



DOWNTOWN SANTA ROSA

Station Area Specific Plan Update

Existing Conditions Report

NOVEMBER 2019

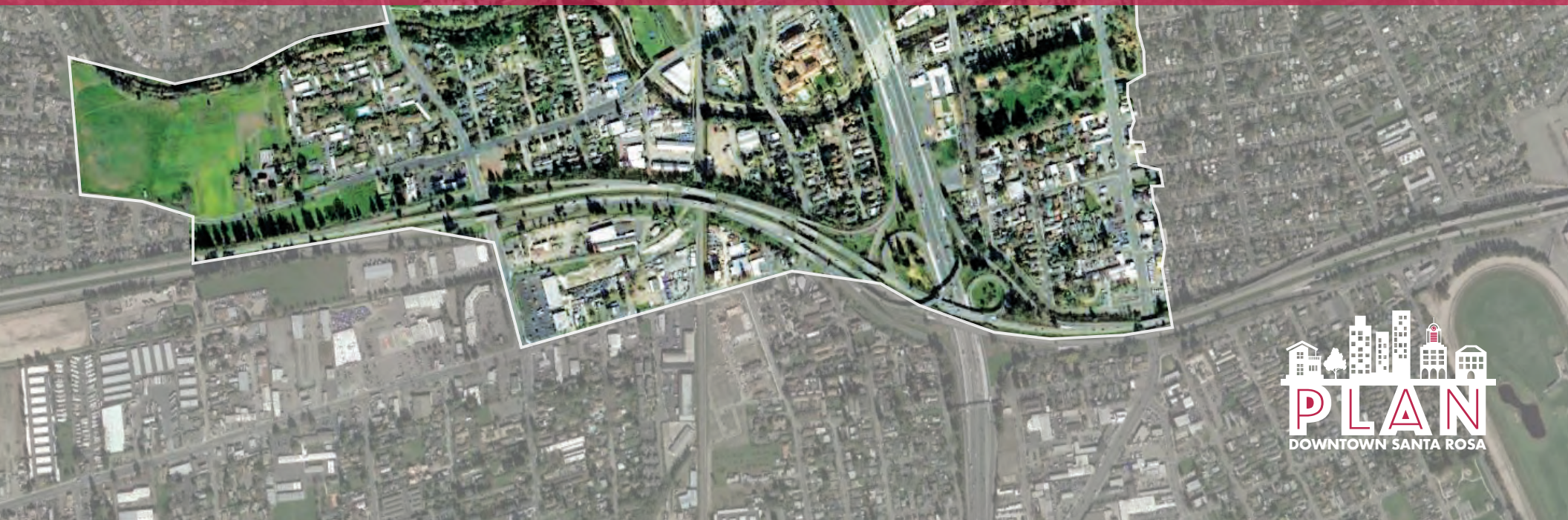


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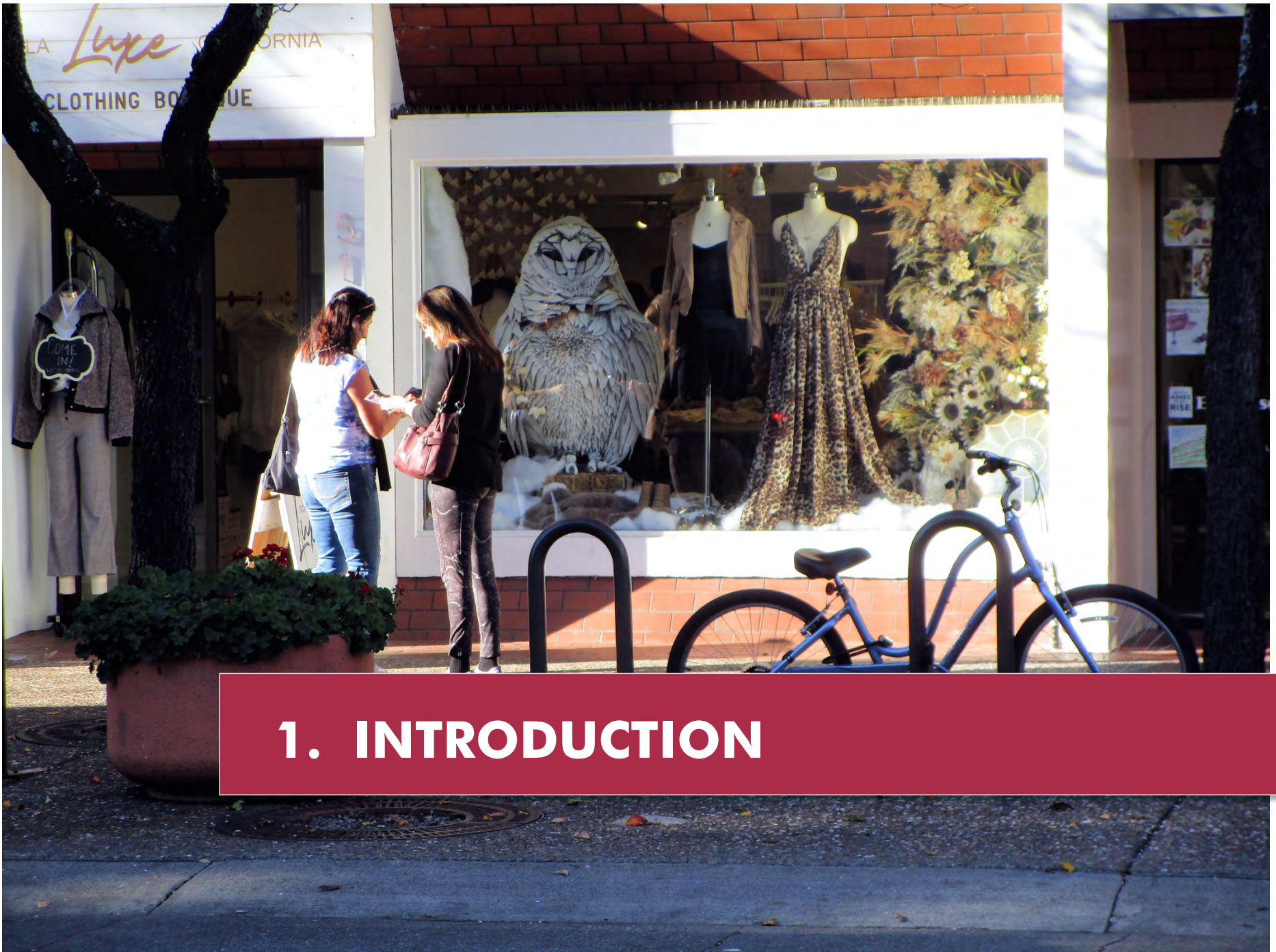
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1. INTRODUCTION

This Existing Conditions Report provides baseline information on existing conditions, opportunities, and challenges in the Downtown Santa Rosa Specific Plan area (planning area) to inform the Downtown Santa Rosa Specific Plan (DSASP) Update.

1.1 Location and Planning Area

Santa Rosa is located in central Sonoma County, about 55 miles north of San Francisco. The planning area covers approximately 720 acres surrounding the Downtown Station SMART site in the heart of Santa Rosa. The planning area is bounded by College Avenue to the north, Brookwood Avenue to the east, Sebastopol Road and Highway 12 to the south, and Dutton Avenue and Imwalle Gardens to the west. As part of the DSASP Update, the eastern boundary has been expanded to be consistent with the General Plan's definition of the downtown core.

The planning area encompasses several established neighborhoods, including Courthouse Square, Railroad Square, Maxwell Court, SOFA, and several established residential neighborhoods, including many that are designated preservation districts. In addition, the entire Downtown Station Area planning area is classified as a Priority Development Area (PDA), an area that has been identified by Bay Area communities as areas for investment, new homes and job growth. See Figure 1-1 for a map of the city and the location of the planning area.

1.2 Project Objectives and Process

Originally adopted in 2007, a key purpose of the Santa Rosa Downtown Station Area Specific Plan (DSASP) is to increase the number of residents and employees within walking distance of the Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) site through the intensification of land uses in the planning area. The 2007 Specific Plan envisioned that 3,409 new residential units and 493,000 square feet of new office, retail and

institutional uses would be constructed by 2027. However, halfway through the planning period, only 100 housing units and 194,000 square feet of office, retail, and institutional uses have been developed, with an additional 275 housing units and 107,000 square feet of office, retail, and institutional uses approved, but not yet constructed. As an area capable of accommodating density and providing new housing options, successful downtown development is an essential part of addressing the urgent housing need created by the housing crisis and devastating loss of homes to the 2017 wildfires.

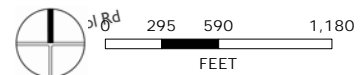
The City of Santa Rosa is undertaking an update to the DSASP in order to explore options for addressing the community's unmet housing needs as well as land use, transportation, economic development, and historic preservation issues associated with the intensification of housing development downtown.

The project includes the following objectives:

- Actively involve the public in updating the Plan through a comprehensive community involvement strategy.
- Revisit the land use plan and policy framework of the existing Plan to accommodate increased housing density downtown along with other transit-supportive uses and improvements.
- Improve motorized, non-motorized, and transit connectivity between the SMART station site, the Downtown Transit Mall, and existing and future adjacent commercial, residential, educational, and governmental areas.
- Develop and implement urban design standards which promote walkable and livable environments within the planning area.

Figure 1.1 Citywide Context

- Park
- SMART Rail
- Undercrossing



Source: MTC, 2019; City of Santa Rosa, 2018; Dyett & Bhatia, 2019

Specific Plan Update Process

The Specific Plan Update planning process will include the following four phases, with robust and diverse methods of community engagement occurring during all phases:

1. **Identification of Issues and Opportunities.** An intensive "deep-dive" to identify and understand stakeholder priorities and concerns, and to establish a coordinated and realistic direction for the future of the planning founded on community vision.
2. **Alternatives and Preferred Plan.** Based on the results of the visioning exercises and background research, the planning team will prepare and analyze a series of alternative design concepts. After additional public outreach and decision-maker input, the options will be narrowed to a single "Preferred Plan."
3. **Draft Specific Plan and Environmental Review.** Based on the Preferred Plan, a public review draft of the Specific Plan Update will be prepared along with an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) that analyzes the effects of Specific Plan policies and development potential on the environment.
4. **Adoption.** Following a public review period, a revised Specific Plan Update will be presented to the Planning Commission and the City Council for adoption at public hearings.

1.3 Report Organization

This Existing Conditions Report describes the planning area's existing land use patterns, regulatory framework, urban form, transportation and infrastructure networks, and environmental hazards. It seeks to identify issues and opportunities within Downtown Santa Rosa, so that the

community may better envision potential for future development. Chapters in the report are organized by topic as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction describes the planning area and its regional setting, outlines the objectives of the Specific Plan and the planning process, and provides an overview of the report's organization.

Chapter 2: Land Use and Development discusses existing land uses in the planning area, allowable development densities and intensities, property ownership information and the future plans of current property owners, major development projects in the planning area and its vicinity, and related plans and regulations.

Chapter 3: Urban Form and Design examines the existing character of the planning area, including the scale and character of its blocks and buildings, as well as the site's topography, views, and street design.

Chapter 4: Historic Resources describes downtown Santa Rosa's historic context and known historic resources.

Chapter 5: Mobility and Transportation provides an overview of downtown Santa Rosa's roadway system and traffic analysis, public transit accessibility, pedestrian and bike network, and parking facilities.

Chapter 6: Infrastructure and Utilities describes the planning area's water, wastewater, and storm water infrastructure.

Chapter 7: Environmental Considerations discusses major environmental constraints that should be addressed in updating the Plan, including geologic hazards, noise levels, flooding hazards and hazardous materials.

Analysis in each chapter is communicated through text, tables, photographs, diagrams, and maps. In addition, each chapter concludes with a brief summary of key planning issues and implications, which will serve as a bridge to the next phase of the planning effort – development and analysis of alternative concepts.