

## **General Plan Advisory Committee**

Meeting of February 11, 2015  
6:30 P.M.

SEBASTOPOL CENTER FOR THE ARTS  
282 SOUTH HIGH STREET  
SEBASTOPOL, CALIFORNIA

### **AGENDA**

ANNOUNCEMENT: Please turn off or silence cell phones and pagers during the meeting.

1. **CALL TO ORDER**
2. **ROLL CALL**
3. **COMMITTEE COMMENTS ON MEETING SUMMARY of: (none)**
4. **PLANNING DIRECTOR'S REPORT (Brief updates on Future Agendas, Action of Other Boards and City Council)**
5. **COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE ON ITEMS NOT ON AGENDA** - This is for items *not* on the Committee agenda, but that *are related to the responsibilities* of the Committee. Comments are limited to three minutes. The Committee will receive any such comments, but under law, may not act on them. If there is a large number of persons wishing to speak under this item, speaking time may be reduced or the item may be moved to later in the meeting to allow agendaized business to be conducted.
6. **Review and Discussion of Conservation and Open Space Issues** - The City's consultant, De Novo Planning Group, will present information about Conservation and Open Space issues and opportunities for Committee discussion. (Please note that developed park issues will be discussed at the March GPAC review of the Community Services and Facilities Element.)
  1. Consultant presentation
  2. Initial Public Comments (allocated 10 minutes, 2 minutes per person)
  3. Committee discussion
  4. Summary of input by consultant
  5. Public Comments (allocated 10 minutes, 2 minutes per person)
7. **ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM COMMITTEE MEMBERS/STAFF:**
8. **WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS/INFORMATION:** Written community comments on General Plan issues that have been submitted to the Planning Department.
9. **ADJOURNMENT:** This meeting will be adjourned to the next regular Committee meeting, at 6:30 p.m. on March 11, 2015 at which meeting at which there will be a discussion of Economic Vitality/Urban Design, and Community Services/Facilities Issues. The meeting will occur at the Sebastopol Center for the Arts, 282 South High Street, Sebastopol, California.

The City of Sebastopol wishes to foster a constructive, respectful, and open process through its meeting procedures. Public comment is encouraged. Members of the public have the right to speak on all agenda items under discussion by the Committee after being properly recognized by the Chair at a time deemed appropriate by the Chair. The Committee requests that members of the audience refrain from expressions of approval or disapproval (clapping, booing, hissing) of statements of other participants, which discourages the expression of a range of viewpoints, as well as lengthening meetings. Comments should be addressed to the Committee as a body and not the audience or any individual member, staff person, or consultant. This is an opportunity for members of the public to make statements regarding matters of concern about the agenda item, and not unrelated matters. The procedure does not provide for members of the public to conduct discussions with the Committee, the consultant or City staff, unless specifically permitted by the Committee. Comments should be limited to 3 minutes or less. If this item takes more than 15 minutes, the item may be moved to the end of the agenda to allow Committee business to be conducted.

**NOTES:**

The Sebastopol General Plan Advisory Committee is a temporary city committee which consists of nine citizens appointed by the City Council. There are also six alternates who may replace regular members who resign in the course of the project.

The purpose of the Committee is to act as a representative community sounding board for the General Plan update process, to help identify issues and opportunities, and help shape the policy of a new preliminary draft General Plan. Following the Committee process, which is expected to take approximately one year, a formal draft General Plan, together with a draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be prepared and released for public review and comment, after which the Planning Commission and City Council will conduct public hearings, revise the draft as appropriate, certify the EIR, and adopt the Plan. The City Council has final authority over the General Plan.

The Committee members are voluntary and serve without any pay as a public service to the community. The Committee procedures are intended to be consistent with the policy directives of the Sebastopol City Council.

**STAFF REPORTS ON AGENDIZED ITEMS** are available for review at the Planning Department during regular business hours and at the Sebastopol Library. Agenda materials are also posted on the City web site. Reports are generally issued and posted by 4 p.m. on the Thursday before the meeting. Interested persons are encouraged to review these reports.

**LETTERS OR WRITTEN MATERIALS** regarding agenda items may be submitted to the Planning Department prior to or at the Committee meeting; written materials submitted at least six days in advance of the meeting will be included in the Committee's meeting packet. The Committee requests that if possible, written materials be submitted to the Planning Department in time for the meeting packet which also allows them to be posted on the City web site; it is difficult for members to effectively review materials submitted during the meeting.

**Disability Accommodations:** If you have a disability which requires an interpreter or other person to assist you while attending this meeting, please call the City Clerk at (707) 823-1153.

For more information regarding the General Plan Advisory Committee Agenda, please contact the Planning Department (707) 823-6167, or see the General Plan Update web site at: <http://sebastopol.generalplan.org> or the City's web site at [www.ci.sebastopol.ca.us](http://www.ci.sebastopol.ca.us). For copies or to review all written documents relating to items listed on the agenda, please visit the Planning Department's office during regular business hours. The Planning Department's office is located at City Hall, 7120 Bodega Avenue, Sebastopol, Ca 95472 or call 707-823-6167.





## MEMORANDUM

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TO: Sebastopol General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC)

FROM: Ben Ritchie and Beth Thompson, De Novo Planning Group

SUBJECT: February 11, 2015 Meeting – Conservation and Open Space

DATE: January 23, 2015

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### INTRODUCTION

The February 11th GPAC meeting will focus on the topics of conservation and open space. As these topics can be very broad and will require covering a variety of specific issues, it will be particularly important to keep the meeting focused and productive.

This meeting packet includes specific reading materials related to conservation and open space, and raises key issues to consider in preparation for the 6th GPAC meeting. As the GPAC is aware, it is critical that each member come to the meeting having read the materials identified in this memo and having prepared and organized thoughts, comments, and questions related to these General Plan topics.

The Conservation and Open Space Elements are mandatory elements of the General Plan.

The Conservation Element will address topics associated with the protection of natural and biological resources, water quality, air quality and greenhouse gases, energy conservation, and cultural/historical resources.

The Open Space Element will address topics associated with the protection of agricultural lands, habitat for plant, animal and fish species, the protection of ecologically sensitive areas, including creeks, riparian habitat, and wetlands, and areas with mineral or other natural resource deposits.

Parks, other than open space areas, will be addressed in the Community Services and Facilities Element.

During the initial public visioning process for the General Plan Update, residents and stakeholders identified numerous concerns and priorities related to the topics of conservation and open space. Some of the primary concerns and opportunities regarding natural resources identified through the Visioning process include:

- Implement additional restoration efforts in the Laguna, and improve public access through expanded trails and bridges
- Implement strong environmental protection and restoration policies, and recognize the “rights of nature”

- Protect the area's natural beauty, including open spaces, hills, creeks, and watersheds
- Protecting the natural environment, including water quality, air quality, biological habitat, and other natural resources
- Enhancing outdoor recreational opportunities
- Preserving and protecting clean water and clean air

The City's existing General Plan includes an extensive set of goals, policies, and action programs specifically related to conservation and open space. It is expected and anticipated that the GPAC will review these for relevancy and scope, and if necessary, expand upon them as part of this General Plan Update.

### **REQUIRED READING**

Prior to the meeting on February 11<sup>th</sup>, please read the following items:

1. **Existing Sebastopol General Plan:** Chapter III (Conservation, Parks, and Open Space)
2. **Existing Conditions Report:** Chapter 5.0, Conservation and Natural Resources
3. **Issues and Opportunities Report:** Chapter 4.6, Conservation and Open Space
  - a. Chapters 1-3 of the Issues and Opportunities Report also include detailed information and summaries of input received from the community that should be read and considered prior to the meeting.

### **WORK EXERCISE**

After reading the materials identified above, please consider the following questions and be prepared to discuss:

1. How well are the topics of conservation and open space currently addressed in the 1994 General Plan?
2. Are there areas where the City's current approach and policies are deficient or need significant improvement?
3. What are the top priorities that the General Plan should address with respect to conservation and open space?
4. Please review the Key Questions contained in Section 4.6 of the Issues and Opportunities Report and come prepared to discuss your thoughts in response to these questions.



### 4.0 ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

The General Plan Update will address an extensive set of issues and opportunities. Many of these issues and opportunities are defined by State law, while others reflect local concerns and desires.

Typically, in a general plan update program, the plan revolves around and is shaped by a handful of key issues and opportunities. Key issues in Sebastopol concern protecting Sebastopol's small-town charm, unique character, and strong sense of community; supporting local business development and strengthening the Downtown core; improving traffic and circulation conditions through reduced congestion, reduced vehicle speeds, and providing expanded facilities for bicycles and pedestrians; emphasizing sustainability and environmental stewardship; providing a range of affordable housing opportunities; and ensuring ample opportunity for meaningful community participation in the planning process.

Despite the many challenges Sebastopol may face, there are also opportunities to take advantage of over the time frame of the General Plan. Opportunities include methods of boosting the local economy, enhancing the community's character, providing community improvements, and expanding services for city residents. However, due to fiscal limitations and regulatory requirements, the City may not be able to address all of the issues and opportunities identified in this report. Therefore, the City and its leaders and residents will need to make important choices during the General Plan Update process as to which issues and opportunities are most important to shape the vision of Sebastopol's future.

#### ISSUES

##### What is an Issue?

In the context of this report, an "Issue" is defined as an important condition or problem that needs to be addressed through the General Plan Update process.

Each issue is highlighted in a beige box. Following discussion of the issue, key policy questions associated with the issue are identified in italics.

#### OPPORTUNITIES

##### What is an Opportunity?

In the context of this report, an "Opportunity" is defined as a unique, favorable, or advantageous condition that the City can capitalize on through the General Plan Update process.

Each opportunity is highlighted in a teal box. Following discussion of the opportunity, key policy questions associated with the opportunity are identified in italics.



## 4.0: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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### 4.6 CONSERVATION AND OPEN SPACE

Natural resources, including waterways, hillsides, wildlife habitat, and historical resources form an important part of the City's unique character. The rural atmosphere, open space, agricultural lands, waterways, and scenic views in and around Sebastopol represent some of the City's greatest assets. These assets provide a natural resource base for tourism and recreation, wildlife habitat, watershed storage, water quality protection, and contribute to the quality of life for the City's residents.

While most of the land within the Sebastopol City Limits and Planning Area is developed with urban and suburban uses, there are significant areas of open space, wetlands, riparian habitat, and rural agricultural lands surrounding the City. Additionally, the Laguna de Santa Rosa runs in a general north-south



direction along the City's eastern boundary. The Laguna de Santa Rosa is the largest freshwater wetlands complex on the northern California coast. As the receiving basin of a watershed where most of the county's human population lives, the Laguna is a landscape feature of critical importance to Sonoma County's water quality and flood control. It provides an important overflow area for the Russian River during periods of heavy winter rain, serving as a natural holding basin, which captures and slows floodwaters, easing their impact on lower Russian River communities. It is a unique ecological system covering more than 30,000 acres; a mosaic of creeks, open water, perennial marshes, seasonal wetlands, riparian forests, oak woodland and grassland. It is home to hundreds of species of birds from bald eagles to hummingbirds; mammals such as mink, badger, bobcat and river otter; and numerous fish and amphibians, including several rare and endangered species.



The wetlands of the Laguna are an important stopover for thousands of birds that migrate along the Pacific flyway, as well as a permanent home to myriad species. Its riparian forest — interface between land and flowing surface water — is a layered habitat of trees, shrubs and undergrowth. It provides food, shelter, and a travel corridor for wildlife, filters nutrients and pollutants from agricultural and urban runoff, and shades and cools the water for fish and other aquatic organisms.

In addition to their value as habitat for aquatic, plant and animal species, natural areas provide flood protection, enhance water quality and provide a myriad of recreational opportunities to local residents and tourists.

The Conservation and Open Space elements of the General Plan will address a wide range of issues and topics, including, but not limited to:

- Natural and biological resources
- Water quality
- Air quality and greenhouse gases
- Energy and resource conservation
- Sustainability
- Cultural and historical resources
- Protection of agricultural Lands
- Habitat for plants, animals, and fish species
- Protection of ecologically sensitive areas (creeks, riparian habitat, wetlands, and areas with mineral or other natural resource deposits)

Developed parks will be addressed in the Community Services and Facilities Element.

During the initial public visioning process for the General Plan Update, residents and stakeholders identified numerous concerns and priorities related to the topics of conservation and open space. Some of the primary concerns and opportunities regarding natural resources identified through the Visioning process include:

- Implement additional restoration efforts in the Laguna, and improve public access through expanded trails and bridges
- Implement strong environmental protection and restoration policies, and recognize the “rights of nature”
- Protect the area’s natural beauty, including open spaces, hills, creeks, and watersheds
- Protecting the natural environment, including water quality, air quality, biological habitat, and other natural resources
- Enhancing outdoor recreational opportunities
- Preserving and protecting clean water and clean air



### Opportunity: Protecting and Enhancing the Laguna de Santa Rosa

#### PAST PLANNING EFFORTS

The Laguna de Santa Rosa, known locally as the Laguna, is critical to the essence of Sebastopol. It is integral to the surrounding habitats which support the diverse plant and wildlife communities identified with Sebastopol. It is an essential influence in the layout of the city's infrastructure and buildings which create a town image unique to Sebastopol. It is also a vital part of the landscape that creates the open space and scenic views which are part of Sebastopol's charm.

Studies and programs to protect and enhance the Laguna have been ongoing for decades. The earliest Laguna study called for preservation and enhancement of riparian habitat and biotic resources. The 1978 Laguna Study Committee appointed by the County Board of Supervisors recommended ordinances and easements to protect wetlands, wildlife and oaks in the Laguna. In 1986, the City Council appointed a Laguna Advisory Committee (LAC), which recommended a Laguna Land Use Management Plan, adoption of a riparian ordinance, protection of Laguna lands, preservation, and enhancement and restoration of vegetation and wildlife habitats in a Laguna Riparian Corridor and lands within the City's sphere of influence. Many of these provisions were formally recognized in the City's Wetlands Ordinance and Council Policy Number 58.

The LAC evolved into the non-profit Laguna Foundation which adopted the *Laguna de Santa Rosa Preservation and Restoration Objectives* and specific implementation measures – the *Laguna de Santa Rosa Management and Restoration Guidelines*. These measures were sent to all agencies with jurisdiction over Laguna resources. All agencies generally endorsed these measures agreeing that modifying land management practices to enhance ecological resources could be accomplished. Lastly, a comprehensive study entitled *History, Land Uses and Natural Resources of the Laguna de Santa Rosa* (Smith, 1990) was prepared for the subregional system to provide a detailed, and long-term assessment of Laguna resources, and means for short term and long-term protection. Much of the preservation and restoration sections of this research publication were applied to the ecological enhancement component of the *Laguna Park Master Plan* (Hyden, 1992).

#### LAGUNA PARK MASTER PLAN

Based on the recommendation of the LAC, the *Laguna Park Master Plan* for a linear park along the Laguna de Santa Rosa was completed and addresses the area of the Laguna within the City of Sebastopol and its sphere of influence. The plan was adopted in 1992 after extensive review and contribution by the Technical Advisory Committee made up of individuals representing organizations and agencies in Sonoma County. The plan addresses many recreational, environmental, developmental, and management issues that affect the Laguna. It offers policies and programs that will protect, preserve and enhance the Laguna while recognizing the importance of incorporating recreation and commercial development necessary for the social and economic well being of the community. In addition, the plan strives to recognize the regional character of the Laguna and how it influences and is influenced by elements and activities beyond Sebastopol's immediate Planning Area.

The 1993 Sebastopol General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element incorporates the *Laguna Park Master Plan*. Included in the *Laguna Park Master Plan* are areas within and outside the Sebastopol Planning Area. The plan recognizes that the Laguna is an ecosystem which is regional and is affected by activities beyond the boundaries of the Planning Area.



### Opportunity: Protecting and Enhancing the Laguna de Santa Rosa

A substantial amount of technical information was gathered and analyzed in order to prepare the *Laguna Park Master Plan*. This detailed information is presented in two volumes entitled: *City of Sebastopol Laguna de Santa Rosa Master Plan: Volume 1: Master Plan*, and *Volume 2: Technical Information*, prepared by Hyden Associates and Golden Bear Biostudies. These plans should be consulted to obtain the factual and technical basis for the goals, policies and programs presented in the Plan.

Defining the community's needs and concerns was a major consideration in preparing the Master Plan. The comprehensive public participation program identified the following principal issues which guided the *Laguna Park Master Plan*:

- Laguna habitat preservation and restoration: Suggestions from the public included development of interpretative paths; creation of an interpretive and environmental education center; acquisition, rezoning, and restoration of adjacent industrial parcels; and creation of guidelines for future adjacent development, emphasizing protection of viewsheds and habitat.
- Future baseball fields: The location, type, and quantity of existing and future baseball fields on the Laguna Youth Park site was a controversial issue. There was a wide range of opinion on this matter, ranging from elimination of existing ball fields to adding an additional senior league field.
- Design: The need to integrate the Laguna into the community through sensitive design guidelines.
- Mitigation of fill: Mitigation of unauthorized fill in one of the sewer ponds on the Laguna Youth Park site.
- Funding: Funding for development and maintenance of the park.
- Land management policies: The impacts of land management policies of adjacent land owners on the Laguna, particularly with regard to water quality.

The City has made great progress in implementing the vision of the Master Plan. Beginning in 1998, when a major community donation for implementation was received, the City implemented multiple trail and restoration projects, resulting in thousands of feet of new trails, and the planting of thousands of native trees and shrubs in areas that once were used for waste disposal. This has transformed perceptions of the Laguna, created habitat, and provided a major new area for low-impact outdoor recreation. In addition, the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation, with assistance from the Open Space District, has performed restoration on the 'Laguna Uplands' property at the foot of Palm Avenue. This is effectively public open space.

Following up on the creation of the Laguna Preserve, in late 2014, the City Council authorized preparation of a Laguna Preserve Management Plan. The intent is to review existing issues, opportunities, and needs in the Preserve, and to establish clear maintenance and management protocols consistent with the Master Plan and regulatory requirements. There are known maintenance needs and issues regarding trails, amenities, restoration plantings, and invasive plant species. The Plan will also examine opportunities to improve connectivity, and to enhance identity and public education.



### Opportunity: Protecting and Enhancing the Laguna de Santa Rosa

#### Key Questions

- *Have local priorities changed or evolved with respect to protection and restoration efforts in the Laguna since the Laguna de Santa Rosa Master Plan was prepared?*
- *The 1994 General Plan addresses Laguna issues in great detail, most of which is derived from the Laguna Master Plan. Should this approach be revised, amended, or otherwise updated to reflect implementation efforts since 1994, as part of this General Plan Update?*
- *Do you consider Laguna preservation and restoration efforts undertaken over the past 20 years to be successful?*



### Issue: Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions

#### RECENT LOCAL GHG REDUCTION EFFORTS

The need to address climate change and reduce the generation of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions is a topic that has been addressed locally for many years. The City of Sebastopol passed Resolution 5229 in January 2002 endorsing the Cities for Climate Protection Campaign, which includes a five-milestone program to reduce greenhouse gas and air pollution emissions. The five milestones are as follows:

1. Conduct a baseline greenhouse gas emissions inventory and forecast to determine the sources and quantity of greenhouse gas emissions in the jurisdiction;
2. Establish a greenhouse gas emissions reduction target;
3. Develop a climate action plan consisting of both existing and future actions which, when implemented, will meet the local greenhouse gas reduction target;
4. Implement the action plan; and
5. Monitor and report progress.

In September 2003 the City reported their municipal baseline emissions in *Standing Together for the Future: Greenhouse Gas Emission Inventories for Eight Cities in Sonoma County, California*.

In 2005, the ten local governments within Sonoma County pledged to reduce GHG emissions to 25 percent below 1990 levels by 2015. The Regional Climate Protection Authority (RCPA) was created in 2009 to help each jurisdiction reach its goal. The RCPA includes representatives from each of the nine cities in Sonoma County and the Board of Supervisors.

**Climate Action 2020** is a collaborative effort led by the RCPA and including all nine cities and the County of Sonoma and several partner entities to take further actions to reduce GHG emissions community-wide and respond to the threats of climate change. RCPA will work with each jurisdiction to develop a Community Climate Action Plan that will provide a comprehensive assessment of GHGs emission sources as well possible measures that jurisdictions can take to reduce GHG emissions and/or adapt to climate change to ensure their communities remain vibrant and resilient. The City of Sebastopol continues to participate in this regional effort, which is expected to produce the City's key policy statement on this issue. Efforts to prepare the Plan remain active and ongoing. The most recent schedule estimates release of the Public Draft Plan in the summer of 2015, with adoption targets set for the end of 2015.

#### GHG EMISSIONS IN SEBASTOPOL

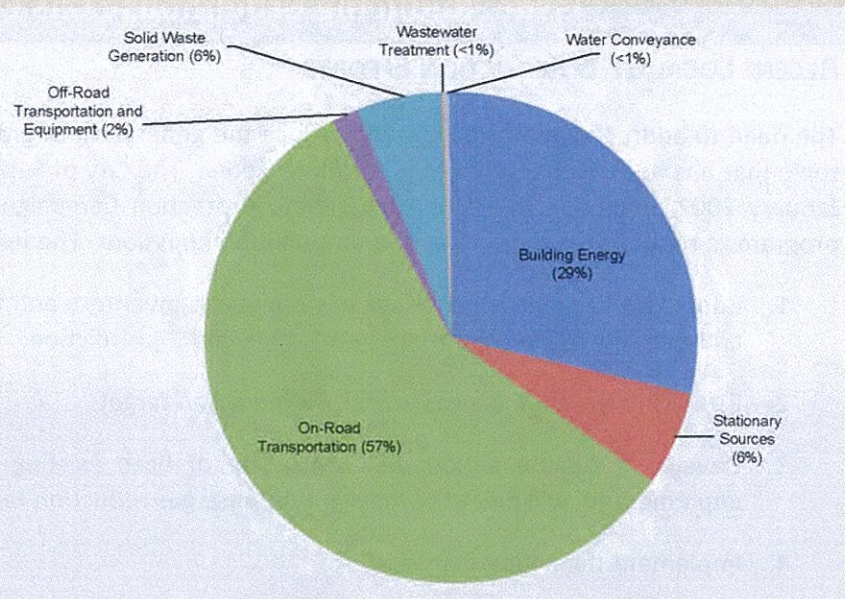
GHG emissions by sector in Sebastopol are reported as a percentage of community-wide GHG emissions in the *Draft GHG Emissions Inventory* prepared in support of the Climate Action 2020 Plan. As shown in the graphic below, transportation sources (on-road) accounted for the largest percentage of local GHG emissions (57%), with building energy emissions accounting for 29% of community-wide GHG emissions. The report estimated community-wide GHG emissions in Sebastopol during 2010 to be approximately 80 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub>e.



## 4.0: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

### Issue: Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The General Plan Circulation Element will include a comprehensive strategy to promote multi-modal transportation options in Sebastopol, including improvements to bicycle and pedestrian facilities, increasing opportunities for access to transit services, and other strategies aimed at reducing auto dependence. These efforts to reduce vehicle trips represent the most effective strategy at reducing local GHG emissions associated with on-road transportation sources, which are the greatest contributor to local GHG emissions levels.



### STEPS TO REDUCE GHG EMISSIONS

The most effective steps that the City can take to reduce emissions associated with building energy are to reduce energy consumption locally, and to utilize alternative sources of clean energy that have reduced (or zero) GHG emissions when compared to more traditional sources of energy. Current and potential future approaches to energy conservation and the use of alternative energy supplies is discussed in the following opportunity box (Energy Conservation and Alternative Energy).

The City of Sebastopol continues to participate actively in the Climate Action 2020 program, and continues to implement numerous policies and programs aimed at reducing GHG emissions. Most cities within Sonoma County have not elected to prepare a stand-alone climate action plan, with the exception of Santa Rosa, which has already adopted a plan.

Climate action plans address a range of measures and steps that local jurisdictions can implement to reduce GHG emissions and adapt to a changing climate. These steps are usually related to increased opportunities for alternative transportation, energy reduction, waste reduction, and other conservation efforts. These conservation efforts are being addressed throughout many elements of the Sebastopol General Plan Update.



### Issue: Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions

#### ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Responding to the effects of climate change may include planning for increased flooding, water shortages, public health risks, increased wild fire risks, and impacts to agriculture, among other things. The RCPA recently published the *Climate Hazards and Vulnerabilities Report*, which outlines specific risks and threats facing Sonoma County as a result of ongoing and projected future climate change. The Report indicates that higher temperatures and more extreme weather (as compared to historical patterns) are likely. However, based on current modeling, it is unclear if Northern California, a borderline area, will have higher, or lower, levels of precipitation in the future. These topics are addressed in the following areas of the General Plan:

**Safety Element:** fire protection, flood safety, emergency preparedness

**Conservation Element:** water conservation, energy conservation, resource protection

**Community Health and Wellness Element:** access to health care

#### Key Questions

- *Are there additional specific steps the City should be taking to address Climate Change and reduce GHG emissions?*
- *Are there additional steps the City should take to respond and adapt to the ongoing and future effects of a changing climate?*



### **Opportunity: Energy Conservation and Alternative Energy**

Sebastopol has taken numerous concrete steps in recent years to implement energy conservation measures and to utilize and expand the use of alternative energy sources.

#### **SEBASTOPOL MANDATORY PHOTOVOLTAIC SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS**

As of July 21, 2013 the City of Sebastopol established a Mandatory Solar Photovoltaic Requirements Ordinance to promote the reduction of Green House Gas Emissions. Sebastopol was the second municipality in the State to adopt such a requirement.

Municipal Code Chapter 15.72 requires a photovoltaic system on all new commercial or residential buildings, and alterations, additions and remodels to existing buildings. Any addition to an existing commercial building that increases the square footage by 1800 square feet or greater and all commercial remodels, alterations or repairs that are made involving demolition, remodel or repair of more than 50% of the structure.

Any addition to an existing residential building that increases the square footage by 75% or greater and all residential remodels, alterations or repairs that are made involving demolition, remodel or repair of more than 75% of the structure.

#### **CALGREEN (TITLE 24) ENERGY EFFICIENCY REQUIREMENTS**

Beginning January 1, 2014, the 2013 California Green Building Standards Code (CALGreen) became effective for new buildings and certain addition or alteration projects throughout California. Projects in Sebastopol are required to meet these Statewide energy efficiency standards.

The CALGreen program includes voluntary tiers (Tier 1 and Tier 2) for residential and non-residential projects that include performance standards that exceed the mandatory CALGreen energy efficiency standards by 15% and 30%, respectively. The City has the authority to adopt and require Tier 1 or Tier 2 standards. For example, the City of Sonoma has adopted and amended CALGreen to require CALGreen+Tier 1 level of compliance for all new buildings (except Tier 1 Energy Efficiency measures need not be met). The City of Sonoma requires that project applicants hire a third-party green building special inspector to verify compliance with CALGreen requirements as amended by the City of Sonoma. While the adoption of mandatory energy efficiency requirements that exceed Title 24 requirements can be an effective tool in reducing energy consumption in new and remodeled buildings, there are increased costs associated with implementation of the Tier 1 and 2 requirements. These costs include, but are not necessarily limited to, use of special inspectors to verify compliance, and increased costs for materials including fixtures, HVAC systems, insulation, lighting, appliances, etc. These increases in construction and remodeling costs can have the effect of driving up housing prices and can pose challenges to the provision of affordable housing.

#### **SOLAR SEBASTOPOL**

Solar Sebastopol was the City of Sebastopol's pioneering effort to encourage Sebastopol residences and businesses to switch to solar energy, a much more environmentally sustainable, renewable source of electricity. The program was designed to make solar a simple, affordable, and compelling choice for

### Opportunity: Energy Conservation and Alternative Energy

Sebastopol property owners, while demonstrating to other municipalities how to take their local energy future into their own hands. The program has grown to what is now called Solar Sonoma County, which is led by the Solar Action Alliance.

The Solar Action Alliance is an organization that supports solar and energy efficiency-related policy issues, educates and trains community members in the field, advocates for a rapidly growing industry, and acts as a clearinghouse for clean energy activity in Sonoma County.

#### SONOMA CLEAN POWER

Sonoma Clean Power (SCP) is the new, locally controlled electricity provider in Sonoma County. Sonoma Clean Power provides residential and business customers across the county the option of using environmentally friendly power generated by renewable sources (like solar, wind, and geothermal) at competitive rates.



In March 2011, the Sonoma County Water Agency Board of Directors directed the Water Agency to investigate Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) while concurrently approving the Water Agency's Energy Policy. In December 2012 the Water Agency's Board of Directors approved the formation of the joint powers authority (JPA) forming Sonoma Clean Power. The formation of this entity provided a vehicle to solicit bids for power purchases and enable more accurate determination of likely electricity rates for program participants. SCP is a not-for-profit agency, independently run by Sonoma County and the participating cities of Sonoma, Santa Rosa, Cotati, Windsor, Sebastopol, Petaluma and Cloverdale. The agency plans to develop programs for local renewable power generation.

#### Key Questions

- *Are there additional steps the City should implement to promote energy conservation?*
- *Are there additional steps the City should implement to encourage use of alternative energy supplies?*



### Issue: Groundwater Management

#### **WATER SUPPLIES**

The City relies exclusively on groundwater as a water supply source. The City of Sebastopol has five permitted wells, three of which are currently active for potable water uses, non-potable water uses, irrigation, and industrial uses. All of the City's available water is groundwater from these three active wells.

#### **UNITED STATES GEOLOGICAL SURVEY (USGS) SANTA ROSA PLAIN GROUNDWATER STUDY**

As part of a technical study program intended to enhance the current knowledge regarding groundwater resources within Sonoma County, the USGS initiated a multi-year cooperative study of groundwater resources within the Santa Rosa Plain Groundwater Basin in 2005. The cooperative study is being conducted by the USGS in partnership with the Sonoma County Water Agency, County of Sonoma, City of Santa Rosa, City of Rohnert Park, City of Sebastopol, City of Cotati, Town of Windsor, and California-American Water Company.

The study has four principal elements: (1) a comprehensive geographic information system (GIS) to compile, analyze and visualize hydrologic and related data; (2) collection of new data, with a focus of water-quality sampling; (3) data interpretation and hydrogeologic characterization – including refining hydrologic budgets, and updating conceptual models of the groundwater flow system based on the new data and the results of ongoing USGS geologic and geophysical studies in the basin; and (4) the development of a fully-coupled numerical surface water/groundwater flow model for Santa Rosa Plain. Results from the study will provide stakeholders with tools to assist in evaluating the hydrologic impacts of future climate-change scenarios and alternative groundwater management strategies for the basin. Additionally, the study could potentially form the technical foundation for a local non-regulatory groundwater management planning process.

In summer 2013, the USGS completed the first portion of a seven-year study of groundwater resources of the Santa Rosa Plain Watershed.

In most groundwater management scenarios, the connection between surface water and groundwater has been largely overlooked. Unless surface water is available to recharge the aquifers, groundwater levels will decline. Alternatively, groundwater helps recharge surface water so any overdraft of groundwater means less water in creeks and streams.

In spring 2014, the USGS finalized a second component of the study – a computer model – which couples surface water and groundwater flow and includes a comprehensive summary of the water budget for the study area, as well as future climate change projections. The cutting edge, science-based data is an integral component of groundwater management planning will allow the community to make decisions that will improve groundwater management.



### Issue: Groundwater Management

#### LOCAL GROUNDWATER BASIN

Most of the City of Sebastopol is located within the Wilson Grove Formation Highlands (WGFH) groundwater basin. The basin straddles southern Sonoma and northern Marin Counties, and is located within an upland area between Santa Rosa Valley and the Pacific Ocean (Water Supply Assessment Northeast Area Specific Plan Sebastopol, CA). The WGFH groundwater basin is approximately 140 square miles in area and the City of Sebastopol is located at its eastern-most boundary. This boundary generally follows the Laguna de Santa Rosa.

Long-term groundwater-level trends for California Department of Water Resources monitored wells located outside of the City and within or near the WGFH groundwater basin are relatively stable over the period of record. This indicates that long-term groundwater recharge and discharge have predominantly remained in balance (Water Supply Assessment Northeast Area Specific Plan Sebastopol, CA).

#### GROUNDWATER MANAGEMENT PLANNING

In September 2014, Governor Brown signed historic legislation requiring that California's critical groundwater resources be sustainably managed by local agencies. The Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) gives local agencies (cities, counties, and water districts) the powers needed to sustainably manage groundwater over the long-term, and requires Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs) be developed for medium- and high-priority groundwater basins. In Sonoma County, three of the county's 14 basins and sub-basins are currently designated as medium-priority: Santa Rosa Plain, Sonoma Valley, and Petaluma. No basins are currently designated as high-priority. The SGMA does not apply outside of mapped groundwater basins.

The SGMA defines sustainable management as managing and using groundwater in a way that can be sustained over a long period of time. Specifically, sustainable yield is defined as the amount of groundwater that can be withdrawn annually without chronically lowering groundwater levels, causing seawater intrusion, degrading water quality, causing land subsidence or depleting interconnected surface water (for example, creeks, streams and rivers) in a manner that causes significant and adverse impacts.

As a first step, in October 2014, County and Water Agency staff formed a workgroup to consider governance options and has been meeting with stakeholders to inform them of the new law's requirements and to discuss collaborative approaches. Staff will report back to their respective boards in late winter/early spring 2015.

#### LOCAL WATER CONSERVATION EFFORTS

**Water Efficient Landscape Program:** Chapter 15.36 of the Sebastopol Municipal Code contains the City's Water Efficient Landscape Program. The purpose of this ordinance, adopted in 2010, is to ensure efficient water use by establishing standards for landscape design appropriate to Sebastopol's climate, soils, water resources, land use and resource planning. This ordinance applies to all new projects with landscape areas of 2,500 sq. ft. or greater where a building permit, plan check, or design review is required. The ordinance has rigorous water use, irrigation, mulching, and other technical requirements



## 4.0: ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES

### Issue: Groundwater Management

which are intended to reduce water use.

**Toilet Rebate Program:** The City of Sebastopol provides cash rebates for the replacement of high-flow toilets in existing occupancies. The rebates do not apply to new construction.

**Water Conservation Tips:** The City maintains online resources related to water conservation tips and strategies.

**Existing General Plan Policies and Programs:** The existing General Plan contains a range of policies and programs aimed at reducing water demand and promoting water conservation.

#### POTENTIAL FUTURE LOCAL ACTIONS

Potential actions that may be implemented at the local level include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- Ensuring adequate areas for local groundwater recharge
- Implementing additional water conservation measures to reduce water consumption
- Utilizing non-groundwater sources, such as recycled water for landscape irrigation
- Monitoring wells to track local groundwater levels

#### Key Questions

- *Are there additional approaches to water conservation that should be included in the General Plan Update?*
- *Is coordination with SCWA on the preparation of a Groundwater Sustainability Plan the most effective planning tool available to the City to ensure reliable long-term groundwater supplies?*
- *Should the City consider developing a Wellhead Protection Ordinance, to regulate uses such as gas stations near City wells?*



### Opportunity: Open Space Preservation

State law requires the General Plan to address open space issues, including the recognition of open space as a valuable resource for its own sake, the coordination of local policies with State and regional policies, and the use of open space to preserve environmentally sensitive natural areas and habitat. California Government Code Section 65560 defines open space lands as being essentially unimproved and devoted to the preservation of natural resources, managed production of resources, outdoor recreation, or public health and safety.

There are two primary land use designations within the existing General Plan that qualify as open space lands.

**Open Space:** This designation applies to areas of land which are essentially unimproved and devoted to the preservation of natural resources, agriculture, outdoor recreation, and for the maintenance of public health and safety. The only structures permitted are shelters, restrooms, storage sheds, and other structures needed to accommodate public use or provide for maintenance of the land. Maximum FAR shall not exceed 0.10.

**Parkland:** This designation applies to existing and proposed active and passive parks, and linear parks (landscaped paths) in urban areas. Structures allowed are shelters, restrooms, storage sheds, other structures needed to accommodate public use or provide for maintenance of the land, and recreational facilities. Maximum FAR shall not exceed 0.10.

As shown in Table 1-1 of the General Plan Existing Conditions Report, there are currently 90.7 acres of Open Space lands and 34.4 acres of Parkland within the City limits. The most significant area of open space within the City limits is the Laguna de Santa Rosa Wetlands Preserve.

Lands surrounding the Sebastopol Planning Area fall under the planning jurisdiction of Sonoma County. The primary land uses surrounding the Planning Area include: Rural Residential; Diverse Agriculture; Land Extensive Agriculture; and Public/Quasi-Public (Ragle Ranch Regional Park).

### Key Questions

- *Are there additional areas in the City that should be identified as Open Space?*
- *Are there additional General Plan land use designations that the City should consider for the City, SOI, and/or Planning Area to identify open space resources?*
- *Should any agricultural areas in the SOI and/or Planning Area be designated with an agricultural land use designation that addresses the agricultural land as an open space resource?*
- *Should the City enhance collaborative efforts to work with other agencies such as the Open Space District and the County of Sonoma to protect open space areas in greater Sebastopol, such as Atascadero Creek, or agricultural resources such as large orchards and vineyards?*











From: **Terry Loveton** [tloveton@msn.com](mailto:tloveton@msn.com)  
Subject: Comment on environmental aspects of general plan  
Date: January 15, 2015 at 4:59 PM  
To: [kenyon.webster@cityofsebastopol.org](mailto:kenyon.webster@cityofsebastopol.org)

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Hi Kenyon,

I would love to see more of our public garden areas planted with California natives and other habitat providing plants that support our local wildlife especially birds, bees and other beneficials. Sebastopol could be a model for other communities by creating beautiful, thoughtfully planned, site appropriate, skillfully maintained gardens that inspire people to do the same in their own gardens and even at their places of business.

I'm a landscape gardener and for the past 2 and 1/2 years have been responsible for the plot south of the Community Center just outside the Laguna de Santa Rosa. The garden is thriving and starting to fill in despite the various impacts (dogs, people, trash, compacted soil) and the fact that the only water it gets is from the 5 gallon container (heavy!) I transport from home every 2-3 days in the summer in the middle of a long drought! Could part of the plan include establishing more gardens like this? People who see native plant/ habitat gardens with their lively array of bees, butterflies, birds etc. often would like to create something similar-it's far less likely if they are rarely exposed to these types of gardens which is currently the situation.

Thank you for your consideration,

Terry Loveton  
Earthgirl Gardens  
[829-6824/www.earthgirlgardens.com](http://829-6824/www.earthgirlgardens.com)





From: **Natasha Beauchamp** tasha@cittaslowsebastopol.org  
Subject: Re: Care about water conservation? The environment? Tell GPAC  
Date: January 17, 2015 at 8:28 PM  
To: nedavi7@comcast.net  
Cc: Kenyon Webster kwebster@cityofsebastopol.org, Clare Najarian armen@sonic.net

NB

This is great feedback, Neil.

I have cc'd Kenyon Webster with this reply so he will get your message. He is the one collecting community comments for the General Plan Advisory Committee.

Thanks for taking the time to contribute!

Tasha

On Jan 17, 2015, at 7:15 PM, [nedavi7@comcast.net](mailto:nedavi7@comcast.net) wrote:

show the downtown trees some love. prune them!!! get rid of the dirty, ugly abandoned newspaper racks. then i'll believe in a beautification process. neil davis of sebastopol.

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**From:** "Cittaslow Sebastopol" <[cittaslowsebastopol@gmail.com](mailto:cittaslowsebastopol@gmail.com)>  
**To:** "nedavi7" <[nedavi7@comcast.net](mailto:nedavi7@comcast.net)>  
**Sent:** Sunday, January 11, 2015 6:43:09 AM  
**Subject:** Care about water conservation? The environment? Tell GPAC

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*cittaslow sebastopol*  
Keeping Sebastopol green, local, friendly and artistic

## Comments due on Conservation, Parks and Open Space

### Email your General Plan ideas

[kwebster@cityofsebastopol.org](mailto:kwebster@cityofsebastopol.org)

Dear neil,

**The February meeting of the General Plan Advisory Committee will look at needed changes to protect our environment and our parks and open space.**

A lot has changed in the 20 years since the last General Plan was drafted. Our understanding of the delicate balance of the environment has increased, but so has our population and the draw upon



our resources.

**Please send your environmental comments to [Kenyon Webster](#) by the 15th of January so they can be included in the February packet.**

Conservation topics might include your thoughts on issues such as:

- Ground water recharge (We're learning this is very important with current drought conditions.)
- Improved trash/recycle options at the Plaza and downtown
- Greywater capture workshops and incentives

Parks and Recreation ideas you might consider:

- Want to see an Observation Tower for the Laguna?
- Want to see better signage and interpretive options along Morris St?
- Wish we had a park named after our Pomo predecessors?
- Do we need more gathering places (buildings, outdoors)? What do you have in mind?

Open Space, think in terms of less manicured options for enjoying nature:

- An easier and year-round pedestrian connection to the County's Laguna Trail. Perhaps from Morris St.
- What about access to the County's Laguna Trail from the Joe Rodota Trail across Highway 12?

**For your own calendar, the topics for up-coming months are:**

- February 11, 2015 Conservation/Open Space
- March 11, 2015 Economic Vitality/Urban Design
- May 13, 2015 Policy Review
- June 10, 2015 Land Use and Land Use Map

Here's wishing you a "Slow," healthy and happy 2015!



Clare Najarian, Co-Chair of Cittaslow Sebastopol and GPAC member

Tasha Beauchamp, Co-Chair of Cittaslow Sebastopol



This email was sent to [nedavi7@comcast.net](mailto:nedavi7@comcast.net) by [cittaslowsebastopol@gmail.com](mailto:cittaslowsebastopol@gmail.com) | [Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Rapid removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).



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