protect the agricultural land base in the Sphere of Influence, including urban gardens, farms, and ranches.

Violence Prevention and Equitable Policing

Uncertainty or fear regarding personal and family safety is a significant negative health determinant. If people don't feel safe, they don't want to leave their home to congregate, exercise, or travel to appointments. Sometimes parents keep their children away from school because of their concern for the child's safety. Ensuring safety for the entire community is a major step toward achieving equity and promoting community health.

Goals, Policies, and Actions

Goal 6-7: Ensure community safety and foster neighborhood environments that are welcoming to all ages, cultures, races, and ethnicities.

Policy 6-7.1: Increase neighborhood safety and promote neighborhood development, particularly in EPAs.

Action 6-7.1: *Engage community members and youth in communities most affected by crime and violence with planning through place-based strategies/solutions for their neighborhoods to address safety.*

Action 6-7.2: *Design safe walking and biking routes in neighborhoods and around schools with high crime and gang activity, using Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design, to ensure that all community members can live, work, and play without fear.*

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design is a multidisciplinary approach that uses urban and architectural features to reduce victimization, deter offender decisions that precede criminal acts, and build a sense of community among inhabitants so they can gain territorial control of areas, reduce crime, and minimize fear of crime.

Source: The International Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design Association, 2023

Action 6-7.3: *Through collaboration between the Violence Prevention Partnership and the Police Department, create comprehensive community safety plans that include equitable resource allocation across the city and strategies to prevent violence.*

Action 6-7.4: *Proactively engage potential perpetrators through fellowships or conflict mediation facilitated by the Violence Prevention Partnership.*

Action 6-7.5: *Support community-based initiatives to reduce violence by*

promoting local economic participation and success, such as neighborhood job and vocational training facilities, community benefit districts, community development councils, and business improvement districts.

Action 6-7.6: *Collaborate with County of Sonoma to establish a re-entry system for formerly incarcerated individuals that promotes a safe and thriving community to ensure they experience healthy reintegration in Santa Rosa, particularly for 2011 Assembly Bill 109 populations (individuals sentenced to nonserious, nonviolent, nonsex offenses).*

Action 6-7.7: *Continue to train City staff to develop and implement trauma-informed models that are culturally relevant for Santa Rosa community members, like the City’s Green Spaces for All Faces program, which was designed with a trauma-informed lens and leverages partnerships to provide high-quality outdoor programming and community services opportunities for probation youth.*

Parks

Santa Rosa features a wonderful network of parks offering a variety of recreation opportunities. Parkland in Santa Rosa is well distributed geographically, and a majority of community members have access to parks or open space areas within a half mile of their homes; however, some areas do not have easy access to park space, and the City has not yet met its established park service goal.

General Plan 2050 continues the City’s long-established goal to provide 6 acres of parkland

for every 1,000 residents—twice the State standard but below the national average of 8.9 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents. This General Plan sets sub targets for how the City will meet its goal:

- A minimum of 3.5 acres per 1,000 residents of Community Park and/or Neighborhood Park space.
- The remaining 2.5 acres per 1,000 residents may be met through a combination of Community Park, Neighborhood Park, and/or Trail and Open Space parkland.

As of 2019 (the base year of this General Plan), Santa Rosa had approximately 4.3 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents. This is a shortfall of approximately 370 acres to serve the existing population, and 740 acres to serve the total future population accommodated by this General Plan. **Figure 6-4** depicts existing parks and general locations where new community parks or neighborhood parks are desired to fill an existing or anticipated community need.

Parkland Definitions

Neighborhood parks are intended to be accessible to community members within one-half mile or a 10-minute walk. Neighborhood parks provide a mix of amenities, such as picnic areas, community gardens, exercise equipment, and children’s play areas, and generally have one signature amenity, such as a water play feature, a skate spot, sports court, or a single athletic field.

Community parks are intended to be accessible to residents within one-mile or a 20-minute walk. They are at least 10 acres large and often include athletic fields and courts; event venues; programed activities and events, such as summer camps, concerts, and farmers markets; and areas for children’s play and group picnicking.

Trail and Open Space parks vary in size. They can support both active and passive recreation, including walking, biking, hiking, jogging, and wildlife viewing, and can also be used as a safe, active transportation network that connects people and places locally and regionally. To be counted toward the city’s progress in meeting its parkland acreage goals, trail and open space parks must provide multipurpose, Americans with Disability Act (ADA)-compliant paved pathways and benches, trash and recycling receptacles, wayfinding and interpretive signage, and lighting.

Additional details on City parkland classifications are in Chapter 2, Land Use and Economic Development.

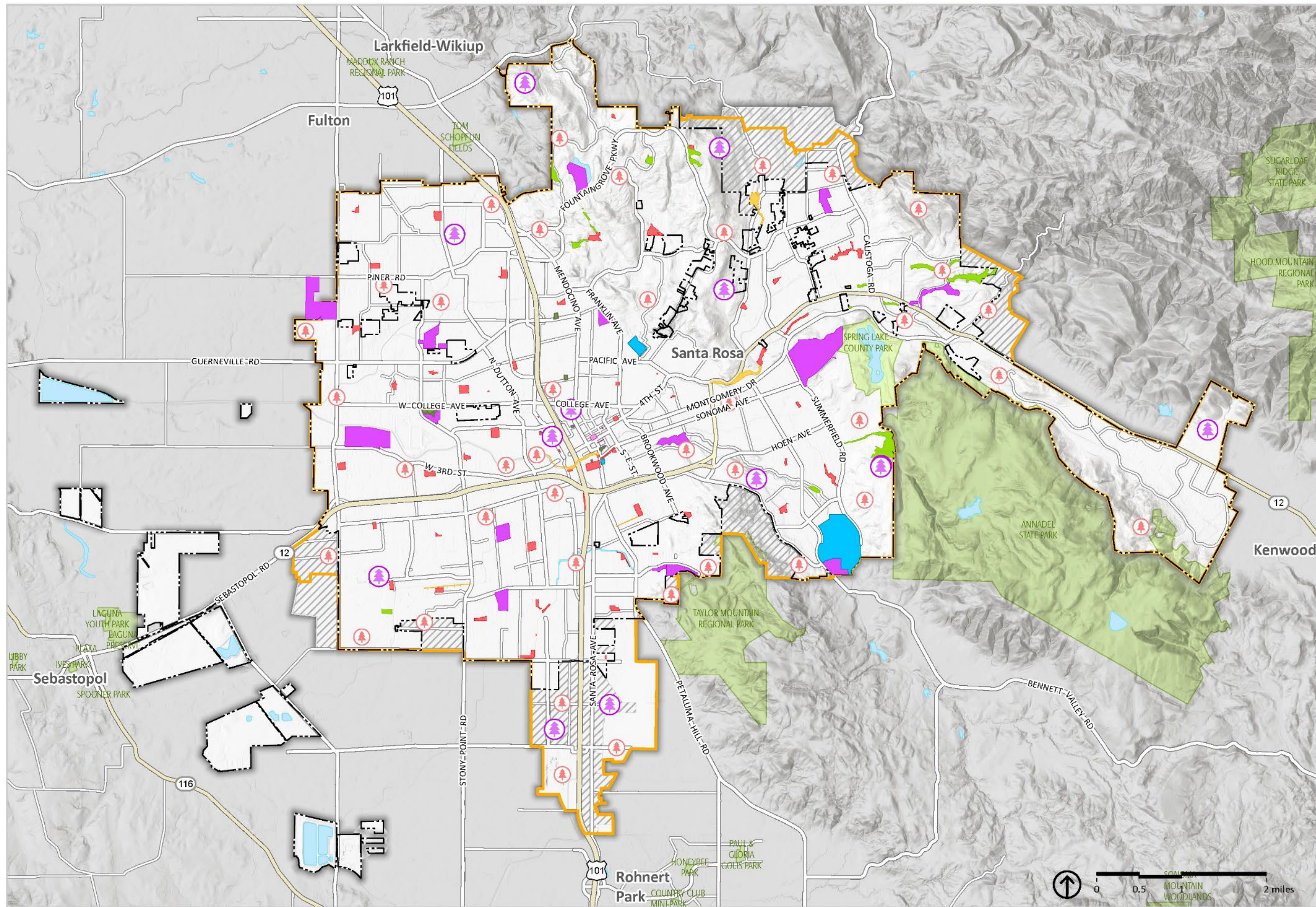


Figure 6-4
Current and Potential Parks

- City Limits
- City Sphere of Influence
- Urban Growth Boundary
- Planning Area
- State and Regional Parks
- State and Regional Parks
- Santa Rosa City Parks
 - Community Park
 - Neighborhood Park
 - Trail
 - Civic Spaces
 - Special Purpose Parks
 - Recreation Facility
 - Open Space
- Potential Park Locations
 - Potential Community Park
 - Potential Neighborhood Park

Source: City of Santa Rosa 2023

Goals, Policies, and Actions

Goal 6-8: Make parks the center for improving personal and community well-being.

Policy 6-8.1: Provide parklands with opportunities for physical activity, recreation, and relaxation, including those offering trauma-informed services (to address long-standing health issues for individuals), culturally appropriate programming, and safe spaces for everyone, especially in EPAs.

Action 6-8.1: Facilitate equitable, authentic community engagement in recreation and parks planning to identify the needs and priorities of all segments of the community, including individuals with special needs, EPAs, and those unable to attend public meetings.

Action 6-8.2: Acquire and develop new parkland to achieve a citywide standard of 6 acres of parkland per thousand residents, using Community Parks (CP), Neighborhood Parks (NP), and qualifying Trail and Open Space Parks.

Action 6-8.3: Prioritize new park acquisition and development in EPAs, Areas of Change, and redevelopment areas, including downtown.

Action 6-8.4: Design new parks with clear lines of sight from adjacent streets and neighborhoods to increase perceived safety.

Action 6-8.5: Where feasible, consider renovating and expanding existing parks to provide more

acreage, increased capacity of athletic fields for organized sports, and a greater range of recreation activities, while maintaining park standards.

Action 6-8.6: Seek land and partnership opportunities to develop large sports complexes and/or multiuse event venues to accommodate tournaments, concerts, athletics, and other community events and activities.

Action 6-8.7: Develop new athletic fields and retrofit existing fields to support year-round use; include lighting for night use; and accommodate the growing community need for organized sports and physical activities by expanding the hours and seasons of use.

Action 6-8.8: Pursue development of civic spaces where provision of a neighborhood park is not feasible, particularly where they can be connected to existing public spaces using pathways, trails, or other forms of connection.

Action 6-8.9: Develop special-purpose parks and recreation facilities throughout the city, including, but not limited to, multigenerational recreation centers, aquatic centers, education and community service centers, and other unique facilities, prioritizing facilities in EPAs, Areas of Change, and other high growth areas.

Action 6-8.10: Develop multiuse pathways and trail parks along creeks designated by the Santa Rosa Citywide Creek Master Plan.

Action 6-8.11: Create a system of interconnected linear parks that provide access to parks and open

space and offer passive recreation opportunities, such as hiking and wildlife viewing.

Policy 6-8.2: Ensure adequate funding for parks and recreation facility improvements and maintenance.

Action 6-8.12: *Annually evaluate the park development impact fees allowed under the Quimby Act to ensure sufficient funds to acquire, develop, and maintain parks, consistent with General Plan targets for park service.*

Action 6-8.13: *Annually evaluate park impact fees to ensure sufficient funds for park acquisition, development, and maintenance from proposals that do not meet Quimby guidelines.*

Action 6-8.14: *Develop a systemwide Park Master Plan for park and recreation facility maintenance that addresses core versus noncore services, appropriate levels of service, and factors that affect park maintenance practices.*

Action 6-8.15: *Encourage innovative approaches for maintenance of*

parks and open space areas by maintaining and developing partnerships with schools, neighborhoods, and businesses.

Youth, Family, and Seniors

The health, safety, welfare, and support of youth, families, and seniors are high priorities for the City of Santa Rosa. The City aims to enhance opportunities for young people, families, and seniors to enjoy a high quality of life with age-appropriate services and the ability to age in place. Affordable childcare is fundamental to protecting the welfare of youth and families so that parents and caregivers are able to earn a living. The cost of childcare is a challenge for many families. Some may qualify for subsidies or other financial assistance, but they may sit on long waitlists before they can access care.

Though childcare services are generally offered by private and nonprofit organizations and may be funded in part or full by private grants and State programs like the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) Child Care Program, the General Plan offers policies and actions to enhance the availability of affordable childcare in the city. The built and social environments also affect the health and well-being of families and community members of all ages. Goals, policies, and actions in this section and throughout the General Plan are intended to foster a supportive community environment with amenities, services, and programs that serve the needs of youth, families, and seniors.

Areas of Change, identified through the General Plan community engagement process, are areas throughout the community where the City will focus efforts to address housing, services, connectivity, and/or infrastructure needs to help make these **complete neighborhoods**—neighborhoods 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.

Goals, Policies, and Actions

Goal 6-9: Foster environments that support families and community members of all ages with high-quality, equitably accessible amenities, programs, and services.

Policy 6-9.1: **Create an environment where children can grow and develop in secure and supportive families and neighborhoods.**

Action 6-9.1: *Collaborate with parents, youth, schools, libraries, businesses, nonprofit agencies, religious organizations, law enforcement, and others to prioritize needs and establish programs and services for children and youth, especially in EPAs.*

Action 6-9.2: *Promote development of multiuse buildings/community centers that can be used for seniors, youth, and teen activities and childcare, including at parks, strip malls, and commercial centers.*

Action 6-9.3: *Coordinate with community-based organizations to promote the provision of educational and community services, including child care/early education, English as a second language courses, after-school programs, and recreational activities.*

Policy 6-9.2: **Expand childcare services to meet the existing and future needs of Santa Rosa.**

Action 6-9.4: *Update the Zoning Code to encourage new residential development to provide places for childcare and youth-oriented facilities and programs.*

Action 6-9.5: *Encourage school districts to continue and expand the provision of before- and after-school care on or near school sites.*

Action 6-9.6: *Endorse the development of new childcare facilities in all areas of the city, including residential neighborhoods, employment centers, and school sites.*

Action 6-9.7: *Promote development of new childcare facilities during review of new development projects.*

Action 6-9.8: *Across the park system, allow use of a portion of city parkland for a childcare center to be developed and maintained by an outside entity.*

Action 6-9.9: *Continue the City's permitting fee deferral and rebate program for provision of childcare facilities.*

Action 6-9.10: *Foster partnerships between the business community and the childcare community to provide information to employees about childcare options.*

Action 6-9.11: *Maintain the high-quality mix of recreation programs, classes, and current maintenance standards for city parks and recreational facilities.*

Action 6-9.12: *Work with local sport leagues that serve youth on facilities planning and needs to support increased participation in organized and alternative posts, especially among elementary-aged children and teens.*

Action 6-9.13: *Work with local organizations that serve the elder community, including the Council on Aging Sonoma County, on facilities planning and needs to support increased participation in*

recreation programs, classes, and maintenance standards for parks and recreational activities.

Policy 6-9.3: Increase teen participation in organized activities.

Action 6-9.14: *Continue to solicit direct involvement from teens in planning future community parks, recreational activities, and programs for teens to provide recreational programs geared toward modern interests.*

Action 6-9.15: *Cooperate with businesses, governmental agencies, nonprofit groups, and educational institutions to develop apprenticeship programs for teens and young adults.*

Policy 6-9.4: Modernize senior services in all areas of Santa Rosa, especially EPAs.

Action 6-9.16: *Continually monitor and analyze the needs of the city's senior population and expand services and programs to meet emerging and changing needs.*

Action 6-9.17: *Explore designation of an age- and dementia-friendly community.*

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