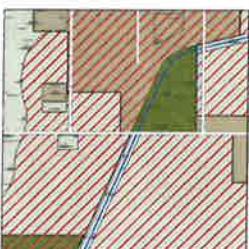
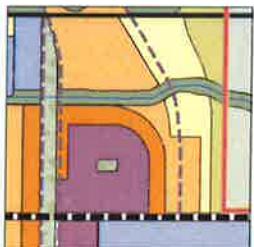
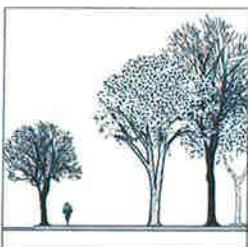


# *Our Place ...Rohnert Park 2020*

A PLAN FOR THE FUTURE



# GENERAL PLAN



Adopted  
July 2000

*Eighth Edition*



# City of Rohnert Park

# GENERAL PLAN

*Prepared by*

**DYETT & BHATIA**  
Urban and Regional Planners

Adopted  
July 2000

*Eighth Edition*

Printed August 2017



**ROHNERT PARK GENERAL PLAN – 8<sup>TH</sup> Ed.  
LOG OF AMENDMENTS THROUGH  
February 1, 2017**

Listed below are resolutions or actions for General Plan amendments occurring since the publishing of the first edition of the Rohnert Park General Plan adopted on July 25, 2000 (City Council Resolution No. 2000-152). The amendments are listed in sequence according to the date of the amendment.

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**2000**

**11/07/00:** Amendments to the General Plan based on the adoption of Measure N (2000), Urban Growth Boundary, and technical corrections.

**2001**

**01/23/01:** Resolution No. 2001-24

**07/24/01:** Resolution No. 2001-161

**08/28/01:** Resolution No. 2001-192

**2002**

**10/22/02:** Resolution No. 2002-247

**2003**

**10/14/03:** Resolution No. 2003-236

**10/14/03:** Resolution No. 2003-238

**2005**

**09/27/05:** Resolution No. 2005-296

**2006**

**05/23/06:** Resolution No. 2006-142

**06/13/06:** Resolution No. 2006-161

**2008**

**06/10/08:** Resolution No. 2008-87

**2010**

**05/11/10:** Resolution No. 2010-052

**08/24/10:** Resolution No. 2010-102

**12/07/10:** Resolution No. 2010-133

**12/07/10:** Resolution No. 2010-135

**2013**

**11/12/13:** Resolution No. 2013-153

**11/12/13:** Resolution No. 2013-155

**2014**

**04/08/14:** Resolution No. 2014-033

**05/24/14:** Resolution No. 2014-033A

**11/25/14:** Resolution No. 2014-156

**11/25/14:** Resolution No. 2014-162

**2016**

**03/22/16:** Resolution No. 2016-029

**2017**

**02/10/17:** Resolution No. 2017-09

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# **1 Introduction and Overview**

## **1.1 ROHNERT PARK: A CAPSULE HISTORY**

---

Rohnert Park was founded as a master-planned community on the former site of the Rohnert Seed Farm, located along the Northwestern Pacific railroad right-of-way. The original 1954 master plan was based on the “neighborhood unit” concept of clustering single-family homes around local schools and parks. The master plan featured eight neighborhoods, each with 200 to 250 homes, a 10-acre school, and a five-acre park.

In 1956, the Rohnert Park Community Services District was founded, and work began on digging wells, building a sewage plant, and installing water lines, sewer lines, and streets. By 1957, the first homes had been constructed. At the same time, the segment of US 101 from Petaluma north past Cotati was completed, making Rohnert Park more easily accessible from points throughout the region. Also, the California Legislature approved funds for Sonoma State University (SSU), which was located within Rohnert Park until moving to its current site in 1966, initiating the City’s long relationship with the University.

In 1962, at the time of incorporation, Rohnert Park had a population of 2,775, and the City limits encompassed 1,325 acres (approximately 2.1 square miles). The city grew quickly as the Bay Area economy continued to grow, and the demand for housing exploded. By 1980, urban uses extended from US 101 in the west to Snyder Lane in the east.

The 1980s saw growth extend west of US 101; “G” section, east of Snyder Lane, was built in this period. Growth in the 1990s was slower because of limited availability of vacant land within the City limits. In 1999, the city had a population of about 41,000 and an area of nearly 4,400 acres (6.9 square miles), with nearly half the land dedicated to residential uses. Figure 1.1-1 shows the evolution of Rohnert Park from 1965 to 1999.

In conjunction with residential growth, Rohnert Park also attracted commercial and industrial development and acquired a sizeable job base of almost 22,000 employees by 1999. Commercial and industrial uses are concentrated west of the railroad tracks and north of Copeland Creek. Major employers include Hewlett-Packard, located within an industrial campus in the southeast corner of the city, State Farm Insurance, and SSU. The Double Tree Hotel, Rohnert Park Municipal Golf Course, and the Sonoma County Wineries Association make Rohnert Park a popular hospitality center.

Rohnert Park’s limited Sphere of Influence (SOI) includes the Wilfred-Dowdell Specific Plan area (24 acres in size; plans for which were developed in 1999) and Canon Manor, where further development is hindered by the need for public facility improvements and the ongoing debate about how to fund the improvements. SSU is located outside the City’s SOI.

## **1.2 PURPOSE OF THE GENERAL PLAN**

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The Rohnert Park General Plan is a document required by State law and adopted by the City Council that addresses issues related to physical development, growth, and conservation of City resources. It:

- Outlines a vision of long-range physical and economic development and resource conservation that reflects the aspirations of the community;
- Provides strategies and specific implementing actions that will allow this vision to be accomplished;
- Establishes a basis for judging whether specific development proposals and public projects are in harmony with Plan policies and standards;
- Allows City departments, other public agencies, and private developers to design projects that will enhance the character of the community, preserve and enhance critical environmental resources, and minimize hazards; and
- Provides the basis for establishing and setting priorities for detailed plans and implementing programs, such as the Zoning Ordinance, specific plans, and the Capital Improvement Program.

### **WHY HAS THIS PLAN BEEN PREPARED?**

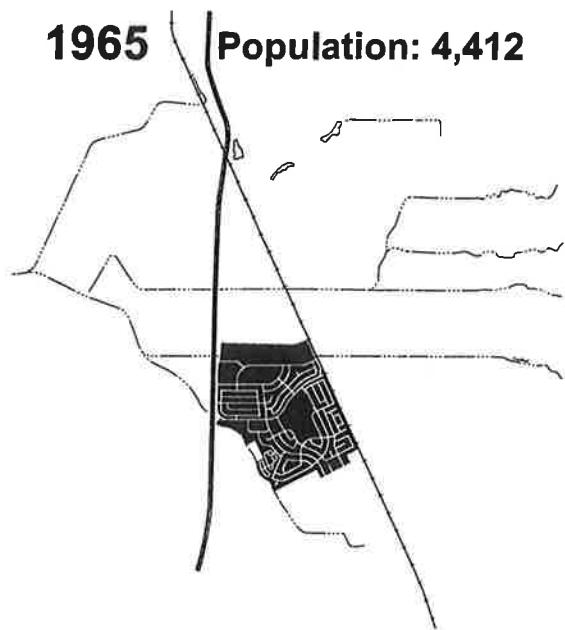
General plans typically look out 20 years in the future and are revised every five to 10 years. Rohnert Park adopted a General Plan in 1990. This plan was updated in 1995, but with a horizon of 2000. In 1996, Rohnert Park voters approved Measure N, which confirmed the existing City limits, along with a 24-acre area (Wilfred-Dowdell Specific Plan area), as the boundary for urban growth for a four-year period, slated to expire in July 2000.

As of mid-1999, the city is almost entirely built out. Only about 190 acres of commercial and industrial land within the City Limits are vacant and available; more than half of the available non-residential land is part of the existing Hewlett-Packard development. There are no remaining residential sites.

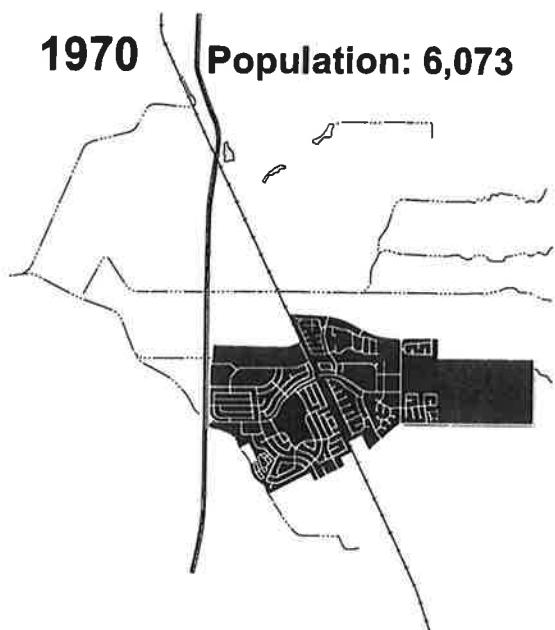
Thus, this General Plan has been prepared to:

- Respond to the need of having policies to guide Rohnert Park's growth before urban boundary provisions of Measure N expire.
- Ensure that the General Plan reflects Rohnert Park's current planning context, and includes goals, policies, and desires of Rohnert Park citizens; and
- Address the issue of land availability to meet the City's economic development objectives, the need for housing in the community, and State law requirements for Rohnert Park to accept its "fair share" of the regional housing needs.

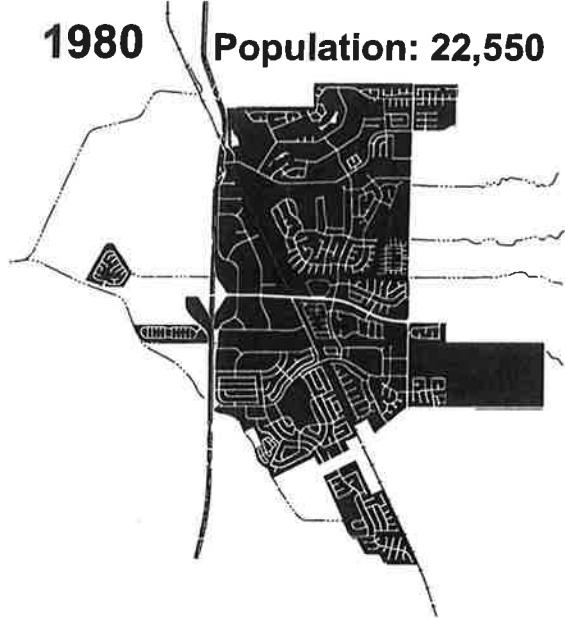
**1965** Population: 4,412



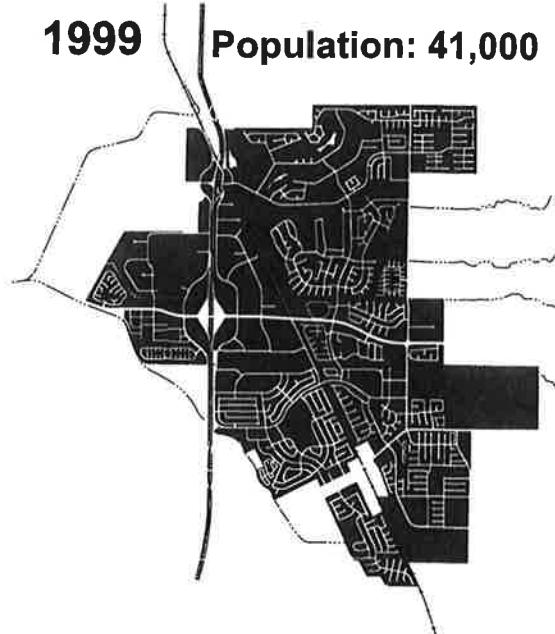
**1970** Population: 6,073



**1980** Population: 22,550



**1999** Population: 41,000



*Figure 1.1-1*  
**Sequence of Development**

## **ROHNERT PARK GENERAL PLAN: VISIONARY AND REALISTIC**

The General Plan articulates a vision for the city, but it is not merely a compendium of ideas and wish lists. Broad objectives such as "quality of life" and "community character" are meaningful only when translated into tangible, feasible actions. Thus, while each element of the General Plan articulates long-term goals, it also includes action-oriented policies that outline concrete and achievable steps to attain these goals.

The Plan is comprehensive and long-range in scope. It will be used on an on-going basis, because many City regulations, requirements, and actions are required by State law to be consistent with the General Plan. Since the Plan is general, there will be circumstances and instances when detailed studies are necessary before policies can be implemented.

## **PLAN PREPARATION PROCESS**

To help prepare this General Plan, the City Council established an Oversight Committee that included two City Council members, two Planning Commissioners, consultants, and key staff members. This Committee was charged with reviewing results of previous work done on the General Plan, such as the 1997 community summit, and preparing a General Plan that defines a long-term vision of the city.

The Committee met on a frequent basis and considered input from randomly chosen focus groups, open public workshops, and other methods of outreach. A community workshop was held in January 1999 to solicit ideas for the General Plan and was attended by 110 people. A wide variety of viewpoints were expressed by a mix of participants from all segments of the community. A second workshop held in February 1999, and attended by 120 people, provided an opportunity to gather input on three alternative land use scenarios and served as the basis for the preferred plan. Subsequent workshops helped refine the preferred plan and the proposed Urban Growth Boundary.

### **1.3 GENERAL PLAN REQUIREMENTS**

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State law requires each California city and county to prepare a general plan. A general plan is defined as “a comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development of the county or city, and any land outside its boundaries, which in the planning agency's judgment, bears relation to its planning.” State requirements call for general plans that “comprise an integrated, internally consistent and compatible statement of policies for the adopting agency.”

A city's general plan has been described as its “constitution” for development – the framework within which decisions on how to grow, provide public services and facilities, and protect and enhance the environment must be made. California's tradition of allowing local authority over land use decisions means that the State's cities have considerable flexibility in preparing their general plans.

While they allow considerable flexibility, State planning laws do establish some requirements for the issues that general plans must address. The California Government Code establishes both the content of general plans and rules for their adoption and subsequent amendment. Together, State law and judicial decisions establish three overall guidelines for general plans.

- *The General Plan Must Be Comprehensive.* This requirement has two aspects. First, the general plan must be geographically comprehensive. That is, it must apply throughout the entire incorporated area and it should include other areas that the City determines are relevant to its planning. Second, the general plan must address the full range of issues that affects the city's physical development.
- *The General Plan Must Be Internally Consistent.* This requirement means that the general plan must fully integrate its separate parts and relate them to each other without conflict. “Horizontal” consistency applies as much to figures and diagrams as to the general plan text. It also applies to data and analysis as well as policies. All adopted portions of the general plan, whether required by State law or not, have equal legal weight. None may supersede another, so the general plan must resolve conflicts among the provisions of each element.
- *The General Plan Must Be Long-range.* Because anticipated development will affect the city and the people who live or work there for years to come, State law requires every general plan to take a long-term perspective.

## **1.4 OBJECTIVES AND THEMES**

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### **GENERAL PLAN OBJECTIVES**

Several objectives for the General Plan were identified and considered by the Oversight Committee, based on public outreach conducted early in the General Plan process. The objectives provide a foundation for development of the goals and policies in the General Plan, and include:

- Establish a 20-year Urban Growth Boundary;
- Keep the city's small-town feel;
- Provide for slow, managed, and predictable growth;
- Increase housing affordability and diversity;
- Establish better cross-town connections;
- Maintain or increase open space ratios within the City;
- Encourage local jobs and maintain the jobs/housing balance;
- Build and maintain infrastructure in anticipation of growth;
- Integrate land use planning with SSU expansion plans and establish better connections with the University;
- Uphold or improve current levels of city services;
- Encourage socioeconomic diversity;
- Ensure legal adequacy and address external jurisdictional issues, including coordination with the Sonoma County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO), Sonoma County, and Rohnert Park's neighbors;
- Increase pedestrian and bike access;
- Provide a framework for design standards that reflect these objectives; and
- Create options for the city's edges. Allow for soft boundaries and scenic corridors.

### **THEMES**

Building on these overall objectives, the General Plan is structured around several themes, which form the basis of goals and policies throughout the document.

1. *An Urban Growth Boundary and Growth Management Program.* The General Plan establishes a 20-year growth boundary, “trigger” caps on development, and adequate public facility requirements. These policies and programs will ensure phased and orderly development, and a sustained high quality of life.
2. *A “Greenbelt” around the city, with targeted growth areas.* Growth is targeted in selected areas to the east and northwest to reinforce a contiguous and compact urban form. Land surrounding the city, where Rohnert Park’s boundaries do not coincide with Cotati’s, are maintained in open space. An open space buffer is also maintained between

new growth areas and Petaluma Hill Road. The buffer varies in width and includes both open land and recreational facilities.

3. *City/University Integration, and Mixed-Use Centers.* The General Plan designates a new pedestrian-oriented University District—envisioned with a mix of residential, retail, entertainment, and office uses that cater to students, faculty, and staff, as well as residents—along Rohnert Park Expressway north of the campus. In addition, the City Center, adjacent to the Expressway and Commerce Boulevard, is designated for a mix of public, office, residential, and retail uses. In addition to these two new centers, the Wilfred-Dowdell Village is already being planned as of 1999 and provides a variety of shops and commercial uses, in a pedestrian-oriented enclave on the westside.
4. *Balanced Neighborhoods.* A guiding premise of the Plan is that activities and facilities used on a frequent basis, such as stores and parks, should be easily accessible to residents. Land uses are designated to ensure balanced neighborhood development with a mix of uses and housing types, provision of parks and schools, and easy access to mixed-use and commercial activity centers.
5. *Increased Connectivity and Accessibility.* The city's existing neighborhoods have few interconnecting streets, and US 101 limits east-west access. Improved connections between neighborhoods, as well as new connections across the highway are included in the General Plan. Roadway improvements and new streets are also proposed to link different neighborhoods and to connect residential areas with SSU.
6. *A Network of Open Space.* Using creeks as the armature, an interconnected network of open space, parks, and trails is provided. These will also enable connections from existing neighborhoods to open space areas beyond Petaluma Hill Road and the SSU campus.
7. *Pedestrian- and Bicycle-Friendly Environments.* Policies for land uses, mixes, intensities, and urban design are established to encourage walking and bicycling. In activity centers like the University District, policies are also established to promote small block sizes and frequent local streets, which help maximize the permeability of a neighborhood for people walking or bicycling.
8. *Enhanced Community Character.* The General Plan establishes specific urban design policies at a citywide, neighborhood, and street scale. Connections between neighborhoods, transitions between urban and open space areas, city and neighborhood edges, community orientation of development, building massing, and streetscapes are all addressed. Policies are also included for viewshed protection.

## **1.5 REGIONAL LOCATION AND PLANNING BOUNDARIES**

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### **REGIONAL LOCATION**

As shown in Figure 1.5-1, Rohnert Park is located in central Sonoma County along US 101, in the northern San Francisco Bay Area. The Russian River, the Sonoma and Mendocino coasts, and the Sonoma-Napa wine country are all short distances away. The Pacific Ocean to the west, with its cool marine air, and the warm Sonoma Valley to the east combine to create a mild climate, with mild, wet winters, dry summers, and seasonal fogs.

Sonoma County as a whole is characterized by rolling hills and a series of valleys. Rohnert Park lies within the broad Cotati Valley, which is bounded by the low, rolling coastal hills to the west and the Sonoma Mountains to the east. Several creeks run into the city from the eastern ridgeline. The hills, along with the surrounding crop fields and pastures, provide a rural backdrop to the city.

Figure 1.5-1 shows Rohnert Park's regional location. The city shares its boundaries with Cotati to the southwest. Santa Rosa's Urban Boundary at its closest point comes to within 1,000 feet of Rohnert Park. The city shares portions of its northern and northwestern boundary with two County-designated Community Separators – open spaces that separate Rohnert Park and Santa Rosa. SSU is located just outside the city's eastern boundary.

### **PLANNING BOUNDARIES**

State law requires that each city adopt a general plan “for the physical development of the county or city, and any land outside its boundaries which ... bears relation to its planning.” Figure 1.5-2 shows the Planning Area. The boundaries of the Planning Area are Stony Point Road to the northwest, Todd Road and the Santa Rosa Urban Boundary to the north, the Taylor Mountain and Sonoma Mountain ridgelines to the east, and Lichau Creek and the Northwestern Pacific railroad right-of-way to the southeast. To the west the Planning Area boundary is conterminous with the 1999 City Limits, because Rohnert Park abuts the Cotati City Limits and SOI on that side.

The Planning Area does not represent the area contemplated for annexation or development, but is the extent of area around the city that was studied and considered in preparing the plan. For example, ridgeline views (the Sonoma Mountain ridgeline is located approximately four miles east of Petaluma Hill Road) are addressed in Chapter 3: Community Design. The Planning Area has not changed from the 1995 General Plan.

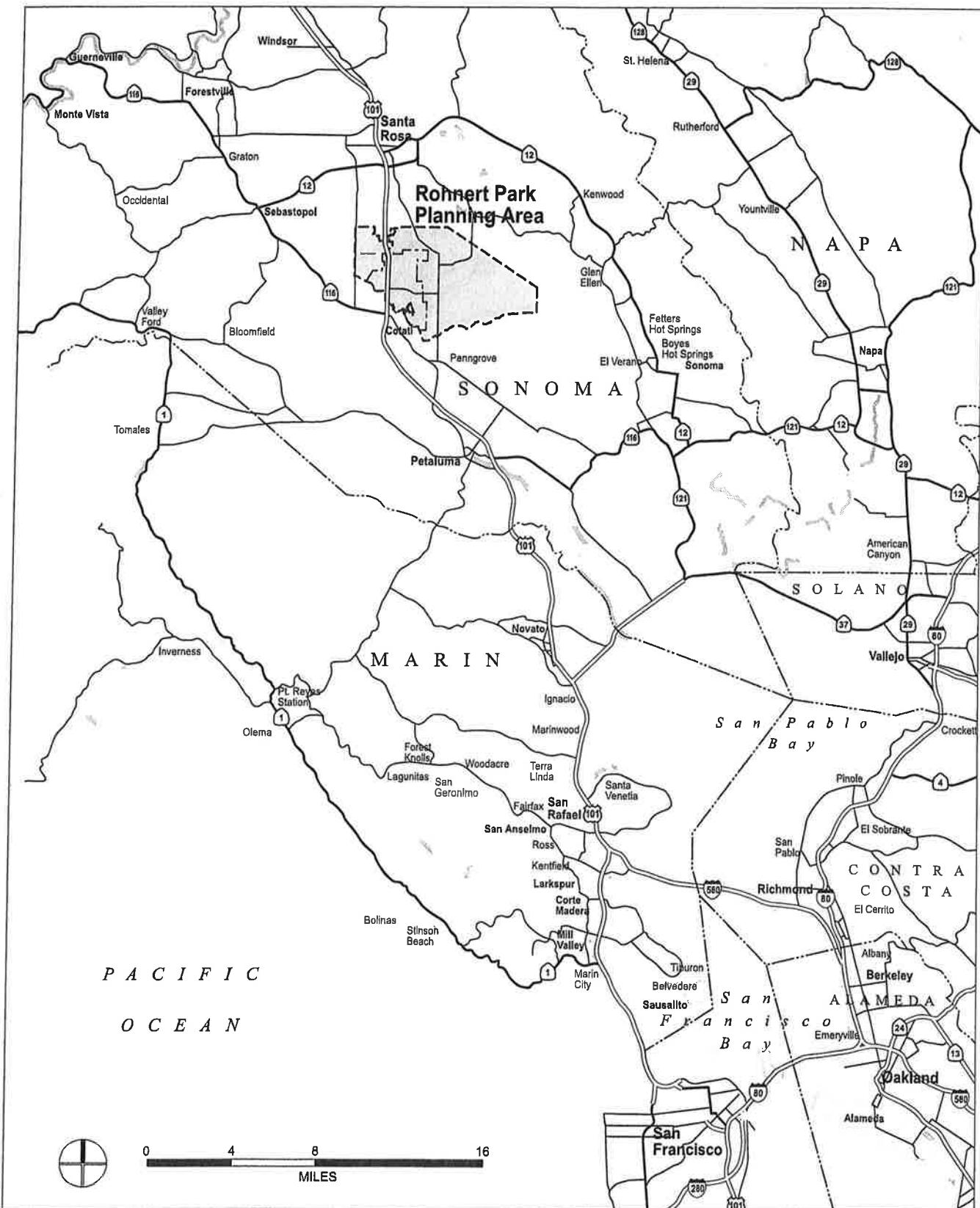
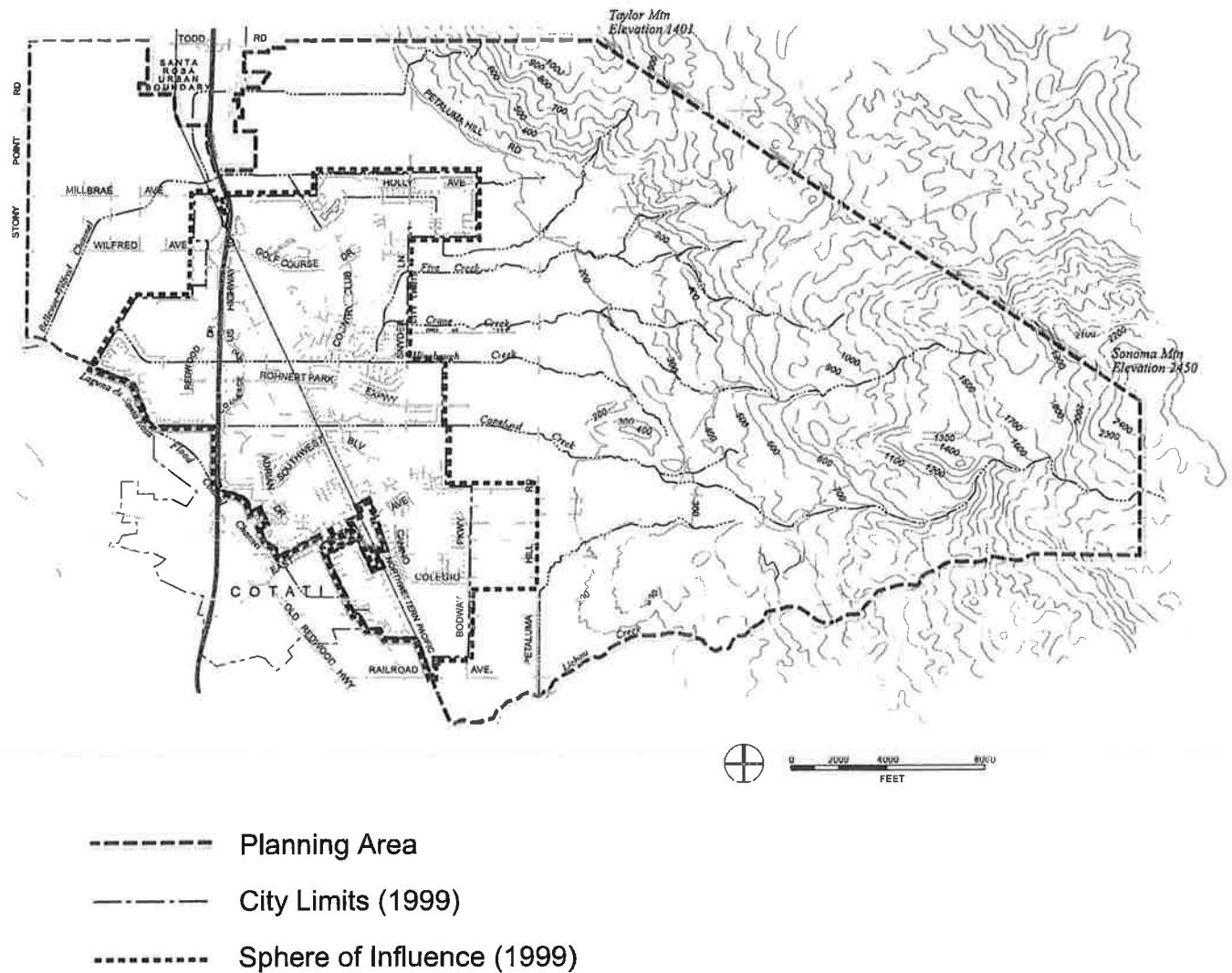


Figure 1.5-1  
Regional Location



*Figure 1.5-2*  
**Planning Area**

## 1.6 THE PLANNING PROCESS

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The City's planning process includes monitoring and updating the General Plan and implementing Plan policies, updating the Zoning Ordinance, preparing other implementing ordinances, specific plans, design guidelines, and other studies called for in the General Plan. An annual General Plan Report will provide an overview of the status of the General Plan and its implementation.

Ordinances and documents the City must update or prepare upon adoption of the General Plan include:

- *Zoning Ordinance.* The Zoning Ordinance is one of the primary implementation tools of the General Plan, and it is required to be consistent with the General Plan by State law. The Land Use and Growth Management Element, as well as the Community Design Element, call for specific revisions to the Zoning Ordinance. A comprehensive update of the Zoning Ordinance will be necessary in order to implement the new General Plan Diagram and land use classifications, land use policies, and policies relating to the intensity, bulk, and character of new development.
- *Specific Plans.* The City has already prepared a specific plan for the Wilfred-Dowdell area, located on the westside. To provide additional direction for new development, policies in the Land Use and Growth Management Element call for preparation of specific plans for all new development areas and identify the boundaries of the new specific plan areas. Requirements for specific plans are laid out in the State's Government Code.
- *Neighborhood and Special Area Plans.* A concept plan for the City Center was prepared in early 1999 and the Central Rohnert Park Priority Development Area Plan (PDA plan) was prepared in early 2016. Both documents are intended to guide future development within the central portion of Rohnert Park. The City may consider establishing neighborhood and special area plans for additional areas with unique planning needs. Neighborhood and special area plans need not necessarily address all the topics required by State law for specific plans. All specific plans and neighborhoods and special area plans must be consistent with the General Plan. The City retains the authority to require specific plans for areas in addition to the ones included in the General Plan.
- *Redevelopment Plans.* The City's Community Development Area is the City's redevelopment area, as authorized by the State's community redevelopment law, and includes most sites in the city that were vacant as of 1999. In redevelopment areas, the property tax increment from new development is reinvested into the redevelopment area, whether through public improvements, economic development strategies, or other measures. Redevelopment plans are required to be consistent with a city's general plan.
- *Growth Management Ordinance.* A Growth Management Ordinance is called for, in order to establish a comprehensive growth management program. The ordinance would establish conditions of approval for new development, annual "trigger" caps on development, requirements for adequate public facilities, and other relevant provisions.
- *Subdivision Regulations.* Revisions to the City's subdivision regulations may be necessary in conjunction with establishment of the Growth Management Ordinance.

Conditions on approval of tentative subdivision maps would need to be established in order to reflect the goals and policies of the growth management program.

- *Capital Improvements Program.* A Capital Improvement Program would need to be established to review and program public facility needs within the city, in conjunction with new development. The program is established through policies in the Land Use and Growth Management Element, as part of an overall growth management strategy.

## AMENDMENTS TO THE GENERAL PLAN

As the city's guide for development, the General Plan is the heart of the planning process. It is intended to be a living document and, as such, will be subject to more site-specific and comprehensive amendments over time. Amendments also may be needed from time to time to conform to State or federal law passed after adoption, and to eliminate or modify policies that may become obsolete or unrealistic due to changed conditions (such as completion of a task or project, development on a site, or adoption of an ordinance or plan).

State law limits the number of times a jurisdiction can amend its general plan. Generally, no jurisdiction can amend any mandatory element of its general plan more than four times in one year, although each amendment may include more than one change to the general plan. This restriction, however, does not apply to amendments to:

- Optional elements (such as the Community Design Element);
- Allow development of affordable housing; or
- Comply with a court decision.

## ANNUAL REPORT

The California Government Code requires City staff to "provide an annual report to the legislative body on the status of the General Plan and progress in its implementation" (Government Code § 65400(b)). This report must also be submitted to the Governor's Office of Planning and Research and the Department of Housing and Community Development. It must include an analysis of the progress in meeting the city's share of regional housing needs and local efforts to remove governmental constraints to maintenance, improvement, and development of affordable housing (Government Code § 65583, 65584).

In addition, any mitigation monitoring and reporting requirements prescribed by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) identified in the General Plan environmental impact report (EIR) should be addressed in the annual report because they are closely tied to plan implementation. Finally, the annual report should include a summary of all general plan amendments adopted during the preceding year and an outline of upcoming projects and general plan issues to be addressed in the coming year, along with a work program.

The Rohnert Park General Plan Annual Report will be prepared by City staff during the early stages of the budget process and submitted for review to the Planning Commission, which will make a recommendation to the City Council. Public comments on the Annual Report may be submitted in writing to the Planning and Community Development Department. The Planning Commission and the City Council also will hear public comments on the Annual Report at duly noticed public hearings.

## **PERIODIC REVIEW**

The City will prepare an Implementation Plan within six months of the General Plan's adoption. That Implementation Plan shall contain language that allows for technical changes to be made in the General Plan. Furthermore, implementing ordinances required by the policies of this General Plan shall be adopted as soon as appropriate.

The City will undertake a periodic review of the General Plan, to determine how well the General Plan has performed, that is, whether policies related to development and conservation have been effective. This review will include:

- Analysis of the effectiveness of implementation programs and strategies initiated to carry out the Plan;
- Assessment of the City's job/housing balance;
- Review of growth trends since Plan adoption, assessment of future urban land needs, and review of growth phasing; and
- Review of Performance Indicators, which reflect progress towards implementation of the General Plan.

The first review of the plan will start five years after adoption of the Plan. As part of the review, a target date for a comprehensive update of the General Plan will be established. A report summarizing City staff's findings and recommendations will be circulated for public comment and then presented to the Planning Commission. The Planning Commission will review the report and make a recommendation to the City Council. The Planning Commission and the City Council also will hear comments on the report at duly noticed public hearings.

## 1.7 PLAN ORGANIZATION

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The Rohnert Park General Plan is organized into the following chapters:

1. *Introduction and Overview.* This includes General Plan objectives and themes, State requirements, and requirements for Plan monitoring, review, and amendments.
2. *Land Use and Growth Management.* This Element provides the physical framework for development in the City. It establishes policies related to the location and intensity of new development, citywide land use policies, and growth management policies.
3. *Community Design.* This Element outlines policies to ensure that new development protects and enhances the community character. Urban form, edges, and views, and neighborhoods, buildings, streets, and parks are all addressed.
4. *Transportation.* This Element includes policies, programs, and standards to maintain efficient circulation. It identifies future street and bikeway improvements, and addresses alternative transportation modes and parking.
5. *Open Space, Parks, and Public Facilities.* This Element outlines policies and standards relating to regional and local open space, parks and recreational facilities, and public facilities, including schools, water, and wastewater.
6. *Environmental Conservation.* This chapter outlines policies relating to habitat and biological resources, water quality, air quality, and historic and archaeological resources.
7. *Health and Safety.* This Element addresses the risks posed by seismic and geologic hazards, flooding, as well as other topics, including solid waste management and recycling, hazardous materials, and emergency management.
8. *Noise.* This Element includes policies to limit the impacts of noise from traffic, railroad service, and other sources throughout the city.
9. *Housing.* This Element, which addresses housing availability and affordability according to State requirements, is bound in a separate volume.
10. *Youth and Family (Reserved).* This Element, when completed, will establish policies to promote the health, safety, and welfare of youth and their families.
11. *Economic Development (Reserved).* This Element, when completed, will establish policies to promote economic expansion and job growth in the city, balanced with the need to maintain the city's character.

### CORRESPONDENCE TO REQUIRED ELEMENTS

The General Plan includes the seven elements required by State law – Land Use, Circulation, Open Space, Conservation, Safety, Noise, and Housing. The General Plan also includes an optional Community Design Element. Table 1.7-1 shows how the Rohnert Park General Plan elements correspond to State-required elements.

**Table 1.7-1:****Correspondence Between Required Elements and Rohnert Park General Plan Elements**

<i>Required Element</i>	<i>General Plan Element</i>
Land Use	Chapter 2: Land Use and Growth Management
Circulation	Chapter 4: Transportation
Open Space	Chapter 5: Open Space, Parks, and Public Facilities
Conservation	Chapter 6: Environmental Conservation
Safety	Chapter 7: Health and Safety
Noise	Chapter 8: Noise
Housing	Chapter 9: Housing

**POLICY STRUCTURE**

Each element of the General Plan is introduced by brief background information that establishes the policy context. This background material is neither a comprehensive statement of existing conditions nor does it contain any adopted policy, except where specifically stated otherwise. Readers interested in a more detailed description of issues related to a particular topic should refer to the “related documents” listed at the end of this Chapter.

This background information is followed by goals and policies:

- *Goals.* Building on the General Plan objectives, goals are statements of overall philosophy and approach to resolving major issues.
- *Policies.* Policies are specific actions that implement the stated goals. They may establish procedures, standards, or programs or call for specific City actions.

Explanatory material accompanies some of the goals and policies; it provides background information or is intended to guide Plan implementation. The use of “should” or “would” indicates that a statement is advisory, not binding; details will need to be resolved in Plan implementation. Statements of “shall” or “will” are mandatory. Where the same topic is addressed in more than one chapter, sections and policies are cross-referenced, typically in *italics* for easy reference.

**Policy Numbering System**

Policies in the General Plan are organized using a two-part numbering system that is intended to give each goal and policy a discrete, easily referenced number. The first part refers to the element (or the subsection within the element), and the second refers to the specific goal or policy. The first part is represented by the abbreviated initials of the element or subsection (such as LU for Land Use and GM for Growth Management). For the second part, goals are represented by a capital letter and policies by a number. Thus, the first goal in Chapter 6: Environmental Conservation is EC-A and the first policy is EC-1.

## **RELATED DOCUMENTS**

As part of General Plan preparation, several technical studies were conducted to document environmental conditions and analyze alternatives for development and conservation. While these background studies and environmental documents have guided Plan preparation, they do not represent adopted City policy. Documents include:

- *Environmental Setting for the City of Rohnert Park General Plan Update*, October 1997;
- *Community Issues Report*, January 1998;
- *Land Use Alternatives and Preferred Plan*, May 1999;
- *Fiscal Impacts of General Plan Alternatives*, May 1999;
- *Draft Environmental Impact Report*, October 1999;
- *Revised Draft Environmental Impact Report*, May 2000; and
- *Final Environmental Impact Report* [to be prepared after completion of the public hearing period].

## **1.8 GENERAL PLAN APPLICABILITY**

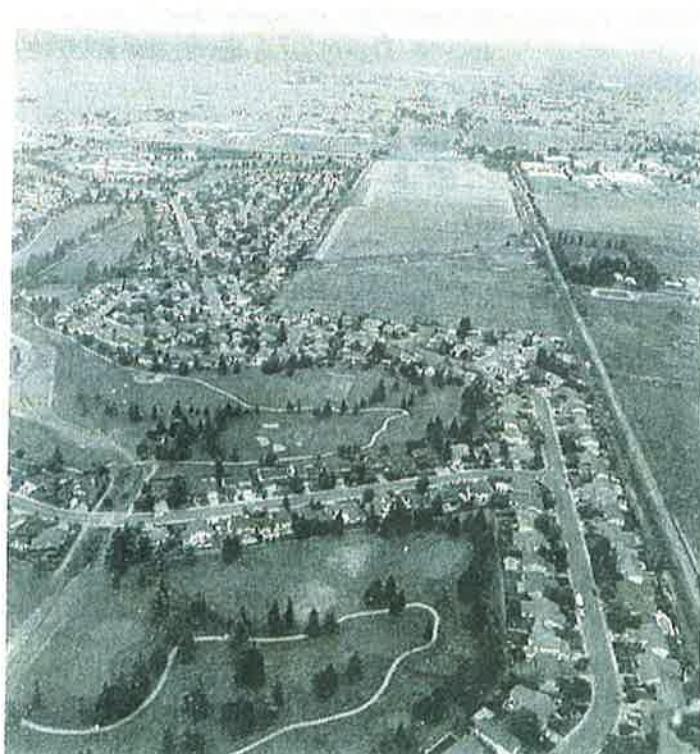
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This General Plan shall apply to all development proposals within the existing and/or proposed city limits, unless otherwise specified in the provisions of this Plan. Applications for development submitted prior to the approval of the General Plan (July 25, 2000) (including applications that have been presented for development and architectural review and other discretionary permit applications) are hereby exempted from this General Plan and are considered “grandfathered” into the Plan.

## 2 Land Use and Growth Management

Land use and growth management represent the prime planning concerns of most Rohnert Park residents. Based on input from public workshops, most residents want the City to ensure that any new development is in keeping with the community character and minimizes urbanization of open space outside the city. With only about 190 acres of vacant land within City limits in 1999, none of it designated for residential use, and limited reuse opportunities as the city is still fairly young, the location, intensity, character, and management of growth at the city's edges is perhaps the most significant General Plan concern.

The text and policies of the Land Use and Growth Management Element, and the General Plan Diagram constitute the physical framework of the General Plan. The chapter begins with a discussion of community form and population growth and their implications for regional growth management. This is followed by definitions of the land use classifications, information on population and projected buildout, and land use policies. Last, growth management policies are presented. Issues specifically related to urban design and development character are addressed in Chapter 3: Community Design.



## 2.1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

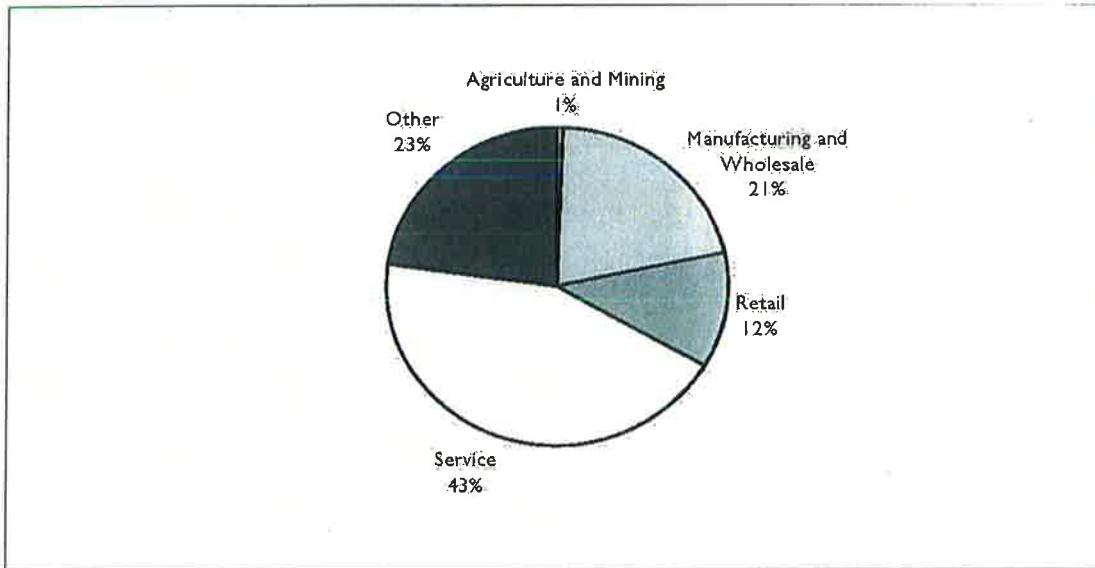
Rohnert Park was established as a master planned community in the late 1950s. The first two neighborhoods were built in 1956, and the city continued to expand over subsequent decades. However, the city's growth over the last few years has been limited; the current City limits were essentially reached in 1990.

### PACE OF GROWTH

Historically, Rohnert Park has experienced decreasing rates of population growth. Between 1965 and 1980, the city had an annual average population growth rate of 4.9 percent, and between 1980 and 1999, the average annual growth rate dropped to 3.1 percent. Extensive development in the 1980s at much higher rates of growth was counteracted by minimal residential development during the 1990s.

Most job growth in Rohnert Park has occurred since 1980. Between that year and 1999, the number of jobs in Rohnert Park increased from 5,280 to 21,900, representing an average annual growth rate of 7.8 percent. Figure 2.1-1 shows that most jobs in Rohnert Park were in the service sector in 1999.

**Figure 2.1-1: 1999 Jobs by Sector**



Source: ABAG Projections '98

## **LAND USE PATTERN, 1999**

As a master planned community, Rohnert Park has a well-structured pattern of land uses. Most neighborhoods are centered around an elementary school and/or a local park. The neighborhoods are separated by major streets, the railroad tracks, and open space and parks, such as the city's two golf courses. Neighborhood shopping centers are located at the intersections of major roads, serving several adjacent neighborhoods. Connections between different neighborhoods are generally limited to the major streets.

### **Land Use Distribution**

The 1999 City limits encompass an area of approximately 4,400 acres (6.9 square miles). Table 2.1-1 shows the distribution of this total area by land use. Residential is the predominant land use, occupying about 44 percent of the area. About a quarter of the remaining developed land has industrial, commercial, or office use, with the balance in public and institutional uses or rights-of-way. Only 192 acres of land are currently vacant.

**Table 2.1-1:**  
**Land Uses Inside City limits, 1999**

	<i>Gross Acres</i>
Residential	1,971
Professional/Office	47
Commercial	332
Industrial	515
Parks/Recreation	467
Public	223
Streets	643
Vacant	192
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,390</b>

*Source: Dyett & Bhatia.*

### **Sphere of Influence and Adjacent Jurisdictions**

There was a limited amount of land outside the City limits in the 1999 Rohnert Park Sphere of Influence (SOI). The Sphere of Influence included Canon Manor and 24 commercial acres near Wilfred Avenue west of Redwood Drive. The SOI does not include Creekside Middle School or the Sonoma State University (SSU) campus, which are located adjacent to the eastern City limits. To the southwest, the city shares its boundaries with Cotati. Open space and agricultural lands are adjacent to the city's other boundaries.

To the north and northwest of the city are two County-designated Community Separators – open spaces that separate Rohnert Park and Santa Rosa. Santa Rosa's Urban Boundary at its closest point comes to within 1,000 feet of Rohnert Park.

## Residential Areas

The city's neighborhood design concept was utilized in the development of new neighborhoods. Single family, townhouse, and garden apartment housing were constructed in each neighborhood. As illustrated in Table 2.1-2, the city, excluding Canon Manor, had 15,426 housing units, the majority of which were single-family detached homes. In addition to standard housing constructed on foundations, the city has five mobile home parks and approximately 1,466 mobile homes.<sup>1</sup> Three of the mobile home parks are reserved for adults.

**Table 2.1-2:**  
**Rohnert Park Housing Inside City Limits, 1999**

	Number of Units	As % of total
Single-family Detached	7,221	47%
Single-family Attached	1,719	11%
Multifamily Residences		
2-4 units	1,048	
5 units or more	3,972	
Multifamily sub-total	5,020	33%
Mobile Homes	1,466	9%
Total	15,426	100%

Source: California Department of Finance, *Official State Estimates*, January 1999

## Commercial and Industrial Areas

Rohnert Park does not have a historic central business district. Commercial and industrial development is typically setback from the street, with on-site parking and landscaping. Three shopping centers, anchored by supermarkets, are located near the US 101 and Rohnert Park Expressway interchange, with surrounding restaurants, office buildings, and small commercial complexes. In addition, regional commercial development located west of US 101 includes stores such as Target, Home Depot, Wal-Mart, and Home Express.

The city's industrial center is located north of the Rohnert Park Expressway, west of the Northwestern Pacific railroad right-of-way. State Farm Insurance, a major employer, is located in this area. Hewlett Packard, another major employer, is located at the southeastern corner of Rohnert Park.

## Hospitality and Visitor Services

The Double Tree Hotel, Mountain Shadows Golf Resort, and Sonoma County Wineries Association (California Welcome Center) are the key hospitality sites in Rohnert Park. They are located at the northern end of the community on Golf Course Drive. The Rohnert Park Stadium, located on Business Park Drive, provides a venue for sporting and other events.

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<sup>1</sup> State of California, Department of Finance, *Official State Estimates*, (January 1, 1999); Table 2. City/County Population and Housing Estimates.

## Public Facilities

### *School Districts*

As discussed in Chapter 5: Open Space, Parks, and Public Facilities, three school districts serve Rohnert Park:

- *Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District.* This school district serves most of Rohnert Park, portions of neighboring Cotati, and limited surrounding areas. The school district operates one high school, two continuation high schools, three middle schools, and nine elementary schools.
- *Bellevue Union School District* and *Santa Rosa High School District.* These two school districts serve areas north of Rohnert Park, including most areas on the westside and eastside, outside the 1999 City limits. None of Rohnert Park's residential areas in 1999 were within these districts.

### *Parks and Recreation*

In 1999, the City operated 32 recreational facilities and parks, including 14 neighborhood parks and nine mini-parks that total 116 acres. In addition, there are nine playgrounds on school sites. A more detailed description of City parks, as well as park policies, appear in Chapter 5: Open Space, Parks, and Public Facilities.

### *City Buildings and Land*

The City owns and/or operates several other significant facilities. There are 84 City buildings which include offices, public safety facilities, and recreation buildings. The City also entered into partnerships to provide facilities such as the Wine and Visitors Center, the Library, and the Rohnert Park Municipal Golf Course. The City owns three significant parcels of land:

- *500 City Hall Drive (8.4 Acres).* In 1990, the City Council approved plans for a civic center complex at this location. Three buildings were planned – the public safety headquarters, a City office building, and a City Council chambers building. The public safety headquarters was completed and occupied in the mid-1990s.
- *Near Rohnert Park Stadium (14 Acres).* South of the Rohnert Park Stadium between Redwood Drive and Labath Ave.
- *Near Rohnert Park Expressway (10 Acres).* North of the Expressway and east of Snyder Lane.

### **Vacant Land**

As shown in Table 2.1-1, only about 190 acres of land within the 1999 City limits, none of it zoned for residential uses, was vacant. Some stores and office spaces were also vacant in the Southwest Boulevard Shopping Center and the Padre Town Station center.

## **Intensity of Development**

Rohnert Park is more densely developed than any other suburban jurisdiction in Sonoma County. Average citywide housing density for land occupied by residential uses, excluding Canon Manor, is approximately 8.0 housing units per gross acre. This is the highest residential density of all cities in Sonoma County. Density varies by neighborhood. Chapter 3: Community Design presents more detail on neighborhood form and character.

Most non-residential uses in Rohnert Park occupy detached, single-story structures and have been subject to maximum lot coverage requirements of 30 to 35 percent. Non-residential sites also typically have large parking lots and landscaping.

## **PLANS AND PROGRAMS, 1999**

While planning in Rohnert Park is controlled by the City, it is influenced by actions of the surrounding jurisdictions as well. This section provides an overview of the major plans and programs in place in the City and adjacent jurisdictions.

### **Rohnert Park Plans and Programs**

In addition to the General Plan, the City had specific area plans, special area plans, and redevelopment plans in place in 1999.

#### ***Specific Area Plans and Special Area Plans***

The City's specific area plans and special area plans include:

- *Wilfred-Dowdell Specific Plan.* Consisting of 24 acres between the 1999 City limits and Dowdell Avenue, this area is planned for more than 170,000 square feet of regional commercial development. The Plan has not been adopted by the City Council.
- *City Center Concept Plan.* The City completed a Draft Concept Plan for the City Center, located near the intersection of Rohnert Park Expressway and State Farm Drive, in May 1999. The Concept Plan is not a specific plan but would be used to guide the development of land purchased by the City for new offices and Council chambers. The Plan outlines a vision for the City Center that features a pedestrian-oriented main street, and establishes direction for land use, urban design, and circulation.

#### ***Community Development Area***

The Community Development Area is the City's redevelopment area. It includes all sites that were vacant within the Rohnert Park City limits in 1999, except for a five-acre commercial site near the intersection of East Cotati Avenue and Bodway Parkway. The property tax increment from new development in the redevelopment area is reinvested into the area through public improvement or other strategies. The City has been adhering to the State requirement of setting aside 20 percent of available tax increment for low/moderate income housing, which are available to meet the City's housing obligations.

## Plans and Programs of Surrounding Jurisdictions

### *Sonoma County*

In response to strong growth pressures, the Sonoma County General Plan establishes a framework for protecting open space and agricultural uses, and uses a variety of strategies for limiting new development.

- *Large-lot Zoning.* Land adjacent to Rohnert Park is designated for very low-density residential uses (typically 10-acre or 20-acre lots) and a range of small-scale and commercial farming activities.
- *Community Separators.* Community separators are established adjacent to existing cities to limit development and provide distinct physical and visual spaces between cities. Community separators are located between Rohnert Park and Santa Rosa, and between Cotati and Petaluma, southwest of Rohnert Park. The amount and intensity of development are limited, and additional requirements are imposed for screening, clustering, and preservation of trees and landforms.
- *Urban Service Boundaries.* Policies limit the extension of urban services to land capable of supporting agriculture.
- *Scenic and Riparian Corridors.* US 101 and Petaluma Hill Road are designated as scenic corridors. As such, adjacent development is required to have setbacks of 30 percent or 200 feet, whichever is smaller, and a 20-foot setback in urban service areas. Copeland Creek and Crane Creek are classified riparian corridors and are subject to a 100-foot streamside conservation area setback.

### *Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District*

Sonoma County voters approved a  $\frac{1}{4}$ -cent sales tax for the preservation of agricultural lands and open space. The Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District was formed for administration of these funds and has identified a process for determining lands to be preserved. Preservation of community separator lands is a primary goal, and the new acquisition plan calls for an emphasis on “greenbelt” conservation and easements and fee purchases. Several sites or easements in the Rohnert Park area have already been purchased for preservation purposes; these sites are shown on Figure 5.1-1.

### *Williamson Act Lands*

Several sites around Rohnert Park have Williamson Act contracts. The Williamson Act of 1965 (California Land Conservation Act, Government Code § 51200 et seq.) is intended to discourage the unnecessary and premature conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural uses by taxing land according to income-producing value, rather than its “highest and best use.” Under contract, farmers agree not to develop their land for 10 years in exchange for the lower tax rate; contracts are automatically renewed each year.

Land under a Williamson Act is designated as an agricultural preserve, which can be used for agricultural, recreational use, or open space use. Recreational uses include walking, hiking, picnicking, camping, swimming, boating, fishing, hunting, or other outdoor games or sports; open space uses include wildlife habitat and managed wetland areas. Lands within a scenic highway corridor may be included in an agricultural preserve.

### ***Santa Rosa***

The Santa Rosa General Plan establishes an Urban Boundary, and policies encourage preservation of community separators and agricultural lands outside the Urban Boundary. Major boundary changes can only be made during the five-year General Plan update process.

According to the Santa Rosa General Plan, the Urban Boundary contained about 149,600 persons in 1995 and can ultimately accommodate a population of 201,000. The City maintains a growth management program that limits residential building permits to 1,000 per year until 2000, 900 per year between 2001 and 2005, and 850 per year from 2006 to 2010.

### ***Cotati***

Cotati's General Plan expresses the City's desire to maintain a small-town feeling and promote compact development. The 1998 Cotati General Plan reduced the western extent of the City's Urban Growth Boundary, while expanding it along the edges of Rohnert Park. Commercial Industrial and Rural Residential (1.0 unit/acre) uses are planned for areas adjacent to Rohnert Park. The Commercial Industrial area, while it does not border on Rohnert Park, could cause off-site impacts like traffic and noise.

Cotati's growth management program limits the City to issuing 75 residential building permits per year, plus an additional 25 for affordable units. Average annual growth has been closer to 50 units.<sup>2</sup> The 1999 population of about 7,200 is estimated to increase to more than 7,500 by 2005 and more than 8,000 by 2010.

### ***Sonoma State University***

While SSU contributes strongly to the city's identity, it actually lies outside the city's eastern boundary and the City's 1999 SOI. The 214-acre campus supports 7,000 full time equivalent (FTE) students and 1,200 employees, making it one of the largest employers in the area. University students, faculty and staff are a part of the Rohnert Park community.

The 1992 SSU Master Plan featured 880,000 square feet of new classrooms, facilities, and parking, and enhanced campus entryways. At buildout, the Master Plan was designed to increase the number of FTE students to 10,000. As of 1999, SSU is preparing an updated Master Plan that plans for additional classrooms and facilities, as well as new student housing. The updated plan is still expected to have 10,000 FTE students at buildout. The University is considering acquisition of the site west of the concert hall for long-term expansion.

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<sup>2</sup> City of Cotati, 1998 General Plan Update (October 1998), 10.

In September 1998, SSU completed a master plan for a new concert hall and music center to be located between the existing campus and the Rohnert Park Expressway. Approximately 97,000 square feet in size, the facility features a 1,400-seat concert hall, an outdoor theater, a recital hall, a rehearsal hall, a banquet hall, and as well as classrooms and offices.

### ***Canon Manor***

The Canon Manor subdivision is located immediately south of SSU, west of Petaluma Hill Road. Although outside of the 1999 City limits, Canon Manor is within Rohnert Park's SOI, and within the Urban Growth Limit shown in this General Plan. The County allowed large-lot development on parcels accessed on graveled roads and supported by individual water wells and septic systems. Water wells and septic systems in close proximity to each other in the heavy clay soils of Canon Manor may result in the infiltration of pollutants from septic systems into water wells. After extended periods of dry weather, the water table may drop below the level of water wells. Public improvements, commonly provided within City limits, either do not exist or were not constructed to City standards in Canon Manor. Property owners, Sonoma County, LAFCO and the City eventually will need to resolve public service issues. Topics to be addressed include:

- Facility standards;
- Costs and mechanisms to install needed facilities;
- Payment of costs by Canon Manor property owners;
- Extension of City services, specifically water and sewer; and
- Annexation.

### ***Penngrove***

Established in 1882, Penngrove is a small, unincorporated, rural town at the foothills of Sonoma Mountain. The Penngrove Specific Plan was adopted in 1984 and encompasses 2,750 acres located between Petaluma, Cotati, Rohnert Park and the Canon Manor subdivision to the north. Penngrove's core area is served by sewer system and aqueduct water, with parcels ranging from 1/4 acre to 1 acre. The outlying areas are served by private wells and septic, with parcels ranging from 2 acres to the 20-acre density established by the Sonoma Mountain Specific Plan. Based on low-density land use policies, the Penngrove Specific Plan intends to accommodate a population of 2,744 at buildout.

The Penngrove Specific Plan is committed to: a community centered concept; provisions of greenbelts surrounding and separating urban areas; retention of agricultural resources; adherence to the principle of environmental suitability; and preservation of natural resources.

### **Regional Agencies and Programs**

Implementation of the General Plan will require coordination with several regional and other local agencies.

### **Sonoma County and Community Separators**

Sonoma County communities strive to maintain clear physical boundaries in order to avoid corridor-style urbanization and suburban sprawl. This concept is recognized as “community separators” in the Sonoma County General Plan. Two community separators are located in the Rohnert Park-Cotati area. The Petaluma-Rohnert Park separator is located between Petaluma, Penngrove, and Rohnert Park-Cotati. The second separator is generally located north and northwest of Rohnert Park, between Rohnert Park and Santa Rosa (see Figure 5.1-1). The Sonoma County General Plan limits land uses in community separators to open space, agriculture, and rural residential development.

Santa Rosa's Urban Boundary, along the Wilfred Channel, is close to the northernmost City limits. A County-designated Community Separator is in effect in this area, providing a green space between Santa Rosa and Rohnert Park. The Sonoma County General Plan allows only very low-density residential development in the separators, in order to provide visual and physical greenbelts between communities.

*For detailed discussion and policies related to separators, including the Sonoma County Measure D, see Chapter 5: Open Space, Parks, and Public Facilities.*

### **Regulation of Uses in Unincorporated Areas**

Because the General Plan does not propose annexation of all land within the Planning Area, development on unincorporated land, essentially all land east of Petaluma Hill Road in the Planning Area, will continue to be regulated by the County General Plan and the Zoning Ordinance. All land in the area is currently designated by the County for agricultural and rural residential uses.

Land outside the Santa Rosa Urban Boundary, within the southern Santa Rosa SOI adjacent to Rohnert Park, includes land designed as community separator. Very low density residential use designations are in place there and permit minimum residential lots of 0.5 to 5 acres. These designations are intended to be permanent, not to reserve land for future development.

## 2.2 GENERAL PLAN DIAGRAM AND USE CLASSIFICATIONS

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### GENERAL PLAN LAND USE FRAMEWORK

#### General Plan Diagram

The land use framework of the General Plan is embodied in the General Plan Diagram (Figure 2.2-1), which is a graphic representation of the themes and policies in the Plan. The General Plan Diagram designates the proposed general location, distribution, and extent of land uses through buildout, which is expected by about 2020. As required by State law, land use classifications, shown as color/graphic patterns, letter designations, or labels on the Diagram, specify a range for housing density and building intensity for each type of designated land use. These density/intensity standards allow circulation and public facility needs to be determined; they also reflect the environmental carrying-capacity limitations established by other elements of the General Plan.

The Diagram is to be used and interpreted only in conjunction with the text and other figures contained in the General Plan. The legend of the General Plan Diagram abbreviates the land use classifications described below, which represent an adopted part of the General Plan.

The General Plan Diagram is not parcel-specific, and uses on sites less than one acre in size are generally not depicted on the Diagram. The interpretation of consistency with the General Plan on sites less than one acre in size will be done through the Zoning Ordinance and the Zoning Map.

#### Land Use Framework Guiding Principles

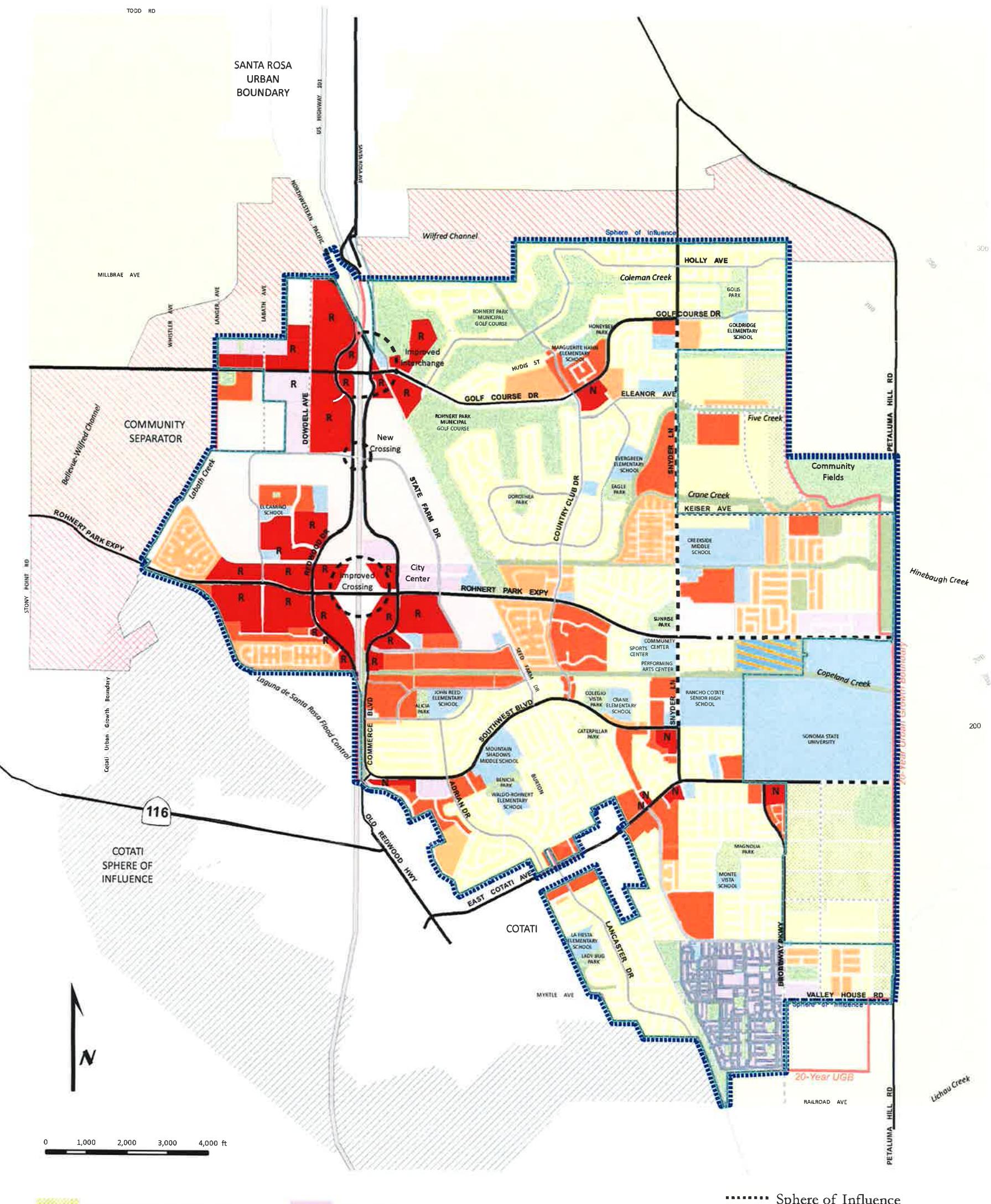
The General Plan Diagram embodies several ideas and principles. These include:

- *Compact urban form.* All growth is contiguous to existing City limits and within 4,000 feet of existing (as of 1999) development. The compact form of growth is supplemented by maintenance of urban densities, to help preserve open space, protect agriculture, and ensure efficient provision of services.
- *Urban Growth Boundary.* The General Plan delineates an Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) as the edge within which all urban development will be contained, until the year 2020.
- *Close physical integration of the city and Sonoma State University.* New growth areas are located to foster a strong physical “town and gown” connection. A new University District is located north of the campus to bring the city and the University together, and provide a mixed-use residential and commercial center to meet the needs of students, faculty, visitors, as well as city residents.
- *Increased connectivity between and within neighborhoods.* New streets are designated to result in increased connectivity. In addition, policies for locating local streets are included to ensure neighborhood-level connections while providing flexibility to project developers.

- *Designation of mixed-use and pedestrian-oriented activity centers.* Three pedestrian-oriented mixed-use centers are designated: the University District, the City Center and Sonoma Mountain Village. In addition, mixed-use or multi-use development is encouraged at three other sites: the northwest growth area, southwest of Adrian Drive/Southwest Boulevard, and a center in the southeast.
- *Variety of housing and mix of housing types in all neighborhoods.* The General Plan provides for a variety of housing types, including Estate Residential, a housing type currently not found in Rohnert Park, as well as higher density housing to meet the needs of students, and mobile home subdivisions to provide for affordable housing. The General Plan Diagram illustrates neighborhoods with integrated housing types, designed to locate a larger share of residences close to transit and neighborhood centers.
- *Protection of creeksides and provision of a network of trails and parks.* The Diagram illustrates a network of open space along creeks that will be realized over time. These open space areas will also facilitate development of a network of bikeways and pedestrian trails.
- *Land use pattern to maximize accessibility to parks and commercial centers.* All high density residential uses are located adjacent to parks/greenways or mixed-use centers to ensure that recreational and everyday shopping facilities are within walking distance of most residents.

## FUTURE BOUNDARIES

The General Plan Diagram shows the proposed future Sphere of Influence for the City; future City limits are proposed to coincide with the Sphere of Influence. Decisions on changes to the City limits and the Sphere of Influence require approval of the Sonoma County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO). Also shown on the Diagram is the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB), which outlines the limits of urban growth under this General Plan. This UGB is entirely within the proposed sphere, and will become operative upon the adoption of this General Plan; UGBs are neither recognized by LAFCO, nor do they require LAFCO approval.



**Figure 2.2-1**  
**General Plan Diagram**

Adopted: 11/7/2000

Diagram Revisions:

11/7/2000  
1/23/01 Reso 2001-24  
7/24/01 Reso 2001-161  
8/28/01 Reso 2001-192  
10/22/02 Reso 2002-247  
10/14/03 Resos 2003-236  
and 2003-238  
9/25/05 Reso 2005-296  
5/23/06 Reso 2006-142  
6/13/06 Reso 2006-161  
6/10/08 Reso 2008-87  
8/24/10 Reso 2010-102  
12/7/10 Reso 2010-133  
Reso 2010-135  
11/12/13 Reso 2013-153  
And 2013-155  
4/8/14 Reso 2014-33  
11/25/14 Reso 2014-156  
3/22/16 Reso 2016-029  
1/10/17 Reso 2017-009

All maps are intended to be consistent with the General Plan Diagram.  
Additional adjustments to other maps may be made for consistency.

Base data from County of Sonoma GIS department and the City of Rohnert Park



## **DENSITY/INTENSITY STANDARDS**

The General Plan establishes density/intensity standards for each use classification. Residential density is expressed as housing units per gross (including public streets and other rights-of-way) acre. Maximum permitted ratio of gross floor area to site area (FAR) is specified for non-residential uses. FAR is a broad measure of building bulk that controls both visual prominence and traffic generation. It can be clearly translated to a limit on building bulk in the Zoning Ordinance and is independent of the type of use occupying the building.

Density (housing units per gross acre) and intensity (FAR) standards are for gross developable land (that is, including streets and other rights-of-way), but excluding areas subject to physical or environmental constraints, as well as areas dedicated for creekside/greenways or habitat protection.

### **Exceptions**

The Zoning Ordinance could provide specific exceptions to the FAR limitations for uses with low employment densities, such as research facilities, or low peak-hour traffic generation, such as hospitals. Intensity standards for non-residential and mixed-use development are for the entire development site; that is, intensities on individual parcels may exceed the maximum, provided the overall development project does not exceed the stipulated intensity.

For residential uses, in contrast, density standards shall apply to individual parcels. The Planning Commission may permit, subject to findings, deviations in residential density standards on individual parcels for clustered development with common open space, as stipulated in the policies included later in this chapter, provided overall project density is not exceeded.

Additionally, Planned Developments or Specific Plan areas which are subject to form-based zoning codes shall be exempted from the FAR limitations set forth above. The density standards applicable to such areas shall be the same as that set forth in the applicable form-based code.

(Rev. 08/10)

**Table 2.2-1:**  
**Standards for Density and Development Intensity**

Land Use Designation	Residential Density (units/gross acre) <sup>1</sup>	Assumed Average for Buildout Calculations	Maximum Permitted FAR <sup>2</sup>
Residential <sup>3</sup>			
Estate	up to 2.0	2.0	
Low Density	4.0-6.0	6.0	
Medium Density	6.1-12.0	12.0	
High Density	12.1-24.0 (30.0 <sup>6</sup> )	21.0	
Office	-		1.0
Commercial			
Neighborhood/Community/ Regional	-		0.4
Hotels	-		1.5
Industrial			0.5 <sup>3</sup>
Mixed-use Development <sup>4</sup>		1.5 for commercial and office mixed-use areas, 2.0 for residential uses mixed with office or commercial, or as defined by a Planned Development or Specific Plan <sup>5</sup>	

1. 25 percent bonus is available for projects meeting State criteria for bonus for affordable housing (Government Code § 65915). 10 percent discretionary bonus (cannot be combined with 25 percent affordable housing bonus) is available upon Planning Commission approval only, and only for projects undertaking off-site improvements (such as streetscape improvements) that further the City's community design objectives.

2. Parking structures and garages are excluded from FAR calculations for non-residential and mixed-use developments.

3. Discretionary increases may be permitted up to a total FAR of 1.0, subject to review and approval for development meeting specific standards included in the Zoning Ordinance.

4. FARs for mixed-use classifications are for combined residential and non-residential development; no separate residential density limitations are specified.

5. FARs exceeding the specific limits stated above shall be as approved in Planned Development and Specific Plan areas.

6. Within the Central Rohnert Park area, residential density may be increased to 30 units per acre. Any density bonus would allow this to be increased according to the applicable provisions.

Source: City of Rohnert Park, Dyett & Bhatia

(Rev 08/10)

### Maximum Density/Intensity Not Automatic

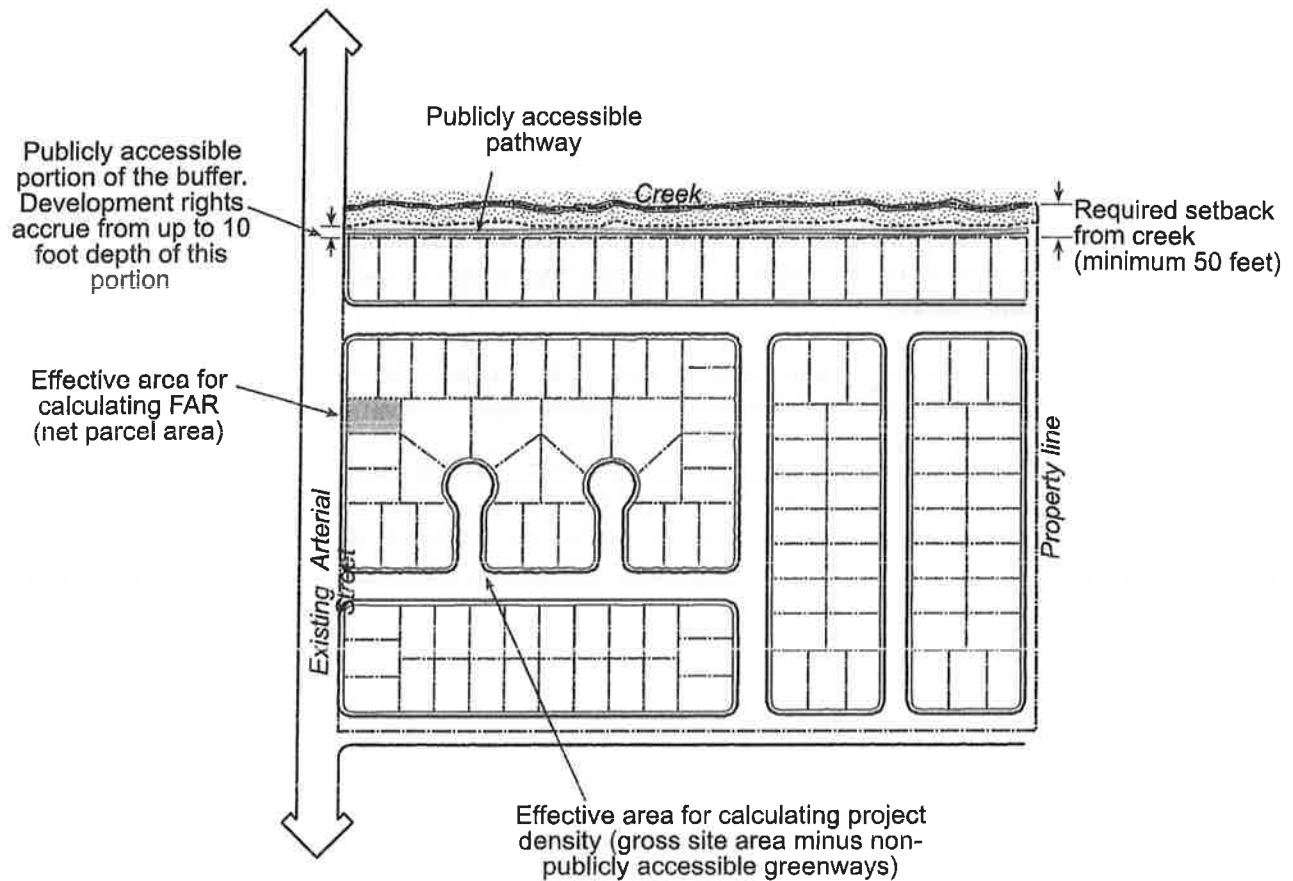
The density/intensity standards do not imply that development projects will be approved only at the maximum density or intensity specified for each use. Zoning regulations consistent with General Plan policies and/or site conditions may reduce development potential within the stated ranges. Examples of conditions that may limit attainment of the maximum densities/intensities include, but are not limited to:

- Development standards established in the Zoning Ordinance (such as for heights and setbacks, or minimum habitable space) may limit building size;

- The Zoning Ordinance and the Zoning Map may break down a single General Plan land use classification into two or more districts with intermediate maximums; and
- The Zoning Ordinance may establish intermediate maximum densities/intensities, with attainment of the maximum in the General Plan subject to specific performance, design, or other criteria.

In addition, policies for specific areas or sites in the General Plan may restrict development intensities to less than what may otherwise be permitted under a specific land use classification.

Gross density standards and assumed averages for residential categories are listed in Table 2.2-1. Design standards specified in the Community Design Element and/or the Zoning Ordinance should also be consulted in addition to the density/intensity standards in this element. (Rev 03/02)



*Figure 2.2-2*  
Residential Density and  
FAR Calculation (illustrative)

## **Classification System**

The classifications in this section represent adopted City policy. They are meant to be broad enough to give the City flexibility in implementing City policy, but clear enough to provide sufficient direction to carry out the General Plan. The City's Zoning Ordinance contains more detailed provisions and standards to implement these classifications. More than one zoning district may be consistent with a single General Plan land use classification.

### **Residential**

Four residential land use classifications are established to provide for development of a full range of housing types (mixed-use classifications that permit residential uses are included later in this section). Densities are stated as the number of housing units per gross acre of developable land, provided that at least one housing unit may be built on each existing legal parcel designated for residential use.

Development would be required within the density range (both maximum and minimum) stipulated in the classification. Second units permitted by local regulation and State-mandated density bonuses for provision of affordable housing are in addition to densities otherwise permitted in each of the residential land use classifications.

Assumed average densities listed are used to calculate probable housing unit and population holding capacity. Neither the averages nor the totals constitute General Plan policy. Population densities corresponding to the housing unit densities can be obtained by multiplying each housing unit by 2.62, the average projected Rohnert Park household size in 2020, according to the Association of Bay Area Governments' (ABAG) Projections '98.

#### **Rural Estate Residential**

Single-family detached residential development at densities of 2.0 housing units per gross acre or less. This classification is intended for three areas: Canon Manor, Southeast Specific Plan Area and at designated locations at the city's ultimate physical edge on the eastside to provide transition between urban and open space uses. The Zoning Ordinance may split this classification into two categories: Rural Residential, to be applied to the Canon Manor, and Estate Residential, which would be applied to the Southeast Specific Plan Area and other areas with this designation.

#### **Low Density**

Single-family residential development at density of 4.0 to 6.0 units per gross acre. Typical lots would be 6,000 square feet, but the minimum would be 5,000 square feet, and the Zoning Ordinance may permit smaller lots (4,500 square feet) for projects that use features such as clustering and common open space that may result in somewhat smaller lots, but increased community-wide open space. This classification is mainly intended for detached single-family dwellings, but the Zoning Ordinance may permit attached single-family units in selected or all areas, provided each unit has ground-floor living area and private outdoor open space. The Zoning Ordinance may include a separate district for mobile home subdivisions or zero-lot-line developments.

### **Medium Density**

Housing at densities from 6.1 to 12.0 units per gross acre. Dwelling types may include attached or detached single-family housing. The Zoning Ordinance may reserve some areas designated as Medium Density for detached (zero-lot-line or other) single-family residential development. Multifamily housing type is not permitted. Side-by-side duplexes not separated by a property line or without individual heating systems are also permitted, provided they are similar in appearance to single family structures.

### **High Density**

Residential development at densities ranging from 12.1 to 30.0 units per gross acre. This designation would permit a wide range of housing types, ranging from single-family attached to multifamily and may include other housing types identified within a Specific Plan, and is intended for specific areas where higher densities may be appropriate.

### **Commercial**

This designation is intended to provide sites for retail areas containing a wide variety of businesses, including: retail stores, eating and drinking establishments, commercial recreation, service stations, automobile sales and repair services, financial, business and personal services, hotels and motels, and educational and social services. In order to provide for the housing anticipated in the Housing Element, and provide for internal consistency between the Land Use Element and the Housing Element, residential uses may be conditionally permitted. Maximum permitted FAR is 1.5 for hotels and 0.4 for all other uses. Letter designation on the General Plan Diagram may limit the type of commercial uses in certain districts, as follows:

- *N (Neighborhood)*. Stores, personal service establishments, offices, financial businesses, and restaurants and cafes that serve the everyday needs of the immediate neighborhood. Department or big-box stores are not permitted, and the Zoning Ordinance may place limitations on automotive (for example, gas stations, auto sales and repair) and drive-through establishments.
- *R (Regional)*. Shopping centers that typically include department stores or big-box stores, which attract consumers from outside the city. Neighborhood-oriented commercial uses may be limited within this district.

(Rev. 03/02)

### **Office**

This designation is intended to provide sites for administrative, financial, business, professional, medical and public offices, and support commercial uses. Limits on retail activities in the district will be specified in the Zoning Ordinance. The Zoning Ordinance may permit hospitals, extended care and other similar facilities in specific locations. The maximum FAR is 1.0.

## **Industrial**

This designation accommodates campus-like environments for corporate headquarters, research and development facilities, offices, light manufacturing and assembly, industrial processing, general service, warehousing, storage and distribution, and service commercial uses. Retail is permitted as an ancillary use only. Maximum FAR is 0.5, but discretionary increases may be permitted up to a total FAR of 1.0, subject to review and approval for development meeting specific standards included in the Zoning Ordinance.

## **Mixed-Use**

This designation accommodates a variety of compatible businesses, stores, institutions, service organizations, and residences in a pedestrian-oriented setting. Allowable uses include multifamily residences, retail shops, financial, business and personal services, and restaurants. Automotive (for example, motor vehicle sales, motor vehicle part sales, and gasoline stations) and drive-through establishments are not permitted, but may be allowed within Planned Development and Specific Plan areas if the governing provisions for such areas expressly provide otherwise. Plan policies and/or the Zoning Ordinance may require certain uses – such as ground-level retail – in some or all portions of a site with this designation.

In general, the maximum FAR for developments with a non-residential mix of uses is 1.5 and for residential and non-residential uses combined is 2.0; however, in Planned Developments and Specific Plan areas, limitations on maximum FAR shall be as set forth in the applicable zoning district. Separate residential density limitations are not established; however, minimum unit size requirements established in the Zoning Ordinance will result in maximum density limitations. In addition, limitations on the size and location of parking, coupled with building orientation and design standards, as specified in Chapter 3: Community Design and/or the Zoning Ordinance will ensure that a pedestrian-oriented environment is created. (Rev. 08/10)

Areas on the General Plan Diagram that are striped with two different colors are not considered mixed use, which only applies to the areas with the Mixed Use designation.

## **Public/Institutional**

To provide for schools, government offices, transit sites, and other facilities that have a unique public character, as well as Sonoma State University. Religious facilities are not called out separately on the General Plan Diagram, although they would be permitted in this designation as well as other residential and commercial districts; these facilities may or may not be specifically delineated on the Zoning Map.

## **Public/Institutional/Medium Density Residential**

This designation shown as a striped area on the General Plan Diagram would allow either of the two uses represented by the striping, or a combination of the two (Public/Institutional and Medium Density Residential) consistent with their separate land use classifications.

### **Commercial- R/High Density Residential**

This designation shown as a striped area on the General Plan Diagram would allow either of the two uses represented by the striping, or a combination of the two (Commercial and High Density Residential) consistent with their separate land use classifications.

### **Parks/Recreation**

This designation provides for parks for active and passive recreation, recreation complexes, community fields, public golf courses, stadiums, arboretums, and greenways. Ancillary facilities such as concession stands, clubhouses, and equipment rental are also allowed.

### **Open Space**

Two types of open space designations are included:

#### ***Open Space for Environmental Conservation***

This designation includes sites with environmental and/or safety constraints. Included are riparian corridors, sensitive habitats, and wetlands. For sites entirely within this designation, development is limited to one housing unit per existing legal parcel, provided policies in Chapter 6: Environmental Conservation, as well as protection standards that may be specified in the Zoning Ordinance or elsewhere, are adhered to. For parcels partially within this designation, no development is permitted within the Open Space designated area if other land within the parcel does not have environmental and/or safety constraints. Land area with this designation shall not be used in calculating allowable development. However, for parcels that include creekside buffers, development rights that would result if adjacent land uses were to be extended into a buffer can be transferred for land in the buffer that is directly accessible to the public, subject to a maximum 10-foot depth, on an acre-for-acre basis, to the developable parts of the parcel.

#### ***Open Space for Agriculture and Resource Management***

This designation includes orchards and cropland, grasslands, and very low density rural residential areas, not to exceed one housing unit per 20 or 40 acres, provided that one housing unit may be built on each existing parcel. Agriculture is permitted with fewer restrictions on keeping animals than in the residential classifications. This classification will also accommodate any greenbelts and/or urban buffer areas that may be designated in the future. Greenbelts are open space, park land, and agricultural areas located outside urban areas, as opposed to urban parks located within developed areas.

### **20 Year Urban Growth Boundary**

This is the area within which urban development will be contained over the period 2000 to 2020.

(Rev. 11/00)

## 2.3 GENERAL PLAN BUILDOUT

Table 2.3-1 shows the buildout acreage of the General Plan Diagram. Approximately 1,301 net acres would be developed within the UGB, including infill sites. An additional 50 acres would be developed for community fields outside the UGB. The table breaks out acreage by area of the city: areas inside the 1999 City limits and three areas outside the 1999 City limits, the eastside (north of the SSU campus), Canon Manor and southeast (south of the SSU campus), and the westside (west of Dowdell Avenue). Most areas that are planned for new development are residential in use, totaling about 640 acres. Amendments to the General Plan in 2010 have resulted in the designation of certain developed and undeveloped lands from an industrial designation to mixed use and parks/open space. An additional 550 acres outside the UGB and inside the SOI would be used for parks and open space. Figure 2.3-1 compares land uses in 1999 to those resulting from full buildout of the General Plan.

**Table 2.3-1:**  
**General Plan Buildout: Net Acreage of New Development**

	Inside 1999 City Limits	Eastside	Canon Manor & Southeast <sup>4</sup>	Westside	Sonoma Mountain Village
Residential					
Estate	0	60	204	0	0 <sup>3</sup>
Low Density	0	150	64	0	0 <sup>3</sup>
Medium Density	0	90	27	0	0 <sup>3</sup>
High Density	0	20	0	0	0 <sup>3</sup>
Mixed Use	20	30	7	50	147
Commercial	40	0	0	54 <sup>1</sup>	0 <sup>3</sup>
Industrial	120	0	0	15	0 <sup>3</sup>
Office	10	0	0	0	0 <sup>3</sup>
Public/Institutional	0	10	0	0	1
Parks/Open Space <sup>2</sup>	2	155	17	5	27
Total	192	495	319	124	175

1. Includes 24 acres in the Wilfred/Dowdell specific plan area.

2. Includes neighborhood parks, linear parks, community fields, and creek corridors. The community fields (approximately 50 acres), are located inside the Sphere of Influence, but outside the Urban Growth Boundary.

3. Various residential, commercial, office, and industrial uses are proposed to be integrated throughout the Sonoma Mountain Village Planned Development, and such uses are therefore collectively reflected as mixed use in this Table.

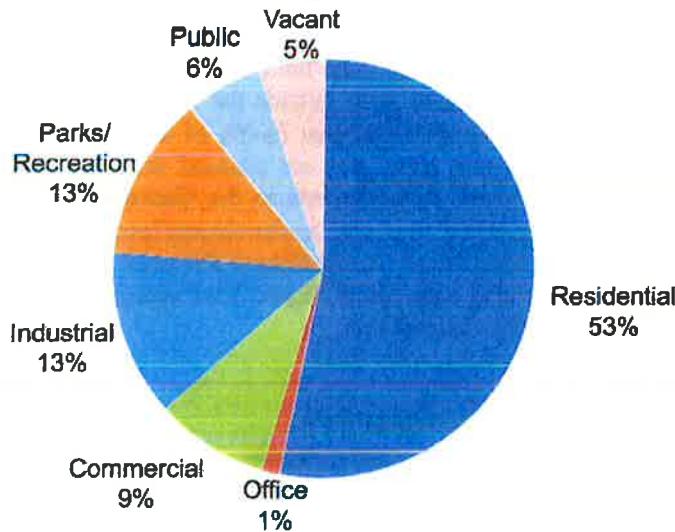
4. Assumes Canon Manor includes 188 acres of Estate Residential, 42 acres of Low Density Residential and 9 acres of Parks/Open Space.

Note: This table is for informational purposes only, and does not represent adopted City policy related to buildout. Total buildout of the General Plan is neither anticipated by nor specified in the General Plan.

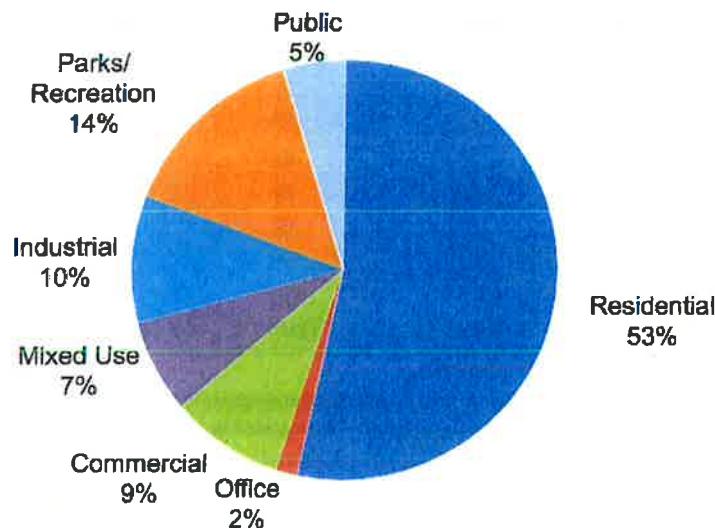
Source: Dyett & Bhatia

(Rev. 9/14)

Figure 2.3-1 Land Uses: 1999 vs. Buildout<sup>1</sup>



Inside City Limits, 1999



Buildout

(Rev. 08/10)

1. Acreages do not include streets.

2. Parks/Recreation acreage includes the 50-acre community fields.

Source: Dyett & Bhatia

Table 2.3-2 shows the total number of housing units estimated at buildout of all General Plan policies.

**Table 2.3-2:**  
**Estimated Housing Units at Buildout**

<b>Existing Units</b>	
Inside 1999 City Limits	15,430
Canon Manor	110
Subtotal	15,540
<b>New Units</b>	
Inside 1999 City Limits	1,142
Eastside	2,440
Westside	400
Canon Manor and Southeast	950
Subtotal	4,932
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>20,472</b>

*Note: This table is for informational purposes only, and does not represent adopted City policy related to buildout. Total buildout of the General Plan is neither anticipated by nor specified in the General Plan. These figures do not include second residential units and reflect anticipated 55% buildout with Sonoma Mountain Village through 2020.*

Source: Dyett & Bhatia

(Rev. 09/14)

Table 2.3-3 summarizes the buildout population and employment under the General Plan. Population and employment are based on estimates of housing units and non-residential building floor area, which are derived from the acreage estimates in Table 2.3-1.

Population is expected to increase at an average annual rate of 1.0 percent between 1999 and 2020. Approximately 10,322 residents will be added to the city, reaching a total buildout population of approximately 51,332. Whereas, jobs are planned to increase at a yearly rate of 1.9 percent under the General Plan, reaching a total buildout of 29,479 jobs. Because jobs will increase at a faster rate than population, the ratio of jobs to employed residents is expected to increase from 1.04 to 1.22.

**Table 2.3-3:**  
**General Plan Buildout: Population and Jobs<sup>1</sup>**

	<i>Estimated 1999</i>	<i>1999- Increase to Buildout</i>	<i>Buildout</i>
<b>Population</b>			
Total	41,000	10,332	51,332 <sup>4</sup>
Annual Growth Rate	-	1.0%	
Housing Units	15,540 <sup>2</sup>	5,382	20,922
<b>Jobs</b>			
Total	21,900	7,579	29,479
Annual Growth Rate		1.9%	
Building Area <sup>3</sup> (s.f.)	n.a.	4,593,469	n.a.
Employed Residents	21,200	4,777	25,977
Jobs/Employed Residents	1.04		1.14

*n.a. – not available*

*s.f. – square feet*

1. *Buildout estimates do not include on-campus population or employment for SSU.*

2. *California Department of Finance, Official State Estimates (January 1999) for Rohnert Park and estimate for Canon Manor; includes 1,466 mobile home units*

3. *Includes commercial, industrial, office, and mixed-use development. Also, includes development in the City Center and Wilfred-Dowdell Specific Plan Area and 55% of the 825,307 non-residential s.f. and 2,541,00 residential s.f. within the Mixed Use designation at Sonoma Mountain Village Planned Development.*

4. *Assumes 1999 group quarters population of 660 to stay the same at buildout. Thus, at buildout, the household population will be 49,740 (50,400-660)*

*Note: This table is for informational purposes only, and does not represent adopted City policy related to buildout. Total buildout of the General Plan is neither anticipated by nor specified in the General Plan. Figures above reflect anticipated 55% buildout with Sonoma Mountain Village through 2020.*

Source: Dyett & Bhatia

(Rev. 08/10)

## **2.4 LAND USE GOALS AND POLICIES**

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### **GOALS: LAND USE**

- LU-A Maintain a compact urban form, with a defined urban growth boundary and urban development intensities in land designated for urban uses. Work with other agencies to ensure that land surrounding the city is maintained in open space.
- LU-B Provide soft urban edges and ensure that designated intensities provide gradual transition to open space at the city edges.
- LU-C Promote a balanced land use program and increase the ability of people to live and work in the city.
- LU-D Provide for concentrations of activity and mixed-use and pedestrian-oriented development in selected areas.
- LU-E Encourage development of the City Center as a mixed-use activity center with a range of commercial, residential, and civic uses.
- LU-F Create a new mixed-use University District north of Sonoma State University that would draw visitors, serve as a destination point for the City, offer a wide mix of residential and employment opportunities, and foster close physical and visual relationship between the campus and the rest of the City.
- LU-G Require preparation of specific plans for strategic new growth areas with complex land use programs.
- LU-H Maintain land use patterns that maximize residents' accessibility to parks, open space, and neighborhood shopping centers.
- LU-I Provide a range of housing types in type and price, including large-lot homes and housing oriented to students. Provide a variety of housing in all neighborhoods and reserve sites, where appropriate, for housing types that would ensure that Rohnert Park remains an inclusive, community.
- LU-J Continue to maintain efficient land use patterns and ensure that infill development maintains the scale and character of established neighborhoods.
- LU-K Promote a diverse range of jobs within the city.
- LU-L Establish Central Rohnert Park as a complete community, with distinctive mixed-use areas and place, by:
- Promoting high-quality, compact infill growth that enhances the character of existing neighborhoods, complements the identity of subareas, and improves the bike, pedestrian, and transit orientation.
  - Encouraging a variety in new housing development to serve the diverse segments of the community, including students, working professionals, families, and senior citizens.
  - Supporting Central Rohnert Park as a thriving business and employment district.

## POLICIES: LAND USE

The first set of policies in this section addresses the city as a whole, and then policies for Specific Plan areas and other specific areas follow.

*For community design policies, see Chapter 3: Community Design.*

### Use Classifications and Land Use Program

LU-1 Update the City's Zoning Ordinance and Subdivision Regulations contained in the Municipal Code for consistency with the General Plan, including the General Plan Diagram.

*A complete revision of the Zoning Ordinance will be necessary, including, but not limited to:*

- *Establishment of new base districts, consistent with the land use classifications in the General Plan;*
- *Establishment of new overlay districts for environmental protection and review processes and base, overlay, or specific plan districts for mixed-use areas;*
- *New development regulations that reflect policy direction contained throughout the General Plan, including design standards in the Community Design Element.*

LU-1A At the time of updating the Zoning Ordinance and the Zoning Map, examine, and update where necessary, the General Plan Diagram and/or the Zoning designation for parcels located within areas of existing development.

*The City's previous (as of 2000) Zoning Ordinance allowed alternate land uses in given zoning districts with the approval of a use permit. For example, commercial uses were allowed on land designated for industrial use along Commerce Boulevard and Redwood Drive. This General Plan anticipates that the Zoning Ordinance will be revised including identification of new base zoning districts. It may be necessary to refine the General Plan Diagram and/or Zoning designations in order to implement the goals and policies in this General Plan and ensure that the Zoning Ordinance that is consistent with and implements this General Plan.*

LU-2 Require sites designated as Mixed Use—University District, City Center, Southwest Shopping Center, and near Bodway Parkway/Valley House Road—to be developed with a variety of residential and non-residential uses, in accordance with the delineated land use program for the Specific Plan areas in this chapter.

### Land Use Pattern

#### ***Mixed-use, Commercial, Office, and Industrial Development***

LU-3 Develop the University District as a mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented center.

*Permitted uses are stipulated in the land use classifications in Section 2.2, and specific policies and land use program are included later in this section.*

- LU-4 Develop the City Center and the Sonoma Mountain Village Planned Development as mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented areas.

*Permitted uses are stipulated in the land use classifications in Section 2.2.*

- LU-5 Encourage development of the northwest growth area along Wilfred Avenue and on the area designated as Mixed Use on Bodway Parkway, south of Canon Manor, as mixed-use centers (that is, with different uses at different levels in a building), while permitting single- or multi-use (that is more than one use on the site, but in separate buildings) development.

*Encouragement for mixed-use development is built into the General Plan Land Use Classification system, which permits an FAR of 2.0 for mixed-use development that include residential uses, and FAR of 1.5 for projects with a non-residential mix (such as retail and offices). Projects with single use buildings would be subject to the FAR for these individual uses, as included in Section 2.2, which are lower than the FARs stipulated for mixed-use developments. Further incentives would result from reduced parking requirements for mixed-use development that may be included in the City's Zoning Ordinance.*

- LU-6 Locate new Medium and High Density Residential development adjacent to parks, creekways or other open space, in order to maximize residents' access to recreational uses, or adjacent to a Mixed Use or Neighborhood Commercial Center, to maximize access to services.

- LU-7 Encourage new neighborhood commercial facilities and supermarkets to be located to maximize accessibility to all residential areas.

*The intent is to ensure that convenience shopping facilities such as supermarkets and drugstores are located close to where people live and facilitate access to these on foot or bicycles. Also, because Rohnert Park's residential population can support only a limited number of supermarkets, this policy will encourage dispersion of supermarkets rather than their clustering in a few locations.*

### ***Residential Development***

- LU-8 Require that residential development projects comply not only with the stipulated maximum density for the range, but the minimum density as well.

*Because of limited land supply, it is vital that minimum residential densities are adhered to for achieving General Plan buildout. Maintaining minimum densities is critical not only to achieve the intent of the General Plan Diagram and a balance and variety of housing types, but also to foster a compact urban form, and ensure that services, such as transit, can be provided and access to facilities is maintained. This policy would also mean, as an example, that approval of a residential project at a Low Density Residential range on a site designated Medium Density Residential will require an amendment to the General Plan Diagram.*

- LU-9 Ensure that the Zoning Ordinance provides for:

- A 5,000 square-foot minimum lot area for areas designated Low Density Residential on the General Plan Diagram.

*The Zoning Ordinance may permit lots as small as 4,500 square feet in selected areas and under specific conditions.*

- Development standards that permit zero-lot line attached or detached single-family dwellings on sites designated for medium or higher densities in the General Plan; and
- Development standards that do not discourage provision of more local streets.

*While General stipulations of gross (as opposed to net) should take out any disincentives to providing more through streets, minimum lot-size standards in the Zoning Ordinance should be attainable in residential projects that provide through streets every 400 to 500 feet.*

LU-10 As part of the Zoning Ordinance, establish the following density bonuses for residential projects:

- Up to 25 percent bonus for projects meeting State-criteria for low- and very-low income housing.

*According to the California Government Code Section 65915, this density bonus shall be applicable to projects with five or more units, when a developer of housing agrees or proposes to construct at least (1) 20 percent of the total units of a housing development for very low income households, as defined in Section 50079.5 of the Health and Safety Code, or (2) 10 percent of the total units of a housing development for very low income households, as defined in Section 50105 of the Health and Safety Code, or (3) 50 percent of the total dwelling units of a housing development for qualifying residents, as defined in Section 51.3 of the Civil Code. Other provision of the Government Code, such as those relating to affordability, shall also apply.*

- 10 percent bonus, upon discretionary approval only, and only for projects undertaking elective off-site improvements (such as streetscape improvements) that further the City's community design and/or open space objectives. This bonus shall not be combinable with affordable housing bonus. Off-site improvements directly resulting from a project's impacts, as specified in the Zoning Ordinance, may still be required; the bonus is for improvements that go beyond the required minimum.

### **Specific Plan, Planned Development, and Other Areas**

*The new growth areas of the City have been divided into five specific plan areas – Northwest, Northeast, University District, Canon Manor, and Southeast; and two planned development areas – Sonoma Mountain Village and Stadium Area. Policies have been developed that pertain to the individual specific plan/planned development areas, as well as for the City Center area, for which a Concept Plan exists. Boundaries for specific plan/planned development areas are demarcated in Figure 2.4-1. For policies related to design issues, please see Chapter 3: Community Design.*

LU-10A Coordinate the adoption of each specific plan and planned development in a manner that provides for the systematic implementation of the General Plan, as is consistent with the growth management and public facilities goals and policies of this General Plan. In order to carry out this policy, the City Council may elect to adopt one specific plan and/or planned development at a time, determine priorities for the adoption of each specific

plan/planned development, initiate the preparation of a specific plan and/or planned development, or otherwise take action to ensure that the adoption of specific plans and planned developments adhere to the growth management and public facilities goals and policies of this General Plan.

Require that all specific plans and planned developments prepared pursuant to this General Plan include the following components:

- A land use program as specified for each Specific Plan and Planned Development area in the General Plan, including the maximum and minimum development for each land use type; and
- A detailed traffic study, prepared by a City-approved traffic/transportation planner, and reasonable mitigation measures to mitigate traffic impacts resulting from the development; and
- The proposed location and capacity of major infrastructure components, including wells, sewage, water, drainage, solid waste, disposal, energy, and other essential facilities proposed to be located within the area covered by the Specific Plan/Planned Development; and

*Policy GM-9 also requires preparation of a Public Facilities Financing Plan.*

- A site-specific biological assessment of wetlands, habitat areas, and creeksides by a City-approved biologist and a program for conservation/mitigation to the extent feasible; and
- Survey for California tiger salamander, both in breeding habitat and adjacent upland estivation habitat, with appropriate mitigation, including avoidance and minimization measures; and
- Program for conservation of the natural resources along creeks and standards for the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources where applicable; and
- Park and open space in accordance with the General Plan designation, including access and connections to the bicycle system shown in Figure 4-3; and
- Hydrology and drainage for the area, with a goal to minimize runoff, and drainage practices to be incorporated as part of individual projects to meet the the Specific Plan/Planned Development objectives; and
- Plan to prevent stormwater pollution, including measures to be incorporated as part of development on individual sites; and
- Demonstration of adequate water supply.

*This demonstration of adequacy should be consistent with policies PF-11 through PF-14, relating to water supply.*

LU-10B Include within each Specific Plan and Planned Development, standards and criteria by which development will be phased and standards for the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources.

- LU-10C Permit hospitals, schools, police and fire stations, parks and other facilities that serve a vital public interest, subject to findings and necessary environmental review, to be located in a Specific Plan/Planned Development area, even if a Specific Plan or Planned Development for the area has not been adopted.
- LU-10D As part of development of Specific Plans and Planned Developments, through site planning and other techniques, ensure adequate transitions between incompatible uses, while promoting the General Plan intent of integrated development of compatible uscs.

#### ***Canon Manor Specific Plan Area***

- LU-11 Require preparation of a Specific Plan prior to approval of any development in Canon Manor, with the amount of development controlled by the underlying land use designations.
- LU-12 Maintain existing uses in Canon Manor north of Alice Drive. Introduce Low Density Residential uses south of Alice Drive, where few lots have been developed (see Figure 2.2-1: General Plan Diagram).
- LU-13A Ensure that uses along Petaluma Hill Road are limited to Open Space, Park and Recreation, or Rural Estate Residential only.

*Uses shown on the General Plan Diagram are consistent with this policy. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that any future changes to the General Plan Diagram be consistent with the policy.*

- LU-13B As part of the preparation of the Canon Manor Specific Plan, develop standards for public facilities that are appropriate for the area.

#### ***University District Specific Plan Area***

- LU-14 Require preparation of a Specific Plan prior to approval of any development in the University District.
- LU-15 Ensure that land uses are dispersed in accordance with the following principles (see also Figure 2.2-1):

- A 10-30 acre Mixed Use Commercial Center, located directly north of the Green Music Center and the northeasterly vehicle entry to Sonoma State University;
- A minimum 5-12 acre “commercial core” as part of the Mixed Use Commercial Center. This core will have continuous ground level retail, personal services, eating and drinking establishments, and other similar operations that are pedestrian oriented, as defined by the University District Specific Plan Development Standards and in the Design Guidelines. Residential, office, and other compatible uses shall be permitted on upper floors. This Mixed Use Commercial Center shall be visible and accessible from Rohnert Park Expressway and, for pedestrian safety and traffic considerations, be located only north of the Expressway.
- No retail uses outside of the “commercial core.”
- The intent is to promote a concentration of activity and continuity of retail uses.
- A private plaza at the center of the Mixed Use Commercial Center.

*See also Chapter 3: Community Design for design policies related to this.*

- A linear parkway configured to provide a pedestrian/vehicular/bicycle link to connect Rohnert Park Expressway and Keiser Avenue..

*See Chapter 3: Community Design for policies related to design of the linear parkway.*

- Approximately 5 to 15 acres of High Density Residential development.
- A mix of residential density development to complement the Mixed Use Commercial Center uses.
- Medium Density, High Density, and Mixed Use Residential to provide a variety of housing types along Rohnert Park Expressway.
- Consistent with General Plan Policy CD-7, minimize disruption of existing views by adhering to the 60' setbacks between Vast Oak structures and existing structures at the Medical Center and Kisco (Oakview Terrace) properties. Along the boundaries between Redwood Park Estates and the Vast Oak Property, and between the J Section and the UD LLC Property, provide a minimum of a 100' setback between structures as well as a single-story requirement for those structures immediately adjacent to this structural buffer. When the structural buffer between structures along Redwood Park Estates and the J Section exceeds 150', then the requirement for the single story structures at Vast Oak and UD LLC is waived as the visual goals of the General Plan are achieved through the increased structural buffer width. The Vast Oak development that is adjacent to the Kisco / Oakview Terrace and Medical Center development is allowed to be three stories in height, as long as there remains the 60' building structure separation

- LU-16 Ensure that the land use program is within the ranges indicated on Table 2.4-1, including the minimum and maximum number of units for each residential land use classification.

**Table 2.4-1: Land Use Program: University District Specific Plan Area**

	Gross Acreage <sup>1</sup>	Housing Units Minimum-Maximum	Building Area (1,000 s.f.) Minimum-Maximum
Rural Estate Residential	10-15	20-26	-
Low Density Residential	50-75	200-410	-
Medium Density Residential	55-100	600-900	-
High Density Residential	5-15	200-500	-
Mixed Use	10-30	0-150	100
Parks	10-20	-	-
Public/Institutional	5-20	-	-
Open Space and Buffers	50-70	-	-
Total	300	1,400-1,645	Minimum of 100

<sup>1</sup>. Excludes acreage for the Rohnert Park Expressway between the easterly City limits and Petaluma Hill Road, and Keiser Avenue.  
(Rev. 04/14)

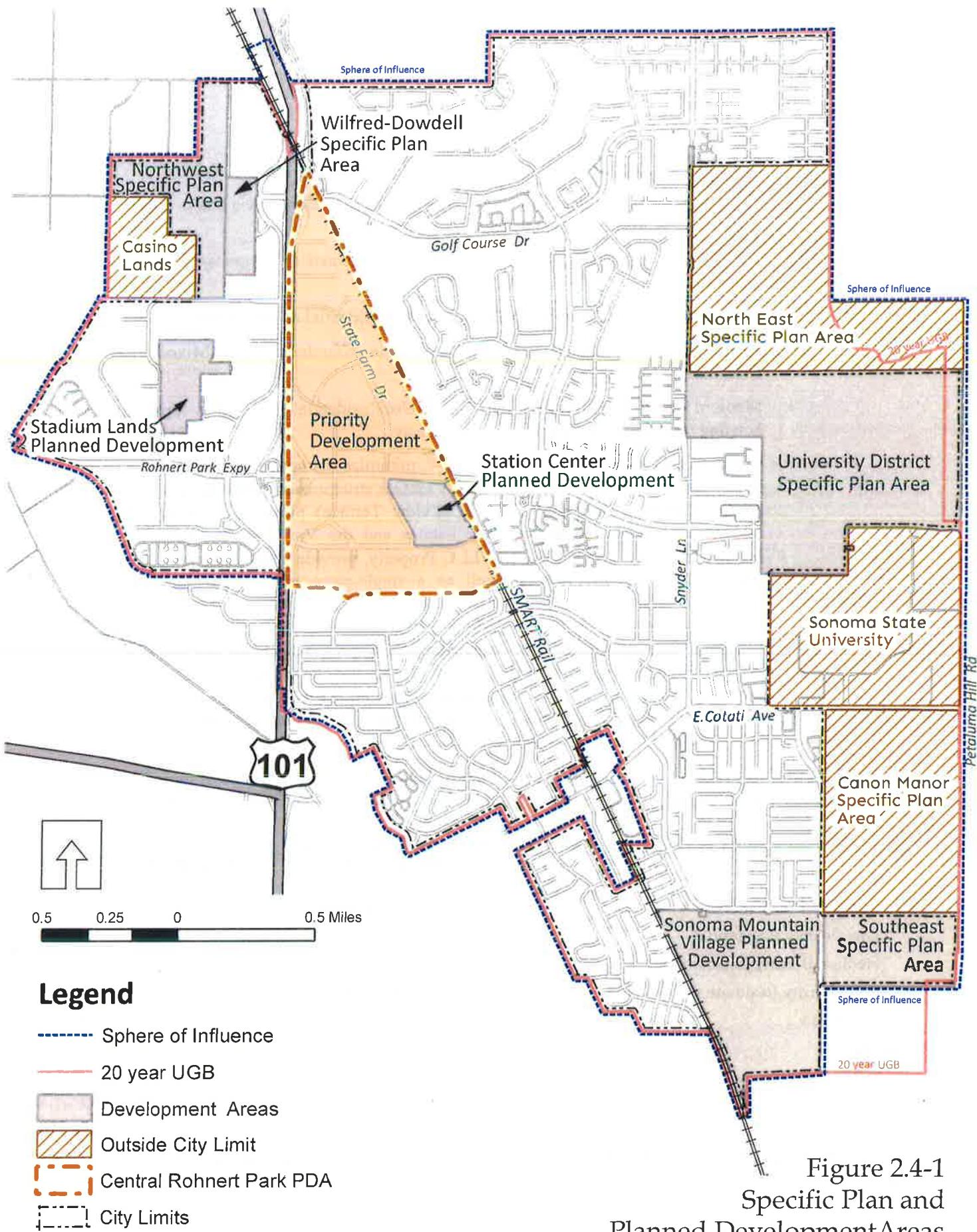


Figure 2.4-1  
Specific Plan and  
Planned Development Areas

Revised 01/25/17

- LU-17 As part of the project approval process, require development of the non-residential component of the land use program as a condition of residential development, with phasing and intermediate check points to ensure that land uses are balanced at intermediate stages in the development process.
- LU-18 Require the Specific Plan to incorporate a plan for pedestrian, bicycle, and auto connections from Rohnert Park Expressway across Copeland Creek and into SSU to integrate the University with the mixed-use area.

### ***Northwest Specific Plan Area***

- LU-19 Require preparation of a Specific Plan prior to approval of any development in the Northwest Area.
- LU-20 Ensure that the Specific Plan is in accordance with the development range outlined in Table 2.4-2:

**Table 2.4-2:  
Land Use Program: Northwest Specific Plan Area**

	<i>Gross Acreage</i>	<i>Housing Units Minimum-Maximum</i>	<i>Non-residential Building Area (1,000 s.f.) Minimum-Maximum</i>
Commercial	20-30	-	450-480
Industrial	5-15	-	200-220
Mixed Use	40-50	300-400 units 100 hotel rooms	50-60
Parks	2-5		200-220
Total	100	300-400 units 100 hotel rooms	900-980

(Rev 09/14)

- LU-21 As part of land use planning for the area, ensure that:

- Dowdell Avenue is not fronted by residential uses;
- The western fringe of the site fronted by residential uses, with maximum views of the surrounding open space from individual units. Residential uses can also be located in the interior of the area adjacent or in mix with the designated Commercial uses;
- Commercial and industrial developments provide adequate transition to residential areas, and industrial developments incorporate a landscaped visual buffer at the residential edges; and
- A minimum of 2 to 5 acres of parkland is provided, either in the Specific Plan area, or immediately adjacent open space areas to the west.

### **Southeast Specific Plan Area**

- LU-22 Require preparation of a Specific Plan prior to approval of any development in the southeast area.

*The Specific Plan shall include a neighborhood park approximately five to eight acres in size, as specified in OS-12. Development shall be in accordance with the development program outlined in Table 2.4-3.*

**Table 2.4-3:**

**Land Use Program: Southeast Specific Plan Area**

	Approx. Gross Acreage	Approx. Housing Units	Approx. Non-residential Building Area (1,000 s.f.)
Rural / Estate Residential	15-20	25-30	
Low Density Residential	20-22	125-130	
Medium Density Residential	26-29	230-240	
Mixed-Use Development	5-10	80-90	10
Industrial	92-104		Governed by underlying FAR for Industrial Uses (Table 2.2-1)
Public/Institutional	<1		
Parks	5-8		
Total	80	475 Max.	10

(Rev. 12/10)

- LU-23 Permit neighborhood-oriented retail, offices, financial, business and personal services, and other similar neighborhood-compatible uses.

- LU-24 Permit a maximum FAR of 0.4 for retail-only development, and 1.0 for mixed use development.

*Only land devoted to non-residential uses shall be counted towards establishing the non-residential FAR requirements.*

- LU-25 Allow residential uses in the mixed use area, as long as they do not front Bodway Parkway.

- LU-26 Allow the Mixed Use area to be developed with a mix of residential and commercial uses, or with either one of those uses without the other.

### **Northeast Specific Plan Area**

- LU-27 Require preparation of a Specific Plan prior to approval of any development in the Northeast area.

- LU-28 Require that development in the Northeast Specific Plan area be in accordance with the development program outlined in Table 2.4-4.

**Table 2.4-4:**  
**Land Use Program: Northeast Specific Plan Area**

	<i>Gross Acreage</i>	<i>Housing Units Minimum-Maximum</i>
Rural / Estate Residential	25-30	40-60
Low Density Residential	110-125	575-635
Medium Density Residential	10-14	100-140
High Density Residential	11-14	200-250
Parks	12	
Total	170	915-1,085

(Rev. 10/02)

LU-29 Ensure that the Northeast Specific Plan incorporate the following features:

- An approximately 8-acre park located southeast of Snyder Lane/Eleanor Road directly adjacent to either Snyder Lane or the Five Creek greenway;
- Greenway along Five Creek;
- One-way couplet along the greenway, with on-street parking on both sides of each one-way street;
- Medium and High Density Residential grouped along the Five Creek greenway or the 8-acre park, with access from the couplet. Medium and High Density Residential development shall be at least 200 feet away from the edge of the Snyder Lane right-of-way;
- 100-foot wide buffer or parkway on the south side of G Section; and
- Linear park along the eastside of Snyder Lane.

*See policy CD-7 that explains this park in detail.*

### ***City Center***

LU-30 Prepare and adopt a City Center Concept Plan to guide development and redevelopment in the City Center area.

*The City Center area is generally defined by Hinebaugh Creek on the north, the railroad tracks to the east, the Rohnert Park Expressway to the south, and U.S. Highway 101 to the west. The City Center would be an area of mixed land uses including civic buildings, commercial businesses, office uses, and multifamily housing. It would include approximately 180 housing units.*

(Rev. 11/00)

LU-31 Allow, but do not require, mixed- or multi-use development.

### ***Wilfred-Dowdell***

LU-32 Ensure development is in accordance with the adopted Specific Plan for the area.

- LU-33 In preparing and adopting the Wilfred-Dowdell Specific Plan, incorporate provisions which ensure integration of land uses and design concepts with the adjacent Northwest Specific Plan area.

***Outside the Urban Growth Boundary***

- LU-34 Areas in the City Planning area, outside the Urban Growth Boundary, should be maintained in agricultural and open space uses consistent with the land use designation in the Sonoma County General Plan.  
(Rev. 11/00)

***Sonoma Mountain Village Planned Development Area***

- LU-35 Require preparation of a Planned Development prior to approval of any development in the Sonoma Mountain Village area.
- LU-36 Ensure that land uses are dispersed in accordance with the provisions of the Sonoma Mountain Village Planned Development Zoning District:
- Encourage infill and redevelopment growth strategies within new neighborhoods.
  - Ensure that zoning provisions will reserve ample space for commercial, industrial, and/or other business-related uses, and require development to enhance economic activity with the Sonoma Mountain Village area through support of business development programs, support of business incubator programs, and mixed-use development.
  - Include a framework of transit, pedestrian, and bicycle systems, both within the Sonoma Mountain Village area and connecting to the surrounding community, that provide alternatives to the automobile.
  - Develop neighborhoods that are compact, pedestrian-oriented and contain mixed-use.
  - Offer a range of housing types and price levels to accommodate diverse ages and incomes.
  - Provide appropriate building densities and land uses within walking distance of transit stops.
  - Provide public, institutional, and commercial activities in neighborhoods rather than isolating them in remote single-use complexes.
  - Distribute a range of open space including parks, squares, and playgrounds within the neighborhood.
  - Require that buildings and landscaping contribute to the physical definition of thoroughfares as civic places.
- LU-37 Ensure that the land use program is within the ranges indicated on Table 2.4-5, including the minimum and maximum number of units for each residential land use classification.

**Table 2.4-5: Land Use Program: Sonoma Mountain Village Planned Development Area**

	<i>Gross Acreage</i>	<i>Housing Units Minimum-Maximum</i>	<i>Building Area (1,000 s.f.) Minimum-Maximum</i>
Mixed Use <sup>1</sup>	147	0-1,694	n.a. <sup>2</sup>
Public/Institutional	1	n.a.	n.a. <sup>2</sup>
Parks/Open Space	27	n.a.	n.a. <sup>2</sup>
Total	175	0-1,694	n.a. <sup>2</sup>

1. Various residential, commercial, office, and industrial uses are proposed to be integrated throughout the Sonoma Mountain Village Planned Development, and such uses are therefore collectively reflected as mixed use in this Table.

2. Due to the broad range of development options permitted in the Sonoma Mountain Village Planned Development, fixing a minimum and maximum building area is undesirable, but shall be subject to the allowances provided in the Sonoma Mountain Village Planned Development Zoning District.

The acreages and housing units in this table reflect buildout of the entire Sonoma Mountain Village Planned Development

Source: Sonoma Mountain Village (Rev. 08/10)

### ***Stadium Lands Planned Development Area***

LU-38 Require preparation of a Planned Development prior to approval of any development in the Stadium Area.

LU-39 Ensure that land uses are dispersed in accordance with the provisions of the Stadium Area Master Plan Planned Development Zoning District:

- Redevelopment of formerly developed industrial and institutional land
- Particular attention shall be given to the interface between the industrial, residential, commercial, and public/institutional land uses.
- Provisions shall be made to ensure complementary transitions between uses through the arrangement between buildings and spaces.
- The arrangement between structures and spaces shall result in a cohesive design among similar land uses.
- Insure that building materials, colors, linkages to sidewalks, parking placement, landscape design, and plant materials complement existing and proposed uses.
- Include proper site design and/or noise attenuating devices to reduce indoor and outdoor noise levels for sensitive receptors.
- Special consideration should be given to memorialize the “Stadium.”

**Table 2.4-6: Land Use Program: Stadium Lands Planned Development Area**

	<i>Gross Acreage</i>	<i>Housing Units Minimum-Maximum</i>	<i>Building Area (1,000 s.f.) Minimum-Maximum</i>
High Density Residential	22.55	Up to 473	None
Commercial – Regional	6.6	None	Up to 300,000 s.f.
Public/Institutional	3.0	None	None
Parks/Open Space	.65	None	None
Total	32.8	Up to 473	Up to 300,000 s.f.

***Central Rohnert Park***

- LU-40 Take advantage of the relatively close proximity and mixed-use character of Central Rohnert Park to support a one-stop destination for the community's shopping, employment, living, and recreational needs.
- LU-41 Support new art and entertainment venues in Central Rohnert Park.
- LU-42 Implement a Regional Commercial Overlay zone to support opportunities for a variety of regional commercial uses in the Triangle Business subarea, particularly within vacant and underused portions of the Triangle Business subarea, fronting U.S. 101.
- LU-43 Implement a Downtown District on both sides of Rohnert Park Expressway and State Farm Drive and encompassing the SMART rail station.
- LU-44 Support creation of a pedestrian-oriented downtown, adjacent to the SMART rail station.
- LU-45 Build on development in the City Center as a civic and cultural destination, with smaller shops and services, mixed-use lofts, and neighborhood-oriented uses.
- LU-46 Promote infill development to activate State Farm Drive, a key roadway connecting Central Rohnert Park.
- LU-47 Support and market available employment parcels within walking distance of the SMART rail line or local transit stop. Connect these centers with bicycle and pedestrian facilities.
- LU-48 Provide transitions to established neighborhood areas by ensuring appropriate setback standards and stepbacks for upper-story levels of multi-story structures, adjacent to residential uses.
- LU-49 Provide a variety of housing types and densities.
- LU-50 Focus the development of new housing in the City Center and Station Center subareas, at densities sufficient to support transit use and with access to employment and community services in the region.
- LU-51 Increase minimum density limits for higher density housing near transit (particularly within one-half mile of the SMART rail station).
- LU-52 Support and encourage the provision of housing to a broad range of income levels, including market-rate and affordable housing.
- LU-53 New development shall be required to comply with the City's inclusionary housing ordinance.
- LU-54 Implement corridor landscape improvements that beautify and improve vehicular, transit, bike, and pedestrian access to businesses within Central Rohnert Park.
- LU-55 Support and market infill development opportunities on vacant and underused sites that can attract small and large tenants and a variety of users.
- LU-56 As new development occurs, provide incentives and assistance to existing small businesses for property improvements that support their vibrancy and viability.

- LU-57 Encourage existing property owners in Central Rohnert Park to upgrade their properties to support new public places and improve the pedestrian orientation and character along the street or retail frontages.
- LU-58 In new development, use site preparation, grading, and construction techniques that prevent contamination and sedimentation of creeks and streams.
- LU-59 Avoid adverse impacts on ecologically sensitive habitat and wildlife in planning, construction, and maintenance of creek corridor paths.
- LU-60 Protect native and heritage trees that meet the definition of a “protected tree” under the City’s Zoning Ordinance.
- LU-61 Plant native vegetation in parks, public areas, and creek open space corridors.
- LU-62 Promote site and building design that improves energy efficiency by designing for natural cooling and passive solar heating. This can be achieved through the addition of building and site development features such as extended eaves, window overhangs, and awnings; tree placement for natural cooling; and orientation of buildings and windows to take advantage of passive solar heating.
- LU-63 Support the use of green or sustainable building materials, including recycled-content materials that are consistent with the style and character of buildings.
- LU-64 New project development will be required to comply with applicable greenhouse gas reduction strategies in the Sonoma County Climate Action Plan and the Rohnert Park Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions Reduction Plan.
- LU-65 Prior to obtaining building permits, projects within Central Rohnert Park will need to be evaluated against the Bay Area Air Quality Management district’s thresholds of significance for project-level impacts and comply with applicable control measures in the Bay Area 2010 Clean Air Plan. Potentially significant GHG impacts will need to be mitigated to a less-than-significant level through alteration of project details or construction methods. Land use policies.

## 2.5 GROWTH MANAGEMENT

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Management and predictability of growth emerged as one of the salient issues that Rohnert Park residents would like the General Plan to address. Based on community workshops held in 1999, the Ad Hoc Oversight Committee established objectives for the General Plan, which included a 20-year UGB and managed and predictable growth (see Chapter 1: Introduction and Overview). Growth management policies are designed to balance competing interests, including the need for additional housing and related development, and the expressed community desires to preserve open space, maintain community character, and ensure adequate public facilities.

Management of growth does not mean curtailing it, but rather structuring it to ensure that it is not haphazard and supports broader planning objectives. As of 2000, Rohnert Park used several conventional growth management tools, including zoning and subdivision regulations and development impact fees. Several other Sonoma County cities have some form of additional growth management or growth control provisions.

The overall amount and location of growth is addressed in the land use policies of this element (see Sections 2.3 and 2.4). This section outlines the framework to phase and pace growth so as to minimize its environmental, social, and fiscal impacts, and ensure concurrency between growth and infrastructure and services. It also outlines policies relating to City boundaries and annexation, and for coordination with other local and regional agencies.

### INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

The City will coordinate with State and County agencies for transportation improvements and water and wastewater services. Caltrans is responsible for improvements to US 101, and the Sonoma County Department of Public Works is currently responsible for Petaluma Hill Road and other county roads. The Sonoma County Water Agency supplies water to the city from the Russian River, and the City of Santa Rosa manages the Subregional Wastewater Disposal System (see Chapter 5: Open Space, Parks, and Public Facilities Element).

### GOALS: GROWTH MANAGEMENT

GM-A Recognize the availability of housing as a vital issue of statewide importance. Cooperate with other local governments and the State in addressing regional housing needs, and balance regional and State considerations with the community's interest in preserving Rohnert Park's quiet, safe, small-town feeling and desire for carefully planned and managed growth.<sup>3</sup>

*Housing is addressed in greater detail in the Housing Element.*

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<sup>3</sup> See Land Use Alternatives and Preferred Plan; May 1999; page 3:

"Based on the input at these forums, it was clear that people don't neatly fit into pre-conceived categories; very few are either vehemently "pro- or anti-growth". Most people understand the inevitability of some growth, however, the great majority favor slow, managed growth that is carefully planned in ways that:

- Maintains a diverse, quiet, safe, small-town, family-friendly feel; ..."

- GM-B Undertake efforts to facilitate provision of housing affordable to low- and very-low income households by exempting affordable housing from any numerical “trigger cap” restrictions.

*Because regional housing needs are escalating the cost of housing, it is vital that provision of affordable housing remains a priority for the City. This policy also clarifies that while affordable housing projects are exempt from “trigger caps”, they are still subject to the other growth management provisions.*

- GM-C Ensure that growth is paced to achieve General Plan buildout over a 20-year period, representing an annual average population growth rate of one percent.

- GM-D Maintain a balance of land uses and a variety of housing types over time.

- GM-E Promote contiguous urban development and maintain a compact form over successive stages of the city’s development.

- GM-F Ensure all new development provides necessary public facilities to support the development.

- GM-G Require all urban development in the Rohnert Park Planning Area to be located within the Urban Growth Boundary; prohibit urban development outside the Urban Growth Boundary.

- GM-H Minimize the impacts—physical, visual, and fiscal—of growth and annexation on existing homes and businesses.

## POLICIES: GROWTH MANAGEMENT

*For policies related to the Community Separators, see Chapter 6: Conservation.*

- GM-1 Prepare and adopt a Growth Management Ordinance that implements policies in this Element.

The Growth Management Ordinance shall establish a detailed program that implements the various policies in this element. Very-low and low-income housing shall be exempted from the numerical limitation provisions of the ordinance.

### Phasing and Pace of Development

- GM-2 A Twenty-Year (Year 2020) Urban Growth Boundary is established in accordance with ballot Measure N (2000) as follows:

#### Section 1. Purpose and Findings.

- 1.1 This measure reaffirms and readopts the City of Rohnert Park’s commitment to planned growth through the designation of an urban growth boundary. This measure establishes the City of Rohnert Park’s Urban Growth Boundary (“UGB”) as depicted on the map shown in Figures 2.2-1 and 2.5-2 as the area within which the City generally projects that development will occur within a specified period. Until June 30, 2020, the UGB shall be changed only by a vote of the people, except

in certain circumstances and according to specific procedures set forth in this measure.

- 1.2 Encouraging a cohesive pattern of urbanization. Adoption of a UGB will encourage a cohesive pattern of urbanization by (1) promoting efficient and orderly growth patterns; (2) supporting stability and certainty in long term planning by advancing the concept of planned growth; and (3) ensuring that lands outside the UGB are not prematurely or unnecessarily converted to urban uses.
- 1.3 Protecting what is unique about Rohnert Park. The City of Rohnert Park is bordered to the east and to the west by unincorporated lands that are dominated by hills, farms, and fields. This unincorporated landscape is enjoyed by the persons who work and live in Rohnert Park and forms a part of the environment of Rohnert Park even though it is outside the city limits. Adoption of a UGB will preserve and protect this aspect of Rohnert Park by requiring urbanization to stop where the unincorporated landscape begins.
- 1.4 This General Plan Amendment is not intended to prevent the City from meeting its obligation under state housing or zoning and planning law. The City's Housing Element, including the sites identified therein for housing, and the programs and activities adopted to promote and encourage the development of housing, will allow the City of Rohnert Park to meet its obligations for the preservation, improvement, and development of housing. This measure establishing a UGB is consistent with the objectives of the City's Housing Element and with the other mandatory elements of the City's General Plan. It is fully expected that the policies and programs in the City's Housing Element, including the sites identified therein for housing, will allow the City of Rohnert Park to meet the requirements of State law to provide housing opportunities for all economic segments of the community. This measure allows the City Council to bring land into the UGB without a public vote for very low and low income housing only, in recognition of the fact that sometimes it is necessary for a local government to take special steps to provide opportunities for very low and low income housing.
- 1.5 The UGB outlines the area within which the City generally projects that development will occur within the next twenty years. However, the General Plan of the City of Rohnert Park Growth Management Policies prohibit growth from commencing, if the necessary public facilities – streets, water, wastewater, solid waste, and parks – are not in place when the growth is completed. In addition, the General Plan of the City of Rohnert Park Specific Plan and Planned Development Policies require that new growth will not be permitted unless and until the specific plan or planned development for the area in which the growth is proposed, has been adopted.

## Section 2. Establishing the Urban Growth Boundary

The following policies shall apply to the Urban Growth Boundary:

- 2.1 No urban development shall be permitted beyond the Urban Growth Boundary.

“Urban development” shall mean development requiring one or more basic municipal services including, but not limited to, water service, sewer, improved storm drainage facilities, fire hydrants and other physical public facilities and services; provided, however, that open space uses, parks, agricultural uses, community fields and golf courses beyond the Urban Growth Boundary that are provided with municipal or public services, shall not be defined as “urban development.”

- 2.2 The Urban Growth Boundary shall be in effect until June 30, 2020.
- 2.3 The Urban Growth Boundary may be amended only by a vote of the people or as provided for in Section 2.4. (Rev. 11/00)
- 2.4 The Urban Growth Boundary may be amended by a majority vote (three affirmative votes) of the City Council under the following circumstances:
  - 2.4.1 Affordable Housing. To comply with state law regarding the provision of housing for low and very-low income families, the City Council may amend the Urban Growth Boundary in order to include within the UGB, lands to be developed primarily (51%) for low and very-low income families provided, however:
    - (a) An amendment to the UGB pursuant to this Section 2.4.1 may not be made earlier than January 1, 2015;
    - (b) No more than 10 acres may be brought into the UGB in any calendar year;
    - (c) If in any year, fewer than 10 acres are brought within the UGB, then the unused increment, up to a maximum of 5 acres, may be brought within the UGB in a subsequent year;
    - (d) Such amendment may be adopted only if the City Council makes each of the following findings:
      - (i) That the land is immediately adjacent to comparably developed areas;
      - (ii) That there is no existing residentially designated land available within the UGB that can feasibly accommodate the proposed development;
      - (iii) That it is not reasonably feasible to accommodate the proposed development by redesignating lands within the UGB for housing;
      - (iv) That there has been an application submitted to provide housing primarily for low and very-low income families, and the applicant has provided substantial evidence that sufficient and adequate capacity is available in all city services and facilities, all school district facilities, and any other relevant public agency facilities, to accommodate the proposed development.

- (v) That the application to provide housing primarily for low and very-low income families is consistent with GM-4 in General Plan 2000.

For purposes of this section, the concept of “feasibility” shall include considerations of market feasibility, environmental feasibility, and other rules and regulations affecting the development of the property.

- 2.4.2 To adjust the UGB exclusively for the purpose of protecting agricultural or open space lands.
- 2.4.3 To add lands exclusively to protect natural resources.
- 2.4.4 To add lands exclusively to be maintained as public parks or public open space.
- 2.4.5 To add lands to provide exclusively for the disposal of treated wastewater and/or sewage treatment and disposal use.
- 2.5 This General Plan Amendment is not intended, and shall not be applied or construed, to authorize the City to exercise its powers in a manner which will take private property for public use without the payment of just compensation. This General Plan Amendment will be interpreted, applied and implemented so as to accomplish its purposes to the maximum permissible extent, by all constitutional means. If the application of this General Plan Amendment to a specific property would take private property for public use without the payment of just compensation (“taking”), then the City Council may take any action necessary to avoid a taking.
- 2.6 This General Plan Amendment is not intended, and shall not apply to any development project that has obtained as of the effective date of Resolution No. 2000-152, a vested right pursuant to state law.

### Section 3. Amending the General Plan to Manage Growth within the Urban Growth Boundary

- 3.1 The UGB establishes the area within which urban development will be contained until the year 2020. This limitation restricts development to lands within the UGB. Such restriction is necessary to implement and to be consistent with the following community goals:
  - 3.1.1 Efficient and orderly growth patterns.
  - 3.1.2 A well-designed mix of residential, commercial, business park, and open space uses, featuring a pedestrian-oriented community focal point with a small town, village-like character.
  - 3.1.3 Stability and certainty in long term planning through planned growth.
  - 3.1.4 Adequate and efficient delivery of public services and facilities.

In order to manage development within the UGB in a manner that is consistent with these community goals, a growth management program shall be adopted that includes each of the following components:

- 3.2.1 An annual standard to determine the number of residential development approvals that are consistent with the goals and policies of the City's General Plan.
- 3.2.2 A requirement to implement the growth management program, including the annual standard in a manner that is consistent with the goals, objectives, obligations and policies of the City's Land Use and Housing Elements.
- 3.2.3 An average approximate one percent (1%) annual population growth rate.
- 3.2.4 An annual review by the City Council to determine the consistency of each of the components of the growth management program with the goals, plans, and policies of the General Plan and State housing, planning, and zoning law.
- 3.2.5 A requirement to coordinate the development in each of the specific plan and planned development areas with the growth management ordinance, if applicable.

Housing that is affordable to very low and low income households shall be exempt from the growth management program.

GM-3 Establish a “trigger cap” on annual residential development approvals with the following characteristics, in order to maintain an average development pace of 225 housing units per year for any three-year period:

- If the combined number of residential development approvals in any two successive calendar years exceeds 560 housing units, and if the development pace for the preceding three-year period has exceeded an average of 225 housing units per year, then a cap on development on the following calendar year will be established (“trigger cap”);

*Based on an average approximate population growth rate of 1%, General Plan buildout would permit an addition of approximately 4,450 housing units over a 20-year period, or an average of approximately 225 housing units per year. The figure 560 represents 125 percent of the two-year average growth of 450 (225 x 2) housing units.*

- The “trigger cap” may be adjusted up or down a maximum of ten (10) percent by the City Council on an annual basis (see GM-4) to accommodate changes in land use program assumptions (for example, vacancy rate factors and household size).
- The “trigger cap” will remain in effect as long as needed to ensure that housing approvals in any consecutive three-year period does not exceed a total of 675 (or an average of 225 per year);
- Housing that is affordable to low- and very-low income households shall not be included in the total housing counts when the trigger cap is in place; and

- The Growth Management Element will include a mechanism to take into account two or more years of no residential approvals.

*The “trigger cap” will help ensure predictable growth. Like annual growth caps, it will help average out growth from year to year, but will allow both the City and the developers greater flexibility in timing for their projects and support predictability. The definition of affordable housing for the purpose of this General Plan shall be consistent with the State definition.*

- GM-4 Undertake an annual policy review of the “trigger cap” and establish priorities for the coming year, including priority development areas and allocation of “trigger cap” to specific housing types and/or densities.

*The annual review shall include, but not be limited to, consideration of the goal of a one percent average annual population growth rate, a balanced land use program, accommodation of the City’s fair-share housing allocations, development patterns and growth area priorities, infrastructure availability, and land use program assumptions (for example, vacancy rate factors and household size). The number of permitted housing units under the “trigger cap” shall be established annually by the City Council within the ten (10) percent range permitted in GM-3.*

- GM-5 In determining preference for allocation of development approval in case demand for residential approvals exceeds availability, ensure that projects with affordable housing components that go beyond the minimum receive adequate preference.

*Policy GM-3 exempts housing affordable to low- and very-low income households from the trigger cap. This policy would ensure that housing projects that have both market rate and affordable components receive adequate preference (as one of the several criteria) over projects that do not have any affordable housing component.*

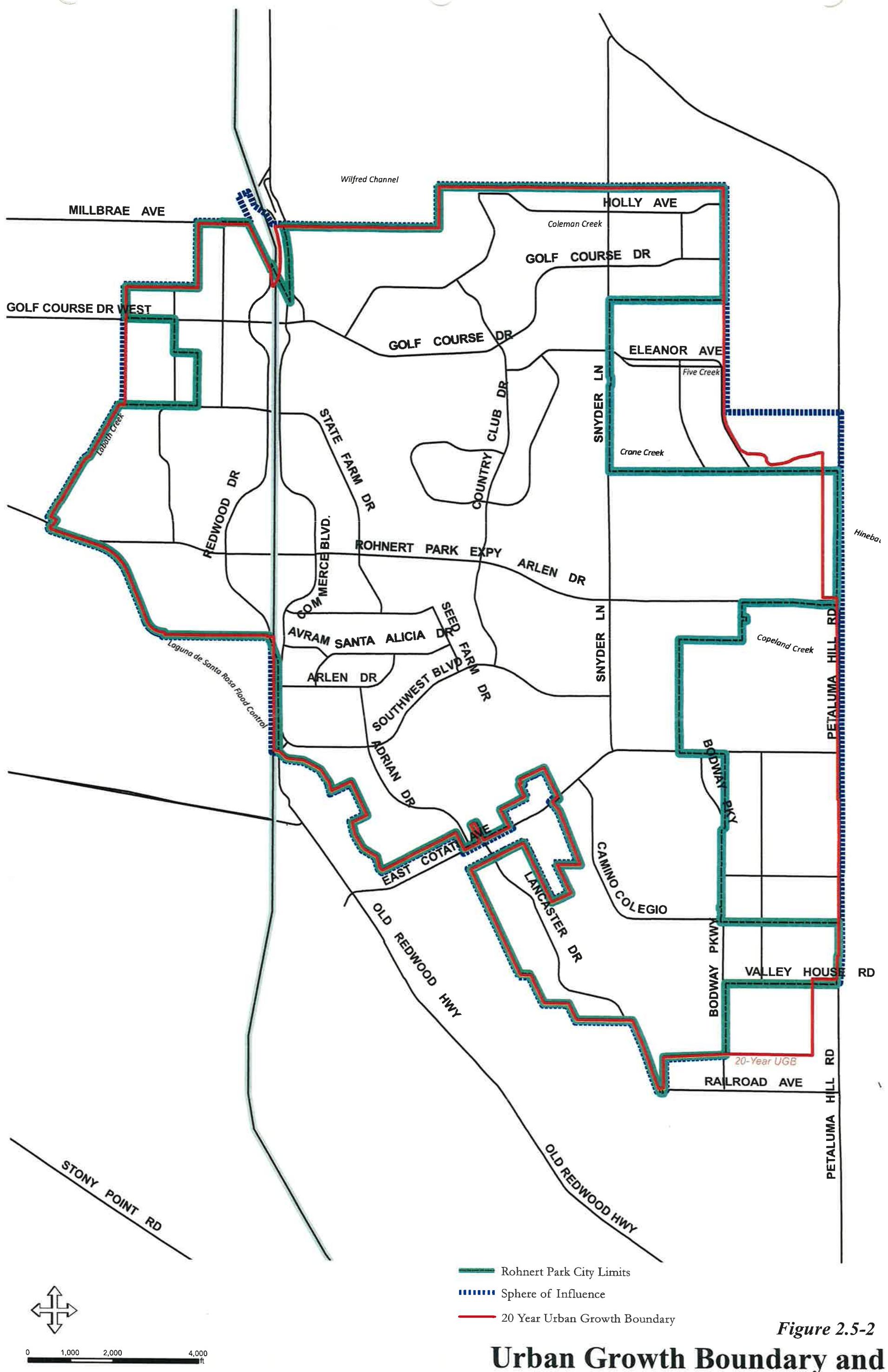
- GM-6 Require that new development be contiguous with existing or approved development or that development is located within 1,000 feet of City limits existing at the time, in order to obtain development approval.

*Providing public facilities for contiguous sites is less costly, thereby reducing the costs of infrastructure development for both the developer and the City.*

- GM-7 Encourage applicants to enter into development agreements with the City, which would also grant vested development rights, including against any changes that may result from the City Council annual policy review (GM-4), to develop a site over a multi-year period. Do not enter into any development agreement for a project until a specific plan or planned development has been prepared and adopted by the City.

*This would permit, but not require, the City to enter into development agreements. Any proposed development agreement shall be consistent with the General Plan, any other relevant plans, policies, programs, regulations, and standards.*

- GM-8 For those residential development approvals that do not require the approval of a tentative subdivision map, or otherwise not vested through a development agreement with the City, approvals shall expire after a 24-month period, unless extended for special circumstances by the City Council.



## Urban Growth Boundary and Annexation Area

All maps are intended to be consistent with the General Plan Diagram. Additional adjustments to other maps may be made for consistency.

Base data from County of Sonoma GIS department, City of Rohnert Park

Revised 08/14



### Adequate Public Facilities

- GM-9 Require that each specific plan and planned development include, or be subject to, a Public Facilities Financing Plan that explains how streets, water, wastewater, solid waste, and parks, all meeting City standards, will be provided to the project. The Plan must demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the City Manager, based upon criteria developed in the Growth Management Ordinance, that completion of all necessary public facilities concurrently with completion of the specific plan or planned development is economically, physically, and legally feasible.
- GM-10 Require that economic, physical and legal feasibility (Policy GM-9) include the method of financing or otherwise paying for the facilities and the plan for receiving approval of all regulatory agencies. A Public Facilities Plan that provides for the project's fair share of the financing for the necessary public facilities, but does not provide for the completion of the public facilities prior to completion of the development due to lack of contribution by other responsible parties, will be deemed complete but will not be approved as part of development project approval unless the exceptions included in GM-11 or GM-12 apply.
- GM-11 Allow, only with the approval of the City Council, some required public facilities (GM-9) to be deferred for a specific time period by adopting a Statement of Public Policy Considerations. The Statement of Public Policy Considerations shall include findings that specific and offsetting community goals and objectives are achieved by the project that balance not meeting the goal of providing necessary public facilities concurrently with development and shall specify a time period in which the improvements must be completed. Such findings shall be supported by substantial evidence in the record of the public hearing.
- GM-12 As provided in GM-10, the City Council may allow an exception to the requirement that all public facilities must be provided prior to completion of the development for streets/highways/intersections only, for projects subject to a development agreement if it can be demonstrated that although adequate street/highway/intersections are unable to be provided for the development at the time occupancy is projected, such facilities will be provided within two years of the time occupancy is projected. The determination that such facilities will be provided within two years of the time occupancy is projected shall be based upon the approved Public Facilities Financing Plans submitted by other projects that contribute to the need for the street/highway/intersection improvement.
- GM-13 Require that new development maintain parkways, creeksides, and open spaces that are part of the development or are required to support it, and consider establishing multi-purpose assessment districts or other financing mechanism in order to assign the cost of infrastructure improvements equitably to benefiting sites.

*Assessment districts include all property that would receive a special benefit from a capital improvement and then imposes assessments on each parcel of property. The amount of the assessment reflects the cost of the proportional special benefit conferred on the parcel.*

*The City already uses assessment districts in certain areas for roadway improvements, as along Redwood Drive. Assessment districts can be considered not only for roadway improvements, but also for sewer and water line improvements, and other necessary infrastructure. Expansion of sewer lines east of the existing City limits will probably be necessary in order to accommodate new development.*

*In addition to infrastructure improvements, assessment districts can be used to assign the cost of maintenance of open spaces and parkways. The cost of additional service above existing costs can be determined by estimating the amount of additional personnel and equipment necessary to maintain response times and service levels.*

- GM-14 Require new development to dedicate land to the City in the appropriate amount and location for parks and recreational space, in accordance with the General Plan Diagram, the Specific Plan and/or Planned Development for the area, and the City's park dedication requirements.

*The Open Space, Parks, and Public Facilities Element establishes standards for the amount of parkland per 1,000 residents and discusses the relevant provisions of the Quimby Act. Dedication may be accomplished either by conveyance of land to the City, or by establishing public access easements over the land, ensuring public use as parks and recreational space.*

- GM-15 Prepare, adopt, and implement a Capital Improvement Program (CIP), based on established performance standards, to provide a framework to undertake necessary citywide public facility improvements. Ensure that the program reflects expected growth and estimated cost of improvements.

*As of 1999, the City did not have a CIP, but had considered establishing a program in order to prioritize improvement projects and funding. The City needs both a programming time horizon (such as five or seven years) as well as an update cycle (such as every year or two years). Many cities work with a five-year CIP that is updated every year or two years. The Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA) uses a seven-year planning horizon and two-year update cycle for its CIP, which is used by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) to prepare the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The CIP's estimate of future growth shall take into account development trends and projects in the development pipeline "trigger cap" and other growth management provisions.*

### **Land Use Balance**

- GM-16 As part of preparation and approval of specific plans and any other implementing ordinances, regulations and development agreements, and allocation of development entitlements for areas of new development, balance non-residential development with residential development over the different phases and require that the contemplated balance of housing types is attained at buildout.

*The land use program for each area, including housing units by density range, is included in Section 2.4.*

## Annexation

GM-17 Consider initiating annexation of Canon Manor Specific Plan Area only if the following conditions are met:

- Adequate public facilities, meeting Rohnert Park's Rural Estate Residential standards established for the area, established either separately or as a part of the Specific Plan, are installed prior to annexation, or a program do so, with secure funding sources, is established to the City's satisfaction;
- No facility improvement costs are borne by the City of Rohnert Park; and
- All land in Canon Manor is included in the annexation.

*Canon Manor shall be deemed to have provided the adequate public facilities when all sites within Canon Manor meet established standards for water, wastewater, streets, lighting, fire hydrants, and other public facilities and services.*

GM-18 Explore the feasibility of annexation of the Sonoma State University campus.

*Land uses and growth areas in the General Plan have been designated to foster a close relationship between the City and SSU. Implementation of the General Plan should result in close physical integration of the campus with the City's neighborhoods; extension of City limits to reflect the extent of contiguous urban limits is only natural. The City currently provides water and wastewater to the campus.*

*SSU remains perhaps the only campus in the California State University system that is not a part of the surrounding community. Annexation will not alter the University's ability to pursue its development efforts; however, the City would moderately benefit by getting a small share of the existing taxes on retail sales at the campus.*

## Inter-Agency Coordination

GM-19 Work with Sonoma State University to establish a planning group to coordinate access and development.

*Coordination will become increasingly important as urban development embraces the campus' northern edge. The location of campus entryways needs to be coordinated with the City's nearby access improvements, including new streets, roadway and intersection improvements, parks, pedestrian walkways, bicycle routes. Also, long-range planning and development on the SSU campus, including potential expansion of the SSU campus, should be coordinated with land use policies and development in adjacent areas. The timing of on-campus housing development, if any, also needs to be coordinated with adjacent off-campus housing development.*

GM-20 Work with Sonoma County to ensure that all land in the Planning Area outside Rohnert Park's Urban Growth Boundary is preserved as open space.

GM-21 Request that the County allow City review and comment on development proposals submitted to the County on unincorporated land in the Rohnert Park Planning Area.

GM-22 Encourage Santa Rosa to designate land within the Wilfred Channel Community Separator and adjacent to it as open space.

*Santa Rosa's current General Plan (in 1999) permits development of land within the separator to the north of Wilfred Channel and up to approximately one mile north, as well as the "triangle" immediately north of the channel between the Northern Pacific Railroad and US 101, with Very Low Density Residential uses (up to two housing units per acre).*

GM-23 Continue joint city / county efforts, such as the Policy-Makers Working Group, to address the Community Separator mitigation issue.

### **Implementation Monitoring**

GM-24 Undertake periodic review to monitor General Plan implementation, with the first review scheduled to occur within three years of Plan adoption.

*The components of the review are spelled out in detail on page 1-13. This review, which is in addition to the annual report required by the State, should incorporate use of Performance Indicators – such as average trip time, total vehicle hours traveled, jobs/housing balance, park space per resident.*

## 3 Community Design

This Element includes goals and policies aimed at protecting and enhancing Rohnert Park's physical and visual character. Community design issues are addressed at citywide, neighborhood, and street scales. While reinforcing the positive attributes of Rohnert Park's urban structure—such as a compact form and well-defined neighborhoods—the Element seeks to foster creation of distinctive centers to enhance the city's identity, and promote pedestrian and community orientation of new development.

The Element also includes policies for increasing neighborhood connectivity and enhancing the visual quality of urban edges. It includes a comprehensive set of measures to preserve the scenic qualities and views from corridors, including goals and policies pertaining to setbacks, street and block patterns in areas of new development, landscaping, streetscapes, and building massing.



## **3.1 URBAN FORM, VIEWS, AND EDGES**

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### **URBAN FORM AND STRUCTURE**

#### **Neighborhood Unit**

Rohnert Park was established in 1956 as a master planned community, based on the concept of “neighborhood units.” Single-family residences are clustered around a centrally located school and park, creating quiet neighborhoods amenable to families and children. Golf courses, railroads, and US 101 provide strong boundaries to many neighborhoods. Commercial facilities are at the edge of neighborhoods, typically at intersections of major streets, and are primarily accessed by car. This neighborhood unit model of development has essentially served as the city’s blueprint since inception.

#### **Connections**

While the City has well-defined neighborhoods, different parts of the city are disconnected, as neighborhoods are inward-focused. The separation of uses is convenient for automobile circulation but discourages walking and bicycling, other than for recreational purposes. Many local streets form loops or cul de sacs, limiting physical and visual connections between neighborhoods. There is not a great level of distinction—in terms of layout, development patterns, lot sizes, and building intensities—between various neighborhoods.

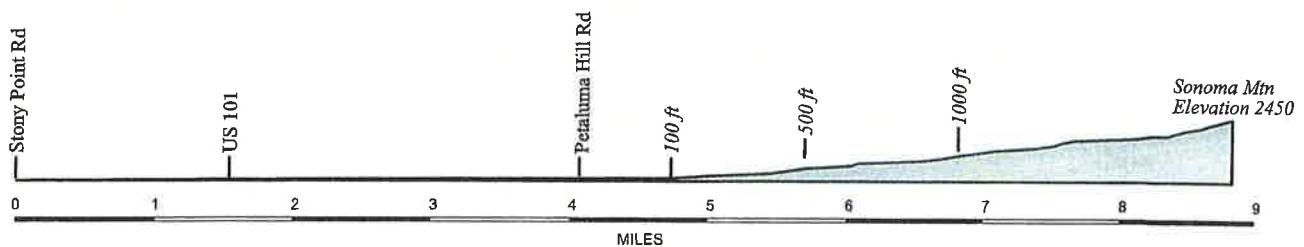
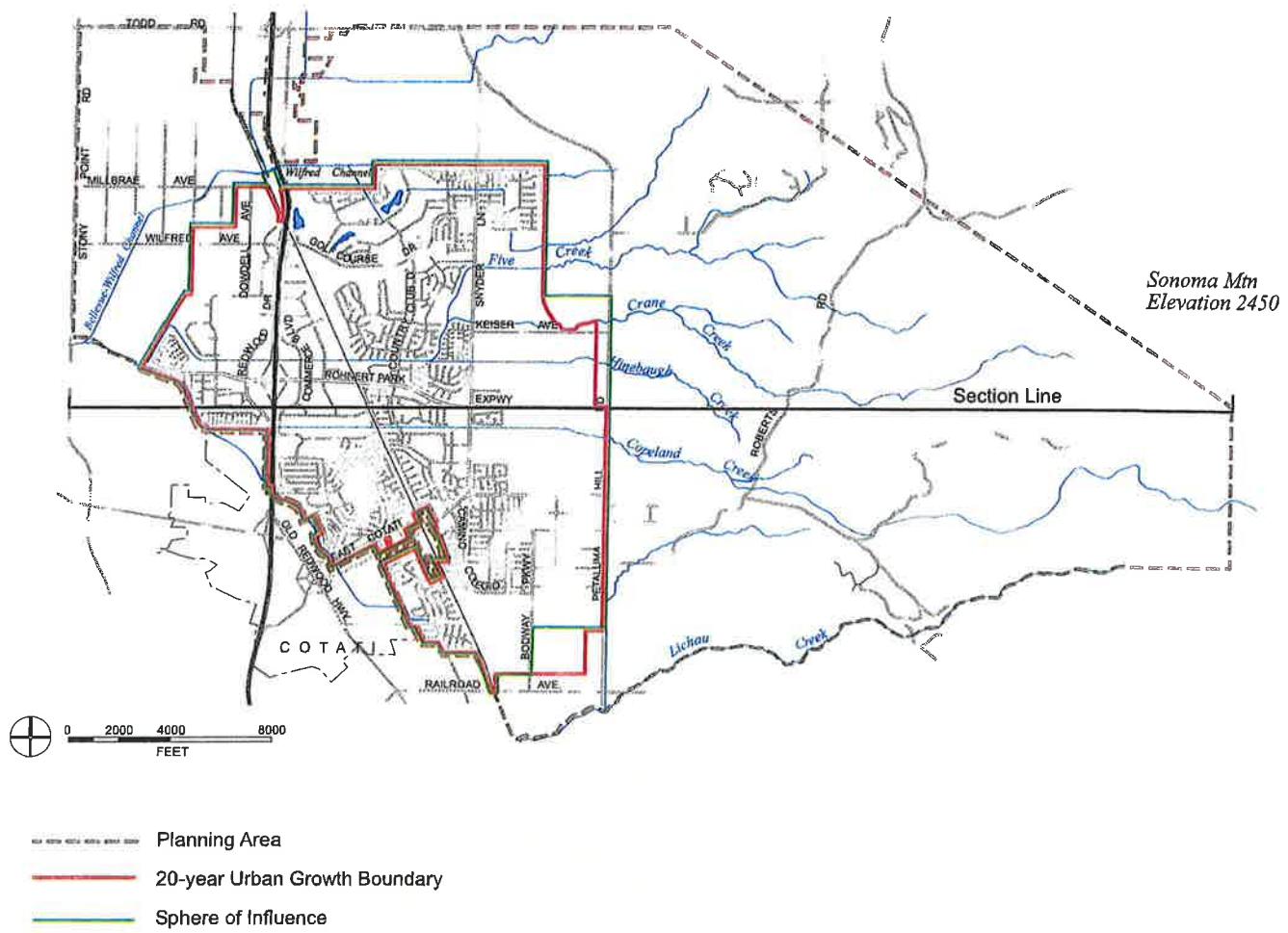
#### **Focal Points**

With the exception of Sonoma State University (SSU), located outside the City limits, and a scattering of commercial and community facilities, Rohnert Park has few citywide focal points. In addition, being a relatively young city, Rohnert Park has no traditional pedestrian-oriented center, as in other older cities such as Petaluma, Sonoma, or Santa Rosa. The area around the Rohnert Park Expressway-Commerce Boulevard intersection, where a majority of the city’s neighborhood retail development is clustered, is the city’s major activity center.

### **VIEWS**

#### **Ridgelines**

The eastern ridgelines constitute a prominent feature of the Rohnert Park landscape. Two peaks are prominent – Taylor Mountain, with an elevation of about 1,400 feet, and Sonoma Mountain with an elevation of 2,300 feet. Due to the height of the ridges and the low building heights throughout the city (generally two stories or lower), the eastern ridges are visible from many streets, parks, and open spaces, as well as buildings, throughout Rohnert Park. Ridgelines are depicted in Figure 3.1-1.



*Figure 3.1-1*  
Section View of Ridgelines

Often the view corridors toward the ridgelines are framed by the natural landscape – such as along the creek beds. Only along East Cotati Avenue, which forms the southern edge of the SSU campus, does a straight line of trees create a more formal view corridor. Other east-west streets that terminate at Petaluma Hill Road—including the Rohnert Park Expressway, Keiser Avenue, Valley House Drive, and streets in Canon Manor—offer panoramic views of the ridgelines.

Open space and rural agricultural lands to the east of the city provide a foreground to the views of Sonoma and Taylor Mountains. Because this General Plan does not contemplate annexation of any area to the east of Petaluma Hill Road, development in the area will continue to be governed by the 1989 Sonoma County General Plan. The Open Space Element of the County General Plan specifies that the Sonoma Mountains provide a scenic backdrop to the Rohnert Park community<sup>1</sup>, and indicates that the County seeks to retain a rural, scenic character in this area and avoid its inclusion within any urban sphere of influence.

### **Scenic Corridors**

Because of the pervasive nature of the views of the mountains to the eastside, virtually every street at the city's eastern edge—including Petaluma Hill Road and Bodway Parkway—offers scenic views. Streets at the northwest edge of the city also offer views of the open space beyond, but because the topography in the area is essentially flat, these views are not as dramatic.

The County has designated US 101 and Petaluma Hill Road as scenic corridors. While US 101—in almost its entire stretch through Rohnert Park—is lined with redwoods resulting in limited distant views, Petaluma Hill Road does provide distant views. At the southern end of the Planning Area boundary (near Railroad Avenue), Petaluma Hill Road is lined by open space and farms on both the eastern and western sides. Stands of trees along Canon Manor block some views, and the view corridor is considerably narrowed along SSU, with tall eucalyptus trees along the western edge of the street. The views open up dramatically north of the campus, and from Rohnert Park Expressway northward, the views are again panoramic.

## **CITY EDGES**

Rohnert Park shares much of its western boundary—between Rohnert Park Expressway and Railroad Avenue—with Cotati. While about half the length of the shared boundary between the two cities is demarcated by the Laguna de Santa Rosa Flood Control Channel, the remaining extent of the boundary is visually amorphous. The city's northern edge, along Wilfred Channel, is a straight-line edge, with homes on the south and the Community Separator to the north. Opportunities to alter the character of these edges are limited. Therefore, the discussion here focuses on the city's eastside and the northwest, where the potential for defining edge character exists.

### **East and Southeast**

The area north of the SSU has attractive open vistas from streets such as Petaluma Hill Road and Snyder Lane. The scale of these views is dramatic, as the foreground is quite extensive, and trees,

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<sup>1</sup> Sonoma County Open Space Element, p. 227.

along the creeks and the eastern edge of the built city, frame many of the views. Because this area is targeted for development in the General Plan, opportunity to shape the new urban edge along Petaluma Hill Road is present.

South of SSU, Canon Manor has been partially developed as rural residential on half-acre to 2-acre lots. Canon Manor serves as a transition between the more intensive development west of Bodway Parkway and the open space and agricultural uses east of Petaluma Hill Road. Some crop sales stands can be seen along Petaluma Hill Road near the intersection with East Cotati Avenue. Canon Manor is less formally landscaped than the adjacent SSU campus, with the exception of tall stands of eucalyptuses that line East Cotati Avenue.

### **Northwest**

In contrast to the eastside, open space lands in the northwest are cultivated and used for pasture. The Laguna de Santa Rosa Flood Control Channel includes riparian vegetation and defines the southern edge of irrigated cropland. Agricultural fields can be seen from adjacent developed parcels within the City limits. Older, scattered rural residential uses along unimproved roads are found west of the commercial buildings in the Wal-Mart Center along Redwood Drive. These rural residential areas have visible stands of trees.

The Industrial Park abuts the city's western edge. The developed, suburban character of the park, with landscaped setbacks and regularly spaced trees, is in marked contrast to the adjacent rural areas. However, because of the several vacant sites along Business Park Drive, large setbacks, and extensive landscaping, the city's western edge is not as hard as the eastern edge. The western edge of the Rancho Verde mobile home park is separated and screened from adjacent rural areas by tall stands of trees, an open channel, and a solid wall. The regional commercial uses along Redwood Drive are oriented to US 101 and have a hard-edge blank wall along their western edge, adjacent to open space areas.

### **GOALS: URBAN FORM, VIEWS, AND EDGES**

CD-A Create pedestrian-oriented activity centers that serve as community focal points.

CD-B Establish strong connections between adjacent neighborhoods and between neighborhoods and activity centers, in order to encourage walking and biking.

CD-C Establish an open space network that links residential neighborhoods, parks, and open space areas.

CD-D Preserve and enhance views of the eastern ridgeline.

*Views of the eastern ridgeline should be preserved from the existing neighborhoods, and should be emphasized in the orientation and design of new public spaces and streets.*

CD-E Preserve and enhance the visual character of scenic corridors.

CD-F Maintain a distinct urban edge, while creating a gradual transition between urban uses and open space.

*The city currently has a hard edge along most sides, creating a strong distinction between urban and rural uses. While the urban edge should remain distinct, a gradual transition in densities in some areas would create a more harmonious visual impression of the landscape.*

## POLICIES: URBAN FORM, VIEWS, AND EDGES

### Urban Form and Structure

- CD-1 As part of preparation of specific plans, ordinances, capital improvements programs, design of public buildings, and other measures, ensure that the University District and the City Center are developed as citywide destinations and with a pedestrian orientation.

*Because these centers are part of the General Plan Diagram and because detailed implementation in these areas will be facilitated by area and specific plans, more detailed policies in this element are not essential. However, this policy serves to recognize the role of these two centers in the urban structure sought to be created by this General Plan.*

- CD-2 Develop linkages between different parts of the city, and foster creation of unique elements that provide identity to the city and the neighborhoods and result in the creation of diverse and distinctive places.

*Many of these elements, such as open spaces and streets, are addressed in other policies in the General Plan. However, some salient features and elements are called out here because they are critical to fostering the desired identity. Key urban form elements are diagrammed in Figure 3.1-2. It is expected that, over time, this list will be embellished.*

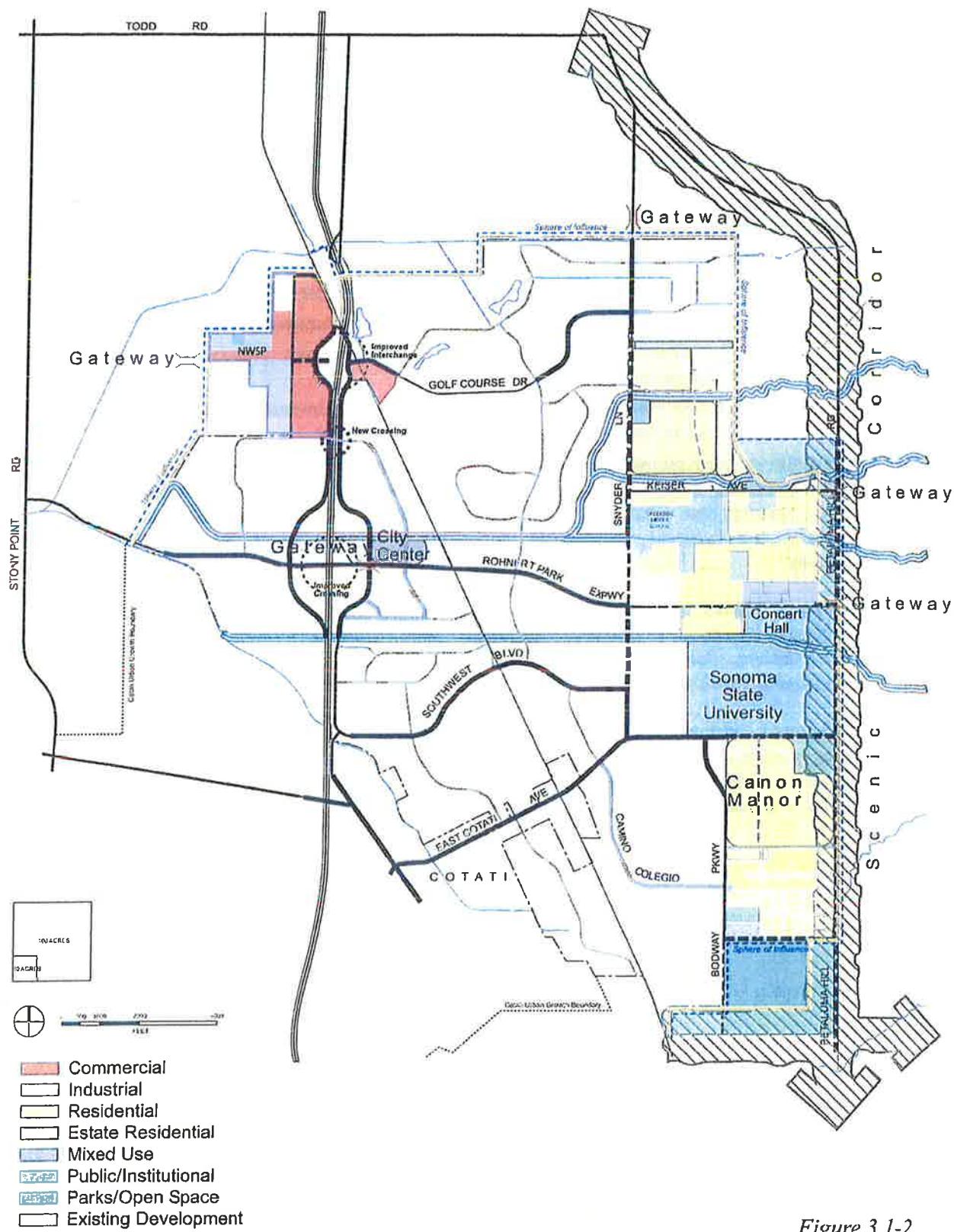
- **Linear parkway connecting the eastern neighborhoods with the Sonoma State University campus:** The proposed linear parkway begins within the Sonoma State Campus and continues north to Keiser Avenue. This parkway would provide strong north-south connections to a bikeway system that now primarily runs east to west along the existing creeks and channels, and would create a public space within the proposed neighborhoods that would serve as an activity center.
- **Interconnected network of streets.** New collector connections are shown on the General Plan Diagram at the northern portion of Snyder Lane, along the extension of Eleanor Avenue, and at the eastern section of Rohnert Park Expressway. Also, a minor collector is suggested to provide a north-south connection through the proposed area along the linear parkway. The objective of these street connections is to provide the necessary connections for automobiles without compromising pedestrian comfort and quality of the neighborhoods. Where appropriate, existing streets should be extended into new developments to provide for a more extended and continuous street system. More information on standards for streets can be found in Chapter 4: Transportation.
- **Private Plaza:** A private plaza shall be provided within the proposed University District. This plaza will serve as a focal point for activity for the area.

- **Extension of Creekside Greenway:** The existing paths along creeks and channels provide important connections for bicyclists and pedestrians throughout Rohnert Park and also provide areas for recreation. These bikeways should be extended through the newly developed areas to continue to provide the amenity and strong pedestrian connections. The following guidelines should be used in extending the greenways:
  - Frequent entrances should be provided to increase access to bikeways;
  - A buffer should be provided between adjacent service areas and the bikeway;
  - If a wall is created between the bikeway, and adjacent property, it should be appropriate in size and material; and
  - Wherever possible, development should be oriented towards bikeways in order to activate the space.

CD-3 Designate gateway points at major entrances to the city, and prioritize their design and implementation through the City's Capital Improvements Program. Use landscaping, signs, lighting, and other streetscape design techniques along streets to announce the gateway, and establish development regulations to provide visual emphasis to the gateway.

*Potential gateway points include, but are not limited to: Rohnert Park Expressway at Petaluma Hill Road, at Commerce Boulevard, and at Hinebaugh Creek; Snyder Lane on the north side of the "G" section neighborhood; and East Cotati Avenue at Petaluma Hill Road and at the Cotati border.*

*Street trees, welcome signs, decorative lighting, banners, archways and other streetscape design elements can be used for the gateway. In addition, adjacent development should be required to orient building entrances to the gateway and provide pedestrian amenities, such as sidewalks and walkway lighting, while limiting adjacent parking lots.*



*Figure 3.1-2*  
**Urban Form and Structure**

## Views

- CD-4 Designate Petaluma Hill Road as a scenic corridor throughout its stretch along Rohnert Park.
- CD-5 Ensure that any landscape treatment along Petaluma Hill Road does not obstruct views of the eastern ridgelines from the street.

*Because there are few trees along Petaluma Hill Road north of SSU, the street provides uninterrupted views of the eastern and northern ridgelines. This visual quality of the street should be maintained by discouraging street planting on the eastern edge of the street, except in the general areas of the creeks.*

- CD-6 As part of any development along Petaluma Hill Road, ensure planting, if any, does not obstruct views of the ridges from the city's eastern neighborhoods. In no case shall trees or shrubs that exceed 25 feet in height upon maturity be used.

*A maximum height of 25 feet will permit views of the ridgelines above 1,000-foot elevation from a horizontal distance of about 1,000 feet from the open space edge. If trees are taller, views of the ridgelines from the eastern neighborhoods will be disrupted. Site specific characteristics may necessitate heights shorter than 25 feet or no planting at all to ensure that views are preserved.*

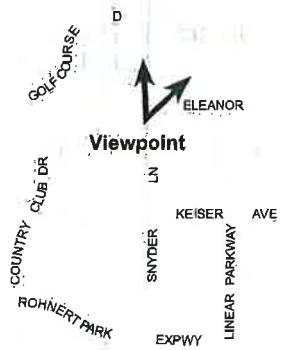
- CD-7 Minimize disruption of existing views by new development.

- Along Snyder Lane:
  - Provide an approximately 32-foot wide linear park/parkway (within the currently acquired right-of-way, which is not needed for street parking; see Chapter 4: Transportation) along the eastern edge of Snyder Lane as a neighborhood amenity and to provide primarily unobstructed views of the ridgeline (see Figure 3.1-4);
  - Set back all development on the eastside at least 20 feet from the edge of the linear parkway (that is, approximately 52 feet from the street curb). Establish upper-story step-back requirements for development adjacent to the parkway as part of the Zoning Ordinance.
- Along the 1999 City limits, in the area between Creekside Middle School and Rancho Cotati Senior High School, set back new structures at least 60 feet away from the edge of existing residential-use parcels immediately adjacent to the west.
- Maintain a 100-foot setback between the “G” section and any new development located south of it.
- Along Petaluma Hill Road, north of Valley House Drive, require any new development on the western side of the street to be set back at least 50 feet from the edge of the street right-of-way.

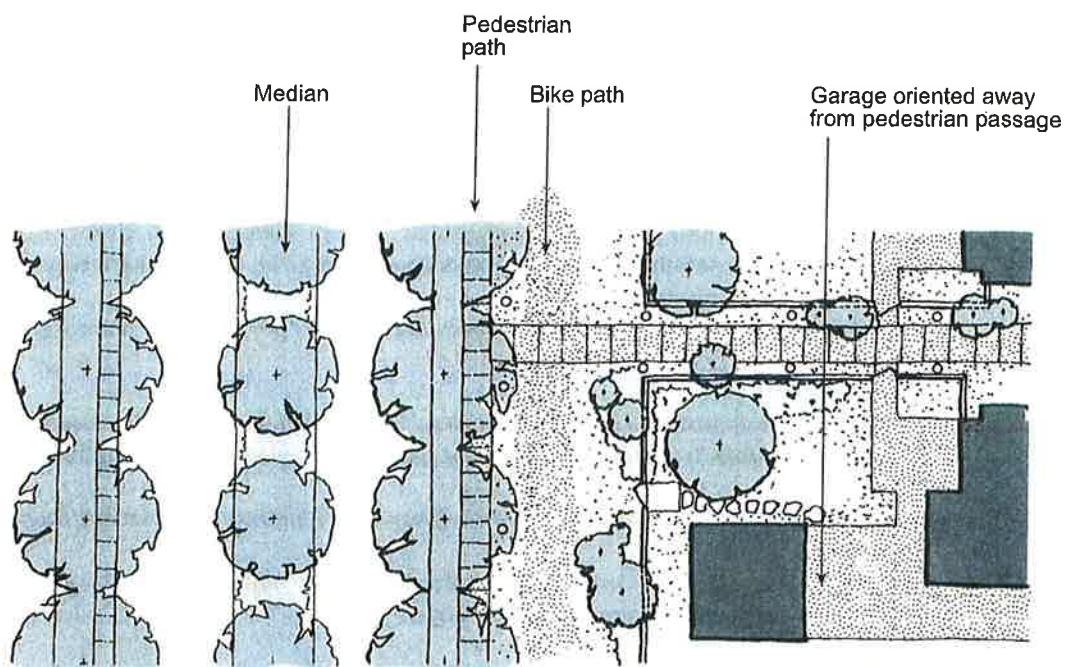
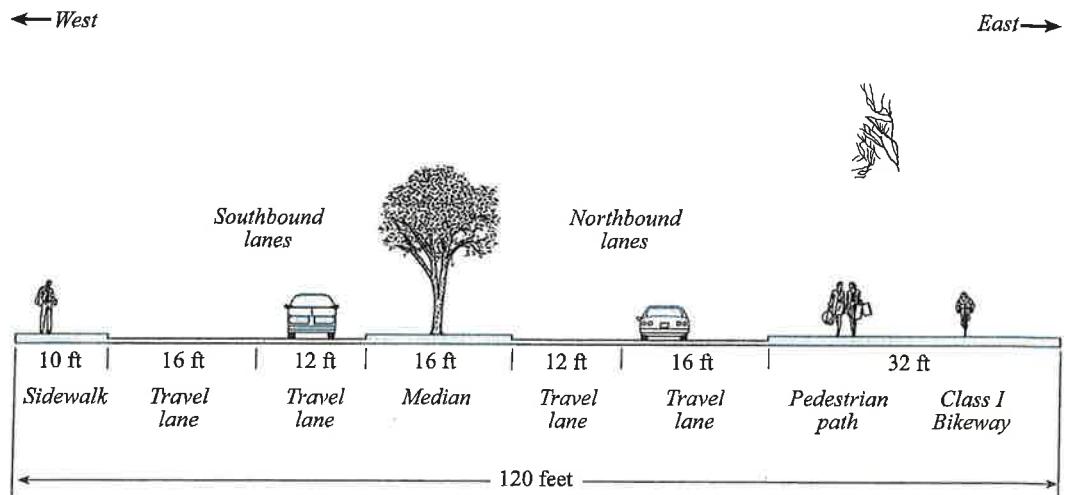
*Figure 3.1-3 shows an illustrative simulation of new development along Snyder Lane. See policy CD-49, pertaining to setback requirements for the Mixed Use center.*



Snyder Lane near Eleanor, looking northeast; illustrative simulation.



*Figure 3.1-3*  
**Snyder Lane near Eleanor,  
looking northeast;  
illustrative simulation.**



Snyder Lane at Eleanor, looking north.

*Figure 3.1-4*  
**Street Section and Plan at Snyder Lane**

**CD-8** Maintain streets as “view corridors” by:

- Where appropriate, keeping the northern and eastern terminus “open” by not allowing buildings or tall trees to be placed at street ends; and
- Either leaving the eastern edge of the north-south streets at the city’s eastern edge to remain unplanted, or ensuring that tall-branched trees that permit views from vehicles.
- Reinforce the dramatic framed views of the ridgeline along the Rohnert Park Expressway by ensuring that if the road is widened, landscaping reinforces the framing of the view.

**Edges**

**CD-9** Ensure that development intensities provide adequate transition from urban to open space uses on the city’s eastside, as indicated on the General Plan Diagram.

*Because much of the city’s western edge will remain unaltered as a result of this General Plan, a similar transition in intensities is not contemplated in the northwest area.*

**CD-10** As part of implementing plans and programs, permit clustering of Estate Residential development, with resultant pockets of open space along the city’s eastern edge.

*The Zoning Ordinance shall establish a minimum lot size for clustered Estate Residential development.*

**CD-11** Require all development along the city’s eastern edge to plant trees and other vegetation along the city edge, in order to maintain the open space appearance along Petaluma Hill Road.

*See also Policy CD-5 pertaining to height of vegetation along Petaluma Hill Road.*

**CD-12** As part of the Zoning Ordinance, establish setback requirements for development adjacent to open space buffers along city edges.

*This setback should be the final step in the transitioning character between developed and undeveloped land.*

**CD-13** Allow only Rural Estate Residential uses or open space and recreation uses along Petaluma Hill Road.

While only these uses are shown on the 2000 General Plan Diagram, the intent of the policy is to ensure that this policy is adhered to in case of any future amendments to the General Plan Diagram.

**CD-14** Ensure that design treatment at the edge of urban uses results in “soft” edges by:

- Prohibiting the use of solid walls along these edges (i.e., fences must be visually permeable);

- Using materials and design to promote soft edges (such as use of wooden or other rustic materials for fences, etc.); and
- Encouraging development at the edge of the city to face outwards.

## 3.2 NEIGHBORHOODS AND FOCUS AREAS

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While policies related to views and edges have implications that extend beyond individual neighborhoods, this section addresses the design and character at a neighborhood scale. Focused policies for certain areas (including specific plan areas) are also included.

### NEIGHBORHOODS

Neighborhoods are Rohnert Park's building blocks. Rohnert Park's neighborhood structure has been, in many cases, characterized by homes clustered around a school and a park. Neighborhood areas are shown in Figure 3.2-1. Key aspects of Rohnert Park's neighborhood structure include:

- *Use Pattern.* While Rohnert Park has a defined neighborhood development pattern, design of neighborhoods to be responsive to the context—such as by creating greenways that traverse neighborhoods, locating parks adjacent to creeks, and locating uses and activities in relationship to institutions such as SSU and physical conditions such as urban edges—can help in creating neighborhoods that are responsive to the landscape and lead to greater identity and diversity.
- *Street and Block Patterns.* Neighborhood A, one of the original Rohnert Park neighborhoods, has the greatest number of through streets, blocks, and access points. It is characterized by long internal blocks, connecting local streets, and few cul-de-sacs, complemented by mature trees and landscaped front yards, making it easy and comfortable to bike or walk. Numerous access points provide connections to adjacent areas. In subsequently developed neighborhoods, fewer street connections and intersections, more cul de sacs, and larger blocks make it difficult to reach destinations via walking or biking.
- Canon Manor—a County subdivision originally platted in the 1950s—has rural residential development with rectilinear streets, very large blocks, and large lots, in contrast to Rohnert Park's curvilinear streets and cul-de-sacs.
- Sonoma Mountain Village – a sustainable community in the southeast area of the City, is subject to “smart growth” development requirements which may differ substantially from the street-and-block pattern of neighborhoods in other areas in the City. Sonoma Mountain Village is typified by pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly elements, with street widths that may differ from standard City streets. Development is governed by a form-based code which seeks to encourage mixed use development.
- *Streets.* Rohnert Park has a hierarchical system of streets that separates high-speed through traffic (along arterials and collectors) from low-speed local traffic (along local streets). Chapter 4: Transportation provides a detailed description of the city's street pattern and outlines roadway classifications. Safety, convenience, and comfort for pedestrians and bicycles are an important issue for Rohnert Park residents in 1999.
- Streets in Rohnert Park have a distinctive character. Major arterials such as the Rohnert Park Expressway as well as recent residential arterials such as Snyder Lane have a planted median strip and flanking greenways with pedestrian paths and bikeways. Such streets contribute to the city's image as a place where residential neighborhoods are integrated with parks and

where open space surrounds the city. Some streets also have views of the eastern ridgeline. The visual character of new streets is addressed by goals and policies in this section.

Figure 3.2-1

## Neighborhood Form

100 acre  
Analysis Unit  
(2087' x 2087')

0 1000 2000 FEET

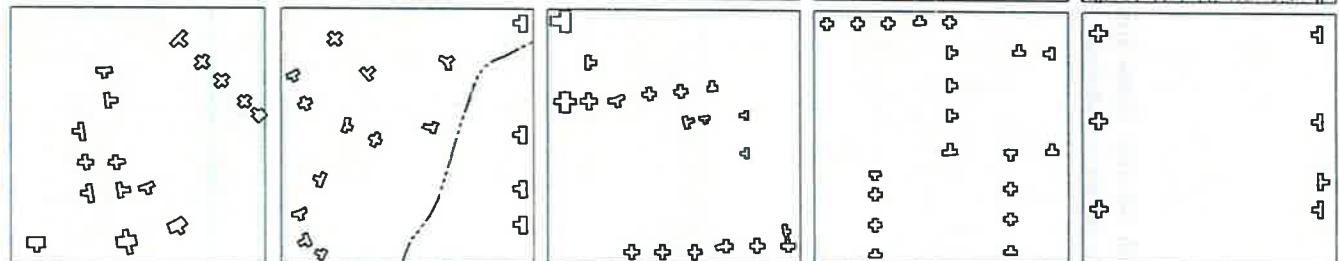


### Land Use

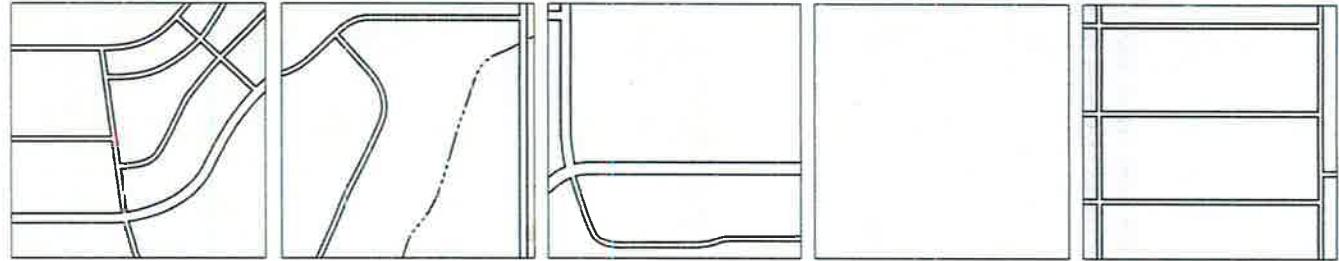
- Rural Residential
- Low Density Residential
- Intermediate Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Commercial
- Office
- Public/Institutional
- Other Public
- Park or Open Space



### Intersections



### Through Streets



Number of Intersections  
(T-intersections counted as 0.5)

11

9.5

14

14

5

Number of Through Streets

7

3

3

0

6

Number of Blocks

4

3

3

1

2

Number of Access Points

9

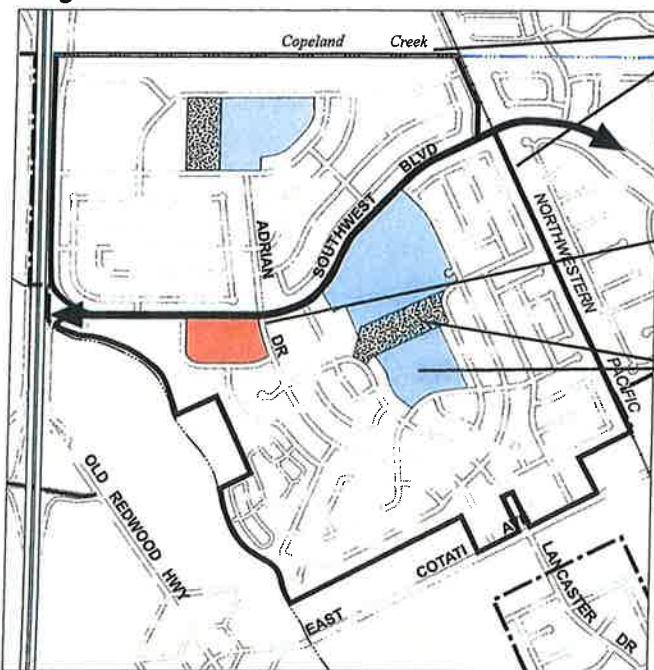
4

5

2

8

### Neighborhood Structure



Creeks, flood channels, arterial roads, and railroad tracks form the edges of neighborhoods

Shopping center on arterial street shared by two neighborhoods

Parks and schools at the center of the neighborhood



Major streets form neighborhood edges. Shopping centers along these streets are shared between two or more neighborhoods.



Parks and schools as the focus of neighborhoods.



Site for the new City Center north of Rohnert Park Expressway/Commerce Boulevard.

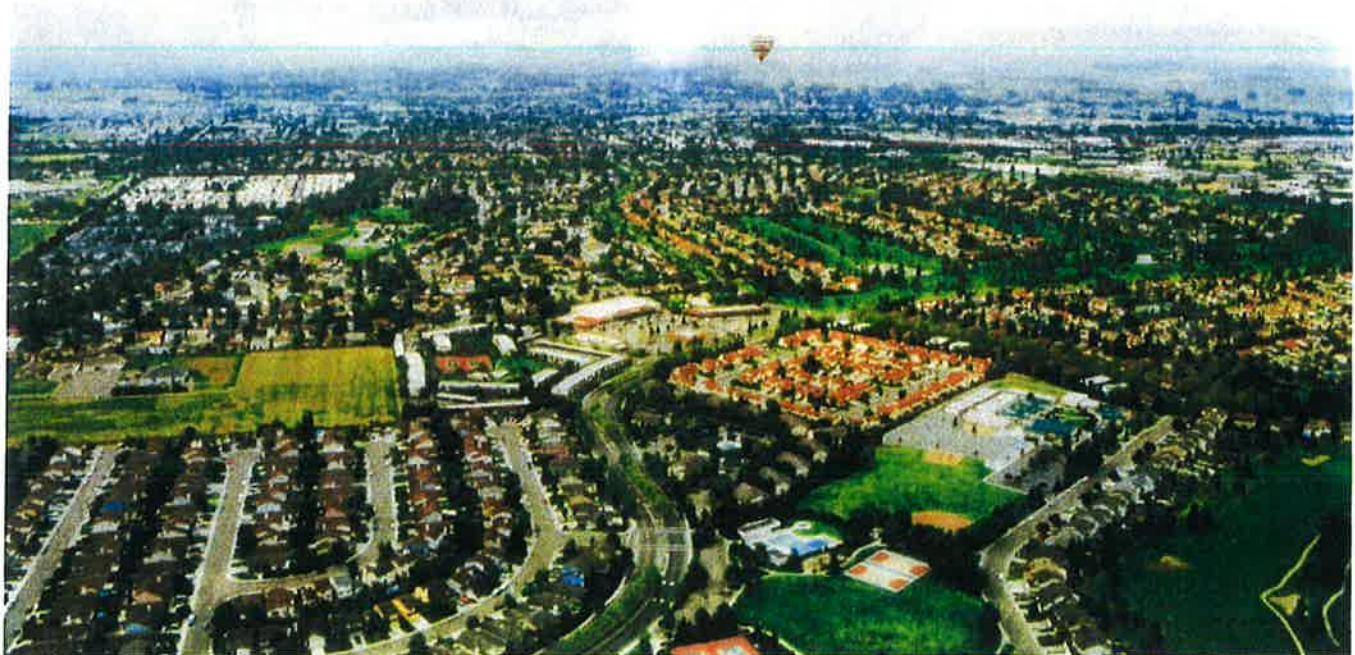
Figure 3.2-2  
Neighborhood Structure



*The City's northeastern edge,  
around the Golis Park  
neighborhood.*



*The City's eastern edge, looking  
south along Petaluma Hill Road.  
Sonoma State University can be  
seen in the foreground.*



*Aerial view of Rohnert Park Municipal Golf Course, at right, with the Marguerite Hahn Elementary School and  
residential neighborhoods.*

## FOCUS AREAS

In addition to policies that apply across the city, this section of the General Plan includes policies targeted at design issues specific to certain parts of the city. These are:

- University District;
- City Center;
- Central Rohnert Park
- Northeast Area;
- Northwest Specific Plan Area;
- Sonoma Mountain Village;
- Stadium Area; and
- Southeast Area.

## GOALS: NEIGHBORHOODS AND FOCUS AREAS

CD-G Encourage development of diverse and distinctive neighborhoods that build on the patterns of the natural landscape and are responsive in their location and context.

*This General Plan encourages development of neighborhoods to be responsive to their location and context, rather than being based on a uniform design formula.*

CD-H Promote a mix of uses and a variety of housing types and sizes within residential neighborhoods.

*The General Plan Diagram establishes a mix of uses within areas of new development and promotes a mix of housing types by allowing a range of residential densities within the same areas. This goal and the subsequent policies build on the overall direction established in the diagram.*

CD-I Ensure that neighborhood streets provide an attractive physical environment for motorists, pedestrians, and cyclists.

CD-J Maintain the character of existing neighborhoods while undertaking streetscape and signage improvements in selected areas.

CD-K Support improvements to the pedestrian orientation within Central Rohnert Park.

CD-L Create a consistent character and identity for Central Rohnert Park – particularly in area defined as Downtown.

CD-M Ensure the quality of new development within Central Rohnert Park.

## POLICIES: NEIGHBORHOODS AND FOCUS AREAS

### Neighborhood Structure

CD-15 Establish thresholds and procedures for review of design of new neighborhoods.

CD-16 Require neighborhood design—including components such as land use, development intensity, and street layouts—to be responsive to natural and institutional elements, including:

- *Creeks.* Ensure adequate access by locating streets and paths adjacent to creekways, and integrate parks and open space with creekways;
- *Urban edges.* Ensure transition from urban intensities to open space; and
- *Integration with the surroundings.* Promote connections with adjacent neighborhoods by integrating street networks, and responding to existing landscape and visual treatments.

CD-17 Allow townhomes and multifamily dwellings to be integrated with single-family residences.

*These buildings should be in character with the surrounding homes in massing, scale, and orientation. See Figure 3.2-3 for illustrations of housing types.*

CD-18 Prepare a design standards checklist for design reviews.

*This checklist would provide a simple means for evaluating proposals.*

### **Street/Building Relationship**

CD-19 As part of updating the City's zoning regulations or applicable specific plans, adopt standards to foster pedestrian orientation of new development in Mixed-Use and Neighborhood Commercial areas by:

- Developing a coherent set of standards for buildings, such that building facades and entrances *define* the streetscape and promote street activity;
- Maintaining volumetric building standards that require buildings to be located at the street by *establishing* maximum setback or “build-to lines”, with appropriate step-backs for upper stories;
- Ensuring that primary entrances of buildings face the street;
- Requiring that parking is provided in the interior of the block, screened by the building or landscaping;
- Requiring awnings and canopies for pedestrian comfort, where appropriate; and
- Establishing building transparency from sidewalks.

CD-20 Encourage buildings to foster a sense of place by providing transitions between the street and building, front setback variation for residential development, and building articulation and massing, as part of development standards or any design guidelines that may be prepared.

*Elements such as porches, bay windows, and landscaping should be designed to create a transition between public and private spaces. When porches are used, they should be designed as a usable outdoor space.*

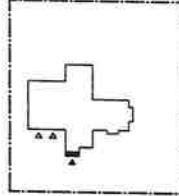
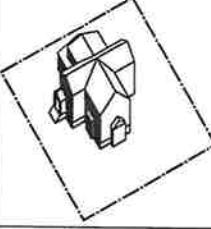
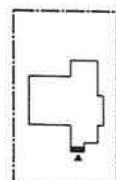
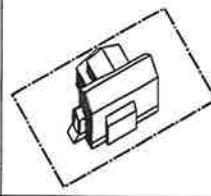
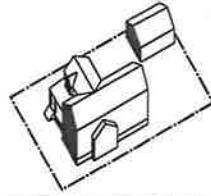
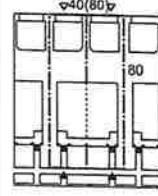
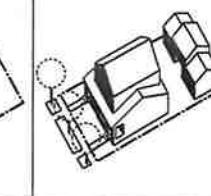
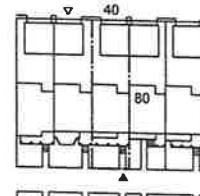
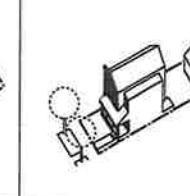
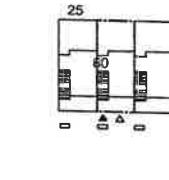
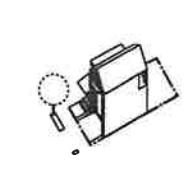
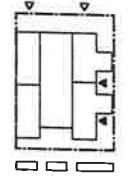
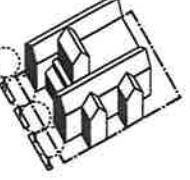
Housing Type	Estate (front loaded)	Low Density Detached	Low Density (rear loaded)	Semi-Detached (rear loaded)	Townhouse (rear loaded)	Townhouse (front loaded)	Residential Over Parking And Commercial Podium
	  	  	  	  	  	  	  
Illustrative Lot Size	20,000	6,000	6,000	3,200	3,200	2,000	-
Dwelling Size	5,260	2,800	2,800	1,400	1,400	1,200	1,200
Number of Floors	2-2.5	1-2	1-2	2	2	2.5	2-3 over podium
Density (units/gross acre)	2.0	6	6	12	12	20	30
Typical Density Range for Housing Type	0.5-2.0	5-7.5	5-7.5	12-16	12-16	15-30	20-30
General Plan Land Use Classification	Estate Residential	Low/Medium Density Residential	Low/Medium Density Residential	High Density Residential	High Density Residential	High Density Residential	Mixed Use

Figure 3.2-3  
Illustrative Housing Types

CD-21 Minimize the visual dominance of garages by maintaining appropriate development standards in the City's zoning and subdivision regulations and/or design guidelines.

*Potential strategies that can be considered as part of the City's Zoning Ordinance include:*

- Limiting the front width of a house that can be occupied with a garage to be no more than one-half the building width;
- Encouraging location of the garages towards the back of properties;
- Requiring garages to be setback from the front edge of house;
- Use of an additional setback if more than a two-car garage entrance is needed;
- Orienting garage doors 90 degrees from the street;
- Allowing implementation of an alley system in new development, with garages accessed from the rear; and
- Incorporating design elements on the second level above the garages such as bay windows or balconies that break down the scale of the garage.

CD-22 Provide streets at the edges of each phase of development in order to provide flexibility and better continuity for later phases.

CD-23 Establish design guidelines for Estate Residential uses to ensure new buildings are consistent with surrounding areas.

*The City's design guidelines shall establish provisions for Estate Residential to ensure that building mass will be compatible with surrounding transitional land uses to soften City edges and protect viewsheds.*

### **Streets and Street Network**

CD-24 Ensure that the Subdivision Regulations encourage a fine-grained and integrated pattern of streets that provide continuity between neighborhoods, have a human scale, and enhance the character of neighborhoods and activity centers. Ensure that the Subdivision Regulations:

- Require the *continuity* of major streets between neighborhoods.
- Limit use of cul de sacs to:
  - No more than ten percent of the length of all streets in a subdivision map; and
  - A 150-foot maximum length, to prevent their use as a substitute to through streets.
- Where cul de sacs are used, integrate pedestrian and bicycle connections through the end to the *adjacent* area.

- Promote closer spacing between the intersections of local streets, as defined in Chapter 4: Transportation, with a maximum spacing of 1/8th mile (660 feet) that will strengthen pedestrian connections.

*See Figures 3.2-4 and 3.2-5 for illustrative diagrams.*

- CD-25 Use traffic calming measures to reduce traffic speeds in residential areas rather than limiting the street connections.

*Connecting streets provide direct linkages between different areas of the city. Traffic calming measures are also discussed in Chapter 4: Transportation.*

- CD-26 Design local streets to not only accommodate traffic, but also to serve as comfortable pedestrian environments. These should include, but not be limited to:

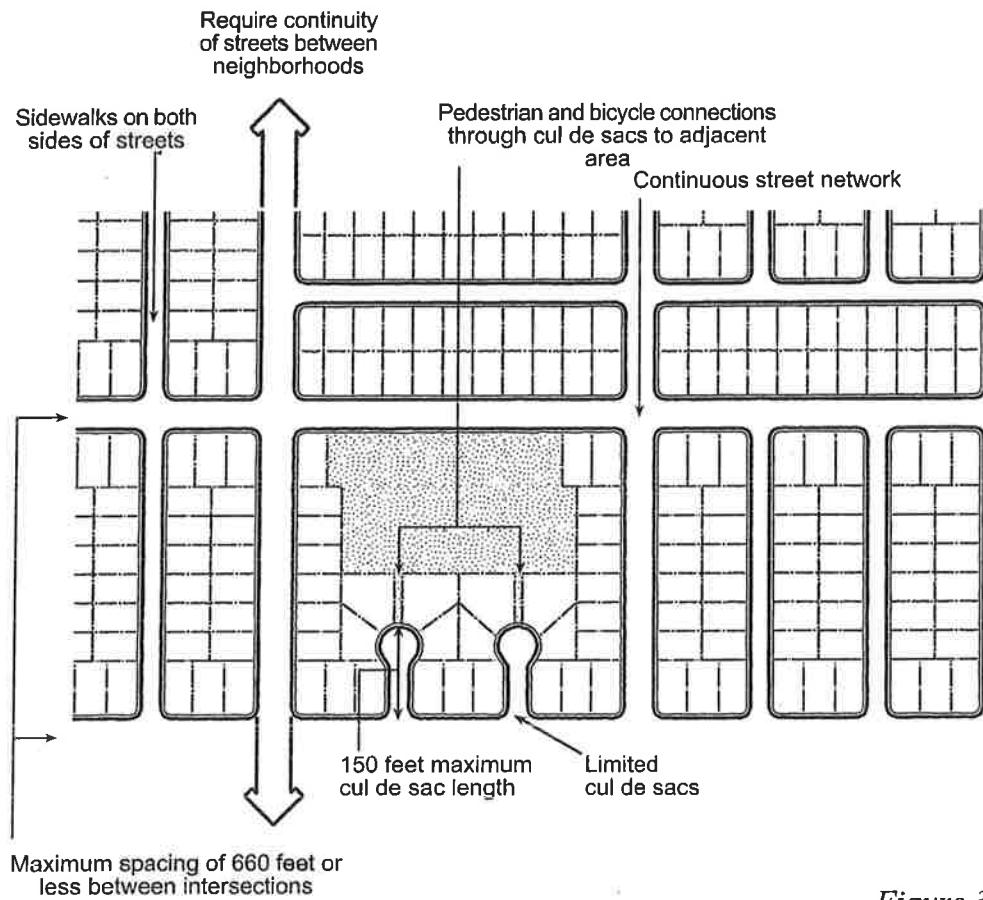
- Street tree planting adjacent to curb and between the street and sidewalk to provide a buffer between the *pedestrian* and the automobile, where appropriate;  
*See Figure 3.2-5 for an illustrative diagram.*
- Minimum curb cuts along streets; and
- Sidewalks on both *sides* of streets, where feasible.

- CD-27 Allow sound walls only for development along US 101 and the NP Railroad, as shown in Figure 3.2-6.

*A review of the calculated noise levels and traffic counts along Rohnert Park's arterials, coupled with implementation of other tools such as larger setbacks, suggests that sound walls will not be necessary along proposed arterials. Restrictions on use of sound walls will allow neighborhoods to be less inward focused and allow them to be perceived as more open and welcoming to passers by. See Figure 3.2-6.*

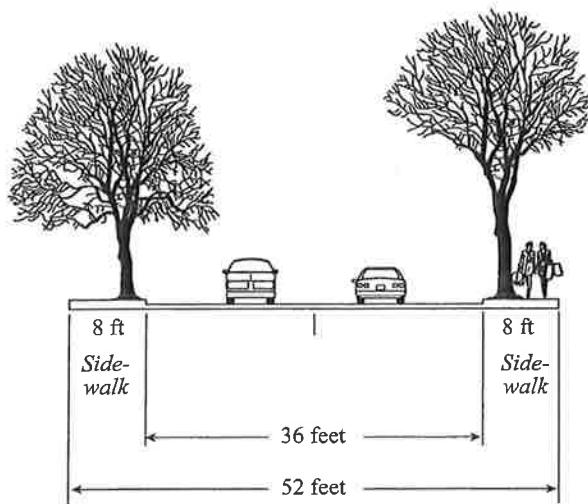
- CD-28 Ensure that development standards do not result in disincentives for providing closely spaced local streets.

*The City should, during updates to the Zoning Ordinance and the Subdivision Regulations, establish minimum lot sizes that take into consideration local streets every 400-500 feet and still allow maximum densities/intensities for the various land use categories to be attained.*



*Figure 3.2-4*

## Local Neighborhood Street Diagram



Local Street

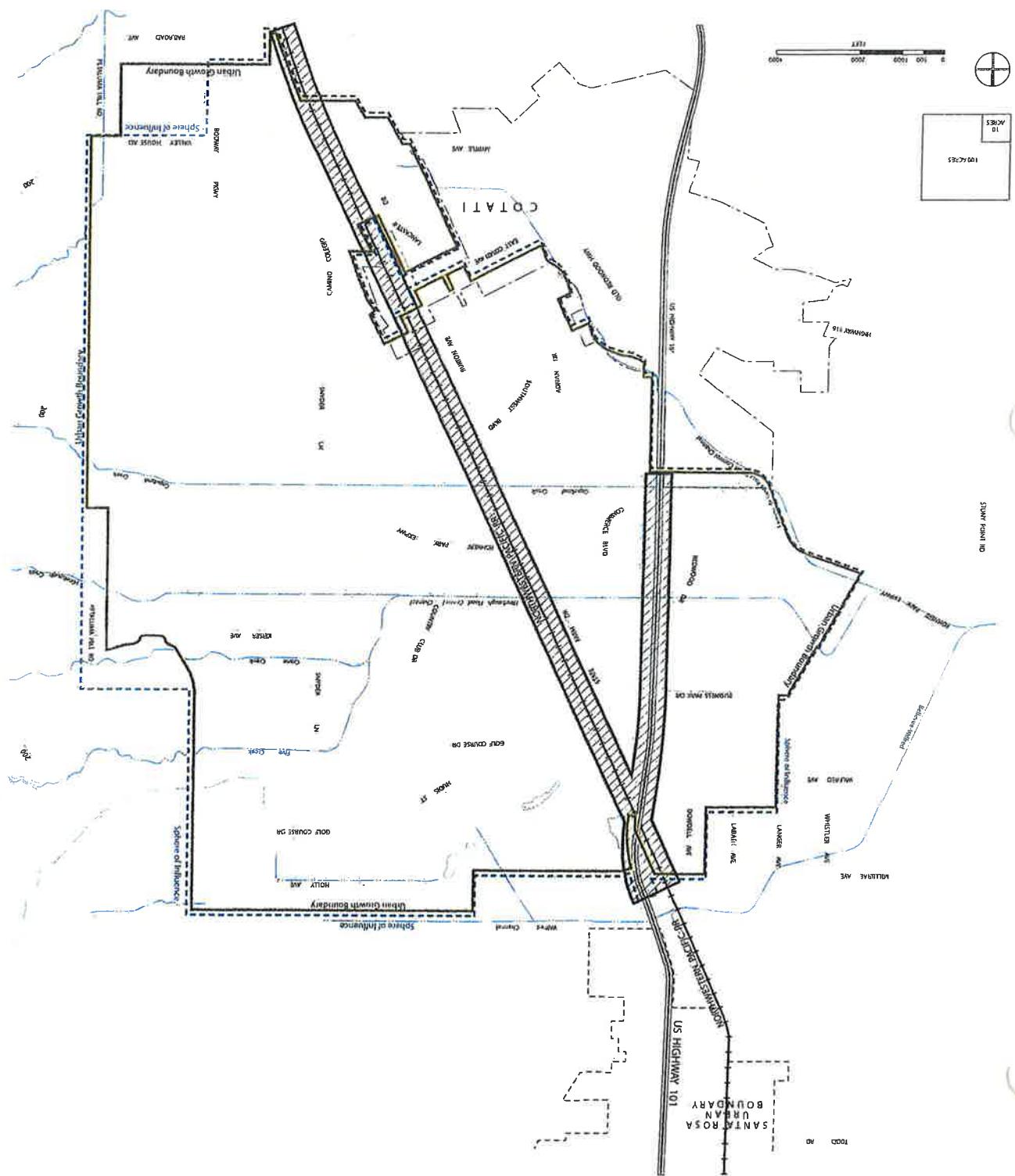
*Figure 3.2-5*

## Local Neighborhood Street Section

# Allowable Sound Wall Locations

Figure 3.2-6

Soundwalls allowed



## Parking

CD-29 To establish flexibility in parking standards, review residential parking requirements in the Zoning Ordinance, and consider implementing the following provisions and exceptions, where appropriate:

- Reduced off-street parking requirements for High Density Residential uses;
- As of 2000, the Zoning Ordinance requires multi-family housing with 10 or more housing units and condominiums, to have two enclosed parking spaces per unit plus one additional uncovered parking space "for each bedroom in excess of three bedrooms per unit."
- Reduced parking requirements for senior housing;
- Reduced off-street parking requirements for residential sites adjacent to the linear park, where on-street parking is more available;
- Reduced parking requirements for development with a mix of uses, to account for differences in peak hour parking demand between the uses.
- As of 2000, the Zoning Ordinance requires sites with more than one use to provide parking that equals the sum of the number of spaces required for each individual use.
- Reduced parking requirements in areas designated as Mixed Use, where mix of uses and compact development favors pedestrian and bicycle access.
- Allowing on-street parking to count toward parking requirements for development in mixed use areas.

CD-30 Encourage development of parking assessment districts for the mixed-use areas. Upon establishment and participation in such a district, do not require parking on individual sites.

*This policy allows flexibility in the arrangement of parking within mixed-use areas. On-street or off-street parking can be located off-site, allowing more compact development.*

## Specific Plan, Planned Development, and City Center Areas

Policies in this section refer to the individual specific plan and planned development areas and to the City Center, as defined in Chapter 2: Land Use and Growth Management.

### ***University District Specific Plan Area***

CD-31 Ensure that the University District is developed as an active, mixed-use pedestrian center, integrated and responsive to the design of the University Concert Hall, sensitive to the existing residential developments to the west, and with transitions to open space to the east.

CD-32 Require development of an appropriately scaled private plaza as the focal point of the mixed use portion of the University District. Ensure that the design of the plaza reflects the following considerations:

- Permit maximum accessibility and foster a public orientation;
- Protection and emphasis of primary view corridors to the east and the north;
- Definition of edges by adjacent buildings and proper landscaping;
- Adequate lighting for nighttime use;
- Flexibility of space for various programs such as concerts, flea markets, etc;
- Locating active uses such as restaurants and cafes around the plaza; and
- A location that is accessible for pedestrians from adjacent areas.

*The location of the plaza is critical for its success. Ideally the plaza would be centrally located, and accessible to a large majority of the mixed-use area within a ¼-mile radius or a five minutes walk. The plaza should also be visible and accessible and accessible from Rohnert Park Expressway, although it need not be located adjacent to it.*

*Many plazas in the West provide successful examples of such considerations; most are based on precepts of Spanish neighborhood design. The Plaza in Santa Fe, the oldest in the country, is perhaps the most successful example. The plaza in Sonoma is much larger, with wider streets as well.*

CD-33 Ensure that the Circulation Plan for the University District Specific Plan incorporates:

- A modified grid-pattern of pedestrian-scaled interconnected streets, no more than 400 to 500 feet apart in the mixed-use areas;

*Where this grid pattern intersects with Rohnert Park Expressway and through-automobile traffic may not be feasible, through pedestrian and bikeway connections across the Expressway should still be provided.*

- A maximum block area;

*A maximum block size would help prevent large blocks that impede circulation within and between neighborhoods. An appropriate maximum block size, to be established as part of the specific plan, would be in the range of 2.5 to 4.0 acres.*

- Street system integrated with existing and proposed accesses to SSU and the Concert Hall;
- Design of street system on the south side of the greenway along Hinebaugh Creek to facilitate connections to the future growth area north of the creek;
- Bikeways, with Class I bikeways along the linear parkway leading to the campus and along Hinebaugh Creek, with connections to the citywide network; and
- Traffic calming measures and unified streetscape; and
- Boulevard-like design for Rohnert Park Expressway between Snyder Lane and Petaluma Hill Road

**Figure 3.2-7 has been eliminated**

**Figure 3.2-8 has been eliminated**

*Rohnert Park General Plan*

Figure 3.2-9: Section of Rohnert Park Expressway at SSU has been eliminated

CD-34 Ensure that the Specific Plan includes an Open Space Plan that:

- Shows existing vegetation and proposed planting areas (including open space buffer) with types and sizes of plant materials; and
- Shows design of walkways, trails, recreation areas, paved areas, benches, water features, and lighting.

CD-35 Ensure that the Open Space Plan provides for the following parks and open spaces:

- A minimum 17-acre open space buffer from the edge of Petaluma Hill Road to the edge of Estate and Low Density Residential and Mixed Use Center development.  
*Policies in Section 3.1 limit the height of planting material along Petaluma Hill Road to 25 feet in order to preserve views from the interior.*
- A "linear parkway" with trails, bike lanes and roadway travel lanes will link Keiser Avenue and Rohnert Park Expressway, the Twin Creeks Park with the Mixed Use Commercial Center and the Green Music Center. An approximately 7.0 acre community park centrally-located within Vast Oak providing active recreational amenities.
- A passive park protecting an existing oak grove located along Keiser Avenue approximately 7.0 acres.

CD-36 Allow clustering of Estate, Low Density Residential, and Mixed Use Center development on the eastern edge of the Specific Plan area to provide pockets of open space and uninterrupted view corridors from interior areas (within the UGB). Require development to be sensitive to and setback from existing residential development on the westside as clarified in CD-7, above.

*Section 3.1 includes a policy to ensure that the City's Zoning and Subdivision regulations permit clustering for Estate Residential developments.*

CD-37 Ensure that the Specific Plan and/or the City Zoning Ordinance reinforce the area's pedestrian-oriented character. Development standards should include:

- "Build-to" lines;
- Defined active street-edges;
- Required transparency;
- Maximum distance between entrances in the mixed-use areas;
- Allowing use of sidewalks for outdoor seating; and
- Integration of street furniture, signage, and elements such as awnings that increase the pedestrian comfort.

CD-38 The linear parkway shall be designed so that parking is provided on each side of this street. Allow half of this parking located immediately adjacent to the Medium- and High-Density Residential areas to count towards off-street parking for these uses.

*This change in parking regulations would result in increased surveillance and security on the street and the park as well.*

- CD-39 Explore the feasibility of use of parking at Sonoma State University's Concert Hall for the University District. Allow suitable reductions in parking requirements for developments in the district if shared parking is available.

*Shared use, if implemented, would not be permitted when concert events are taking place.*

**Figure 3.2-10, Figure 3.2-11 and Figure 3.2-12 have been eliminated per City Council Resolution No. 2006-142.**



### ***City Center***

- CD-40 Use an adopted City Center Concept Plan (Policy LU-30) as the basis for the development character of the area.

*The City Center Concept Plan, in draft stages as of early 2000, envisions the center as “an attractive, family-friendly district, serving as the central community-gathering place, a focal point for cultural, recreational, business, and civic functions.” The City Center should be a “pedestrian-oriented environment with City Hall Drive serving as the City’s ‘main street’”.*

### ***Northeast Specific Plan Area***

*Figure 3.2-13 shows an illustrative simulation of development along Valley House Drive.*

- CD-41 Provide a minimum of one local north-south through street, extending from Eleanor Avenue to Keiser Avenue, within the area between Snyder Lane and the collector leading to the University District linear park.

- CD-42 Provide an 8-acre park to serve as a neighborhood focal point.

*This park should be directly adjacent to either Snyder Lane or the Five Creek greenway and should be directly accessible by bicycle and pedestrian paths to the greenway.*

- CD-43 Locate the proposed High Density Residential uses adjacent to open space (the Five Creek Greenway or 8-acre park) and along the proposed north-south arterial and collector streets to increase accessibility.

### ***Northwest Specific Plan Area***

- CD-44 Use design review to ensure the compatibility of uses in areas where residential and commercial areas are adjacent.

- CD-45 Foster strong design character for Golf Course Drive West through uniform streetscape and signage, and by requiring some parts of all development, including commercial, to be built to the edge of the properties along the street to provide street definition.

- CD-46 Provide a park in the North District to serve the adjacent residential uses.

- CD-47 Ensure that residential developments are designed to capitalize on views of the surrounding separator to the west and the north and beyond.

- CD-48 Ensure that a majority of internal parking is located away from Golf Course Drive West or is screened.

***Sonoma Mountain Village Planned Development Area***

CD-48A Ensure that Sonoma Mountain Village is developed as a sustainable community typified by pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly elements, compact village-style blocks, and integration of residential, commercial, and industrial uses.

CD-48B Ensure that all development and land use conforms with the Sonoma Mountain Village Zoning Code.

CD-48C Ensure that development includes features which advance energy conservation, environmental protection, and sustainability, including:

- Minimizing demolition of existing structures and encouraging adaptive reuse of buildings.
- Providing ample pedestrian and bicycle paths throughout Sonoma Mountain Village, and provide appropriate connection points to surrounding areas to integrate pedestrian and bicycle access to adjacent portions of the City.
- Use of low-water plumbing fixtures and water conservation techniques in building design and construction.
- Use of solar, wind, and other alternative energy forms.

CD-48D Require parks, open spaces, and recreational facilities to be distributed throughout the area in a manner that encourages easy and frequent access by residents, employees, and others within Sonoma Mountain Village.

CD-48E Require design of streets, infrastructure, buildings, and other public and private features to be consistent and complimentary, so as to create a uniform character for all development within Sonoma Mountain Village.

***Stadium Lands Planned Development Area***

CD-49A Require building materials, colors, linkage to sidewalks, parking placement, landscape design, and plant materials to complement existing and proposed uses.

CS-49B Integrate proper site design and/or noise attenuating devices to reduce the indoor and outdoor noise levels for sensitive receptors.

CD-49C Require that all streets within the PDA include sidewalks on both sides, and that sidewalks and paths shall connect all activity areas.

CD-49D Bike racks shall be provided at all retail use locations and within residential areas.

CD-49E Ensure that all development and land use conforms to the Stadium Area Zoning Code

### **Southeast Specific Plan Area**

- CD-50 Locate the proposed Mixed Use Commercial area along Bodway Parkway to increase accessibility. Require buildings to front on Bodway with parking located behind buildings.
- CD-51 Provide Medium Density Residential uses adjacent to mixed-use/commercial areas. Require the commercial center to provide landscaping to screen parking and provide a buffer between the residential and commercial uses.
- CD-52 Ensure that the proposed neighborhood park is located adjacent to the Medium Density Residential area.
- CD-53 Allow only Estate Residential uses along Petaluma Hill Road in order to provide transition between developed and undeveloped areas.

*While this is the only use along Petaluma Hill Road shown on the General Plan Diagram, the intent is to ensure that this policy is maintained if the General Plan Diagram were to be amended in the future.*

### **Existing Neighborhoods**

- CD-54 Ensure that new development in existing neighborhoods is respectful of the character of existing uses and causes minimal design intrusion.

*The General Plan does not seek to alter the character of existing neighborhoods, which have played and will continue to play an important role in the future success of Rohnert Park as a community.*
- CD-55 In cooperation with merchants, undertake a streetscape program for Commerce Boulevard that provides high branching trees that permit the stores to be seen but provide a canopy to the street. Provide shrubs to screen parking from the streets.
- CD-56 Establish a zero foot building setback that allows buildings to be located at the back of the sidewalk for commercial areas in the Downtown District Amenity Zone, as indicated in Figure 3.2-15.
- CD-57 Support public realm enhancements that improve bike and pedestrian connectivity, comfort, and access from neighborhoods and destinations in Central Rohnert Park to the SMART rail station.
- CD-58 Encourage new development to provide public plazas, gathering places, and pedestrian amenities that contribute to the character of the street and public realm.
- CD-59 Focus public and private investments inside the Downtown District Amenity Zone to create an urban downtown streetscape and facilitate pedestrian and bicycle crossings of Rohnert Park Expressway (RPX) and State Farm Drive.

- CD-60 Develop a streetscape palette that accents the identity for downtown and each of the subareas and enhances the character and role of the street.
- CD-61 Promote sustainable development practices that result in more energy- and water efficient development, responsive to the mild climate conditions in the Sonoma Valley.
- CD-62 Allow diverse building types and styles that are compatible and consistent with the character of development in Sonoma County.
- CD-63 Use high quality landscaping and building materials at the SMART station.
- CD-64 Support high quality architecture, streetscape, and landscape design features in the Downtown District Amenity Zone.



Figure Not To Scale

Figure 3.2-13  
Southeast Specific Plan Area Illustrative Diagram

Revised 12/10



Figure 3.2-14

## Illustrative Plan Sonoma Mountain Village

Revised 12/10



Figure Not To Scale

## Rohnert Park General Plan

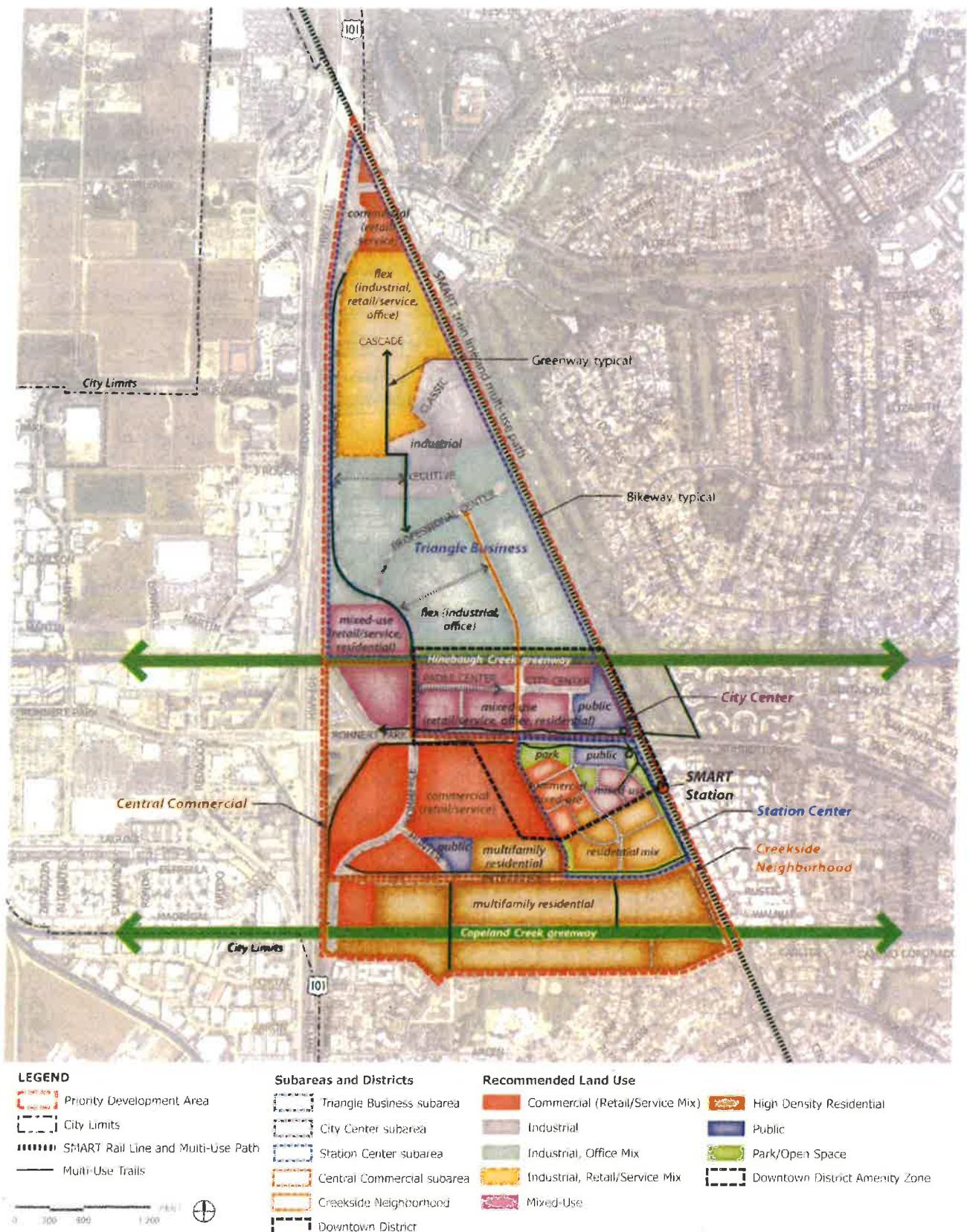


Figure 3.2-16



### 3.3 COMMERCIAL CENTERS

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As of 1999, essentially two types of commercial centers exist in Rohnert Park:

- *Neighborhood Commercial*, located adjacent to neighborhoods, providing convenient shopping for nearby the residents. Neighborhood commercial centers are primarily oriented toward the automobile, but include amenities like large sidewalks and landscaped buffers that are pedestrian-friendly. The largest of these, at Rohnert Park Expressway/Commerce Boulevard, includes more than half the land devoted to neighborhood commercial facilities in the city.
- *Regional Commercial*, located primarily along US 101, serving a regional clientele, in addition to Rohnert Park residents. Large, big-box retail stores (such as Home Depot and Wal-Mart) along Redwood Drive are oriented to their parking lots and the visibility that US 101 provides. Large blocks, minimal access points, and lack of shade trees discourage walking and bicycling.

While much new future commercial development is contemplated as being part of mixed-use centers (policies for which are included in the preceding section), single-use commercial development may occur in several areas.

#### GOALS: COMMERCIAL CENTERS

- CD-N Provide safe, convenient, and comfortable pedestrian connections within commercial centers and between commercial centers and adjacent sites and residential neighborhoods.
- CD-O Ensure that the location of buildings and the orientation of entrances within commercial centers allow for easy pedestrian access.

#### POLICIES: COMMERCIAL CENTERS

Figure 3.3-1 illustrates the potential visual appearance of commercial centers developed according to the policies in this section.

CD-56 Require all development within commercial districts to provide pedestrian amenities, including:

- Pedestrian walkways through parking lots to connect buildings on opposite sides of parking areas;
- Sidewalks wide enough to accommodate pedestrian use;
- Sidewalk intersection bulbs, to reduce the walking distance across streets;
- Pedestrian lighting, benches, street trees, and other sidewalk amenities; and
- Landscaping that complements pedestrian circulation and eliminates barriers to pedestrian access.

*Commercial development should be designed to accommodate both the pedestrian and the automobile. Neighborhood commercial centers, in particular, should provide strong pedestrian and bicycle connections to adjacent neighborhoods. Regional commercial centers are primarily accessed by car, but pedestrian amenities on-site (adequate sidewalk widths, pedestrian lighting, landscaping that complements pedestrian activity and removes barriers to walking, etc.) can help improve pedestrian safety and circulation and facilitate walking to and from adjacent sites.*

*See also Chapter 4: Transportation, which requires pedestrian amenities to be provided within 600 feet of Mixed-use, High Density Residential, schools, parks, and recreational uses.*

CD-57 As part of the Zoning Ordinance, maintain development standards for all development within commercial districts that include, but are not limited to:

- Maximum setbacks from the front lot-line;
- Maximum length of the front lot line that can be used as the edge of a parking lot;
- Landscaping requirements;
- Design standards for parking lots, including landscaping and buffering;
- Required orientation of main entrances to the street;
- Building transparency and pedestrian comfort;
- Signage requirements; and
- Height, overall size, materials, lighting, and location.

## DOWNTOWN DISTRICT

In 2016, in order to facilitate the development of downtown, a Downtown District Amenity Zone (DDAZ) was established by the Central Rohnert Park, Priority Development Area Plan. The DDAZ is intended to focus investment in the downtown area and to facilitate and create a compact, walkable, commercial district that is unique to Rohnert Park. The intent is to establish an urban streetscape environment supporting creation of a walkable dining, entertainment, retail, and civic district, within an urban atmosphere that is uniquely defined for the city. Figure 3.2-16 illustrates the DDAZ boundaries.

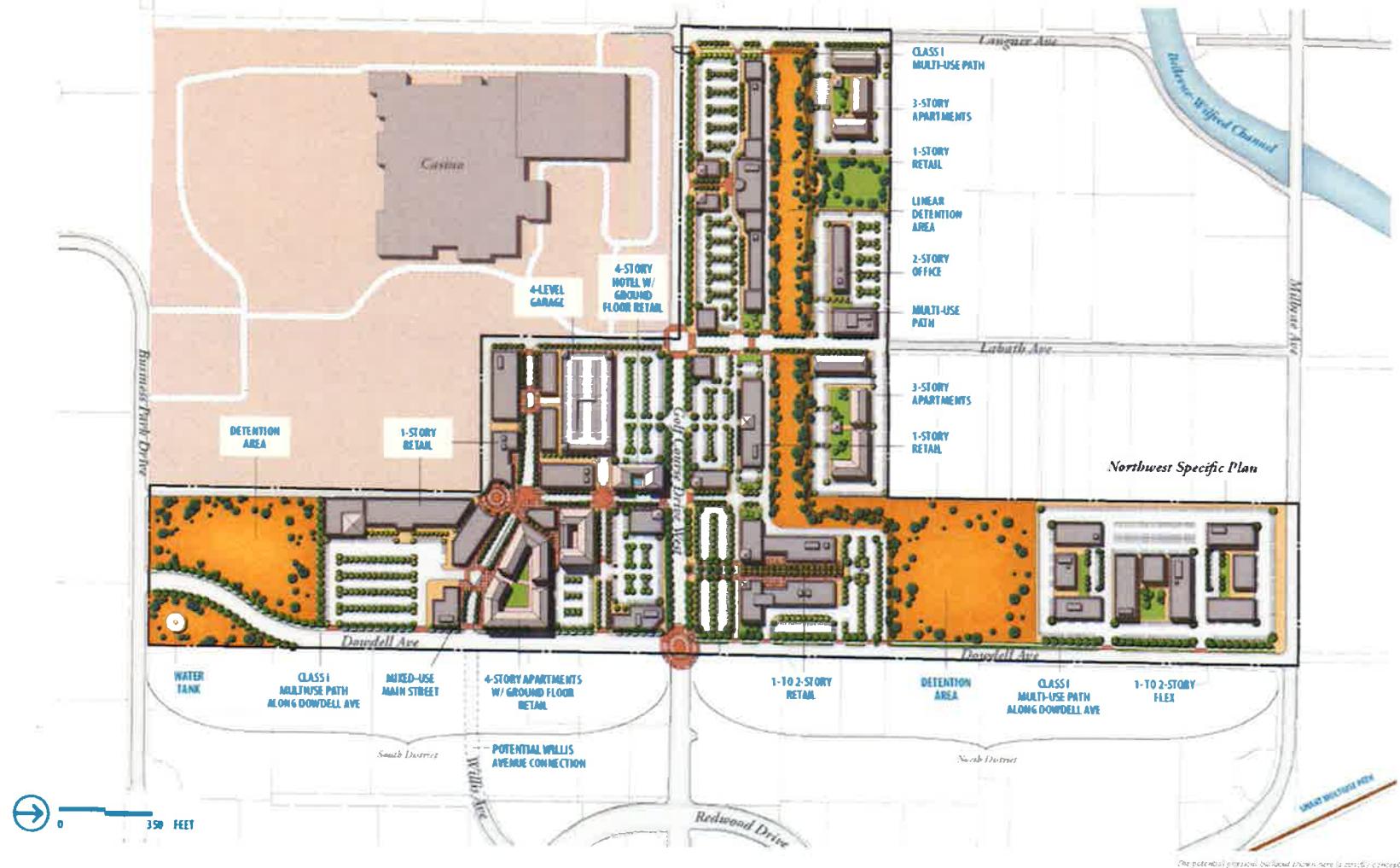


Figure 3.3-1  
Northwest Specific Plan Area Illustrative Diagram

Revised 09/14

## **PUBLIC ART**

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As in the past, the City should continue efforts to promote arts and culture, including in cooperation with Sonoma State University, and as part of development and redevelopment.

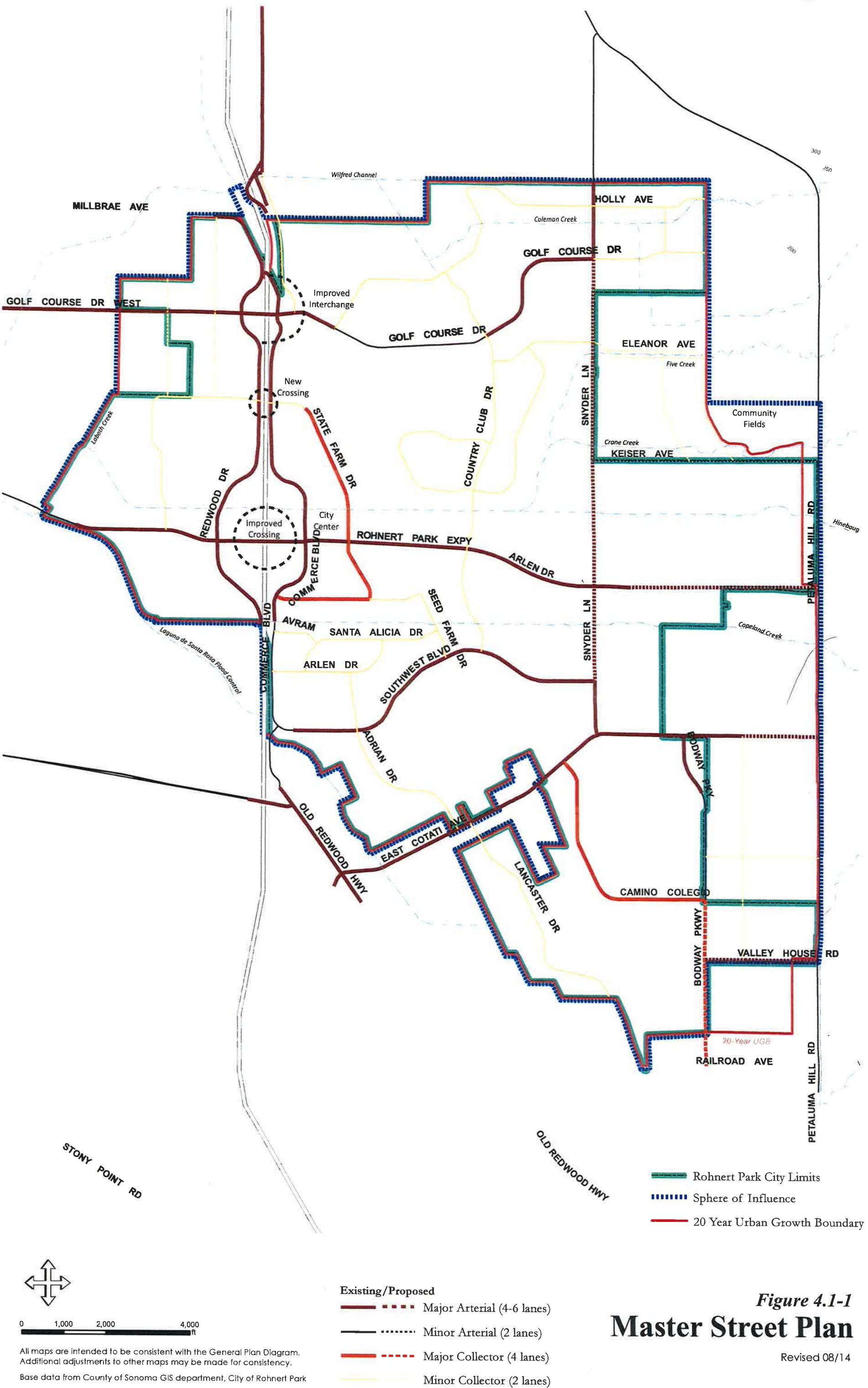
### **GOALS: PUBLIC ART**

CD-P Promote art and culture in Rohnert Park

### **POLICIES: PUBLIC ART**

CD-58 Encourage the integration of art and cultural components in public places and facilities.

CD-59 Include art and cultural components in areas of new development and redevelopment.



**Figure 4.1-1**  
**Master Street Plan**

Revised 08/14



## **4 Transportation**

The Transportation Element includes policies, programs, and standards that are intended to:

- Maintain mobility and reduce traffic in congested locations;
- Improve connections between different parts of the city;
- Further an integrated multi-modal transportation system that encourages transit use, walking, and biking; and
- Provide incentives for travel demand reduction.

The Transportation Element identifies future circulation needs for a long-range planning horizon, based on General Plan buildout (see Chapter 2: Land Use and Growth Management). As part of the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP), the identified improvements will be studied in greater detail, and funding and implementation sources will be determined.

This element addresses issues from a citywide to neighborhood and block-level scales, as well as other issues that are countywide or regional in scope. Coordination with other jurisdictions will be necessary for improvements to US 101 and other roads outside the City's jurisdiction. Transit service improvements will require coordination with transit operators.

Transportation and land use are closely connected. Development imposes new demands on the transportation system, and the transportation system shapes the character and intensity of development over many years. Policies related to the physical framework for development that the circulation system is designed to serve are included in Chapter 2: Land Use and Growth Management and Chapter 3: Community Design. Provisions in Chapters 2, 3, and 4 are intended to be complementary, so that land use and transportation are coordinated.

## 4.1 STREET SYSTEM

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Rohnert Park's street network—including existing (1999) streets, roadway improvements, and new streets—is shown on Figure 4.1-1. US 101 bisects the city and serves as the main connection to cities to the north and south. Petaluma Hill Road and Stony Point Road are partially used as bypass routes for trips between Santa Rosa and Petaluma. State Route (SR) 116 connects Rohnert Park with Sebastopol and the Russian River area to the west, with Petaluma to the south, and the Valley of the Moon wine country to the east.

Rohnert Park has a hierarchical street system of city streets—characteristic of post-war suburban development—that separates fast-moving through-traffic from slow-moving local traffic. Arterial and collector streets provide circulation between and through neighborhoods, activity centers, and highways and other regional routes, and are characterized by higher traffic volumes and speeds and fewer curb cuts. In contrast, local streets have lower traffic volumes and speeds and provide curb cuts for most adjacent sites.

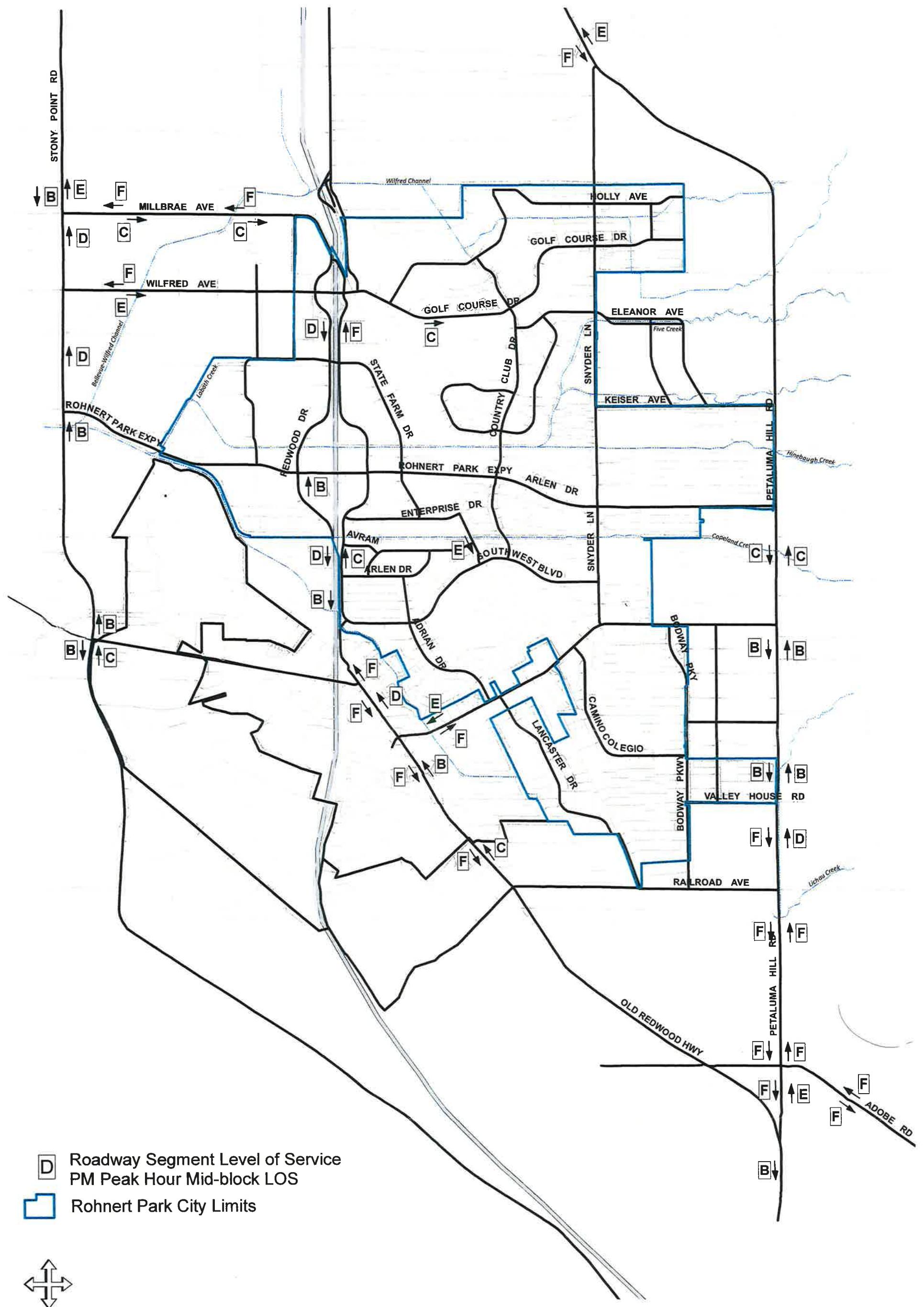
### TRAFFIC FLOW STANDARDS

#### Levels of Service

The most widely used standard for evaluating traffic flow is called level of service (LOS), which is a grade level assigned to volume-capacity ratios. As shown in Table 4.1-1, LOS describes the quality of flow, ranging from free flow (LOS A) to extreme congestion associated with overcapacity conditions (LOS F). Signalized intersection LOS definitions are included in Table 4.1-2.

**Table 4.1-1a:**  
**Traffic Level of Service (LOS) Definitions**

<i>LOS</i>	<i>Traffic Flow Conditions</i>	<i>Max Volume-Capacity Ratio</i>
A	<b><i>Free flow.</i></b> No traffic-related restrictions on vehicle maneuverability or speed. Speed is determined by drivers' desires, speed limits, and physical roadway conditions.	0.6
B	<b><i>Stable flow.</i></b> Operating speeds start to be restricted; little or no restrictions on maneuverability from other vehicles. Slight delays.	0.7
C	<b><i>Stable flow.</i></b> Speeds and maneuverability more closely restricted. Occasional backups behind left-turning vehicles at intersections. Acceptable delays.	0.8
D	<b><i>Approaching unstable flow.</i></b> Queues develop. Temporary restrictions on speed may cause extensive delays. Little freedom to maneuver. Comfort and convenience low. Delays at intersections may exceed one or more signal changes.	0.9
E	<b><i>Unstable flow.</i></b> Stoppages of momentary duration. Low operating speeds. Maneuverability severely limited. Intolerable delays.	1.0
F	<b><i>Forced flow.</i></b> Gridlock conditions. Stoppages for long periods. Low operating speeds. Delays at intersections average 60 seconds or more.	>1.0



**Figure 4.1-2**

## Traffic Levels Of Service Under General Plan Buildout

All maps are intended to be consistent with the General Plan Diagram. Additional adjustments to other maps may be made for consistency.

Base data from County of Sonoma GIS department, City of Rohnert Park



**Table 4.1-1b:**  
**Signalized Intersection LOS Definitions**

<i>LOS</i>	<i>Intersection Conditions</i>	<i>Delay (Seconds per Vehicle)</i>
A	Progression is extremely favorable, and most vehicles arrive during the green phase. Most vehicles do not stop at all. Short cycle lengths contribute to low delay.	5.0
B	Good progression and/or short cycle lengths. More vehicles stop causing higher levels of average delay.	5.1 to 15.0
C	Fair progression and/or longer cycle lengths. Individual cycle failures, resulting in drivers having to wait through more than one red signal indication, begin to appear. The number of vehicles stopping is significant, although many still pass through the intersection without stopping.	15.1 to 25.0
D	The influence of congestion becomes more noticeable. Unfavorable progression, long cycle lengths, or high volumes. Many vehicles stop, the proportion of vehicles not stopping declines. Individual cycle failures noticeable.	25.1 to 40.0
E	The limit of acceptable delay. Poor progression, long cycle lengths, and high volumes. Individual cycle failures are frequent.	40.1 to 60.0
F	Unacceptable to most drivers. Oversaturation, arrival flow rates exceed the capacity of the intersection. Many individual cycle failures. Poor progression and long cycle lengths.	60.0+

## Other Standards

Other standards, aside from LOS, can be used to evaluate and monitor traffic conditions. For example, vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and vehicle hours traveled (VHT) are measurements that are used to understand overall traffic conditions and delays experienced by commuters. Standards based on such measurements can ensure that traffic flow is evaluated and monitored in a comprehensive manner, not just on a segment-by-segment basis.

## TRAFFIC CONDITIONS

### 1999 Operations

As of 1999, traffic in Rohnert Park flows relatively smoothly along most street segments. Although traffic has increased over the course of the City's 43-year history, in conjunction with new development, most streets in Rohnert Park were designed with excess capacity and have been able to absorb the traffic increases. The fact that most streets have low traffic levels suggest that the roadway system can accommodate additional traffic volumes without significant increases in delay in most places.

However, in 1999, several arterial streets experienced congestion during peak hours, and some intersections also experienced congested conditions and delay. The principal congestion locations within the city include:

- US 101 interchange at the Rohnert Park Expressway;
- Rohnert Park Expressway-Commerce Boulevard intersection;
- US 101 interchange at Wilfred Avenue;
- Commerce Boulevard, between Golf Course Drive and Redwood Drive; and
- Snyder Lane, between Southwest Boulevard and Keiser Road.

Congestion is also an issue on regional routes in the Rohnert Park Planning Area. US 101 has become increasingly congested throughout the 1990s, as a result of countywide population and employment growth. The Rohnert Park segment of US 101 currently operates at LOS E during the peak hours. Petaluma Hill Road also experiences heavy traffic, because it serves as a bypass for US 101 and provides access to Sonoma State University (SSU). The segments of Petaluma Hill Road adjacent to Rohnert Park generally operate at LOS D or worse.

Traffic signals have been installed at intersections with high traffic volumes or accident rates, or have special traffic control needs. In 1997, traffic light synchronization was installed on Commerce Boulevard between the Expressway and Enterprise Drive and on the Expressway between Commerce Boulevard and Snyder Lane, but was disconnected due to programming and coordination problems. As of 1999, the City has allocated funds to replace the controllers with up-to-date units.

### **Projected Traffic Flow**

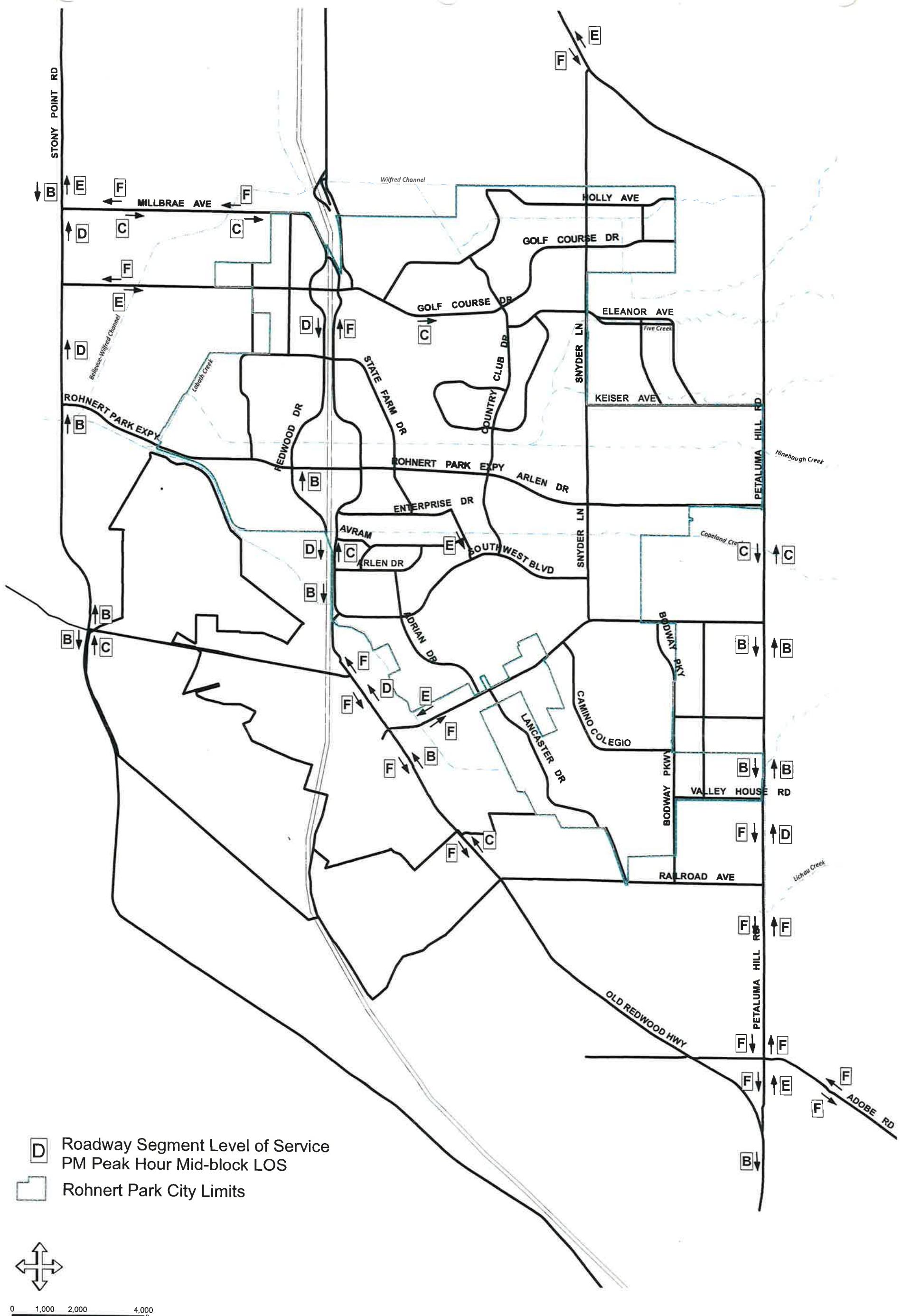
With all the improvements listed in Table 4.1-4, many city streets would have relatively little traffic congestion (LOS A, B, C) during the PM peak commute hour under full buildout of the General Plan, as shown in Figure 4.1-2. The following roadway segments would experience congested conditions and exceed the maximum acceptable level of service during the PM peak hour:

- Commerce Boulevard
  - northbound, between State Farm Drive and US 101 interchange (LOS F)
  - southbound, between State Farm Drive and US 101 interchange (LOS D)
  - southbound, between Enterprise Drive and Old Redwood Highway (LOS D)
- Seed Farm Drive
  - southbound, between State Farm Drive and Southwest Boulevard (LOS E)
- Petaluma Hill Road
  - northbound, between Valley House Drive and East Railroad Avenue (LOS D)
  - southbound, between Valley House Drive and East Railroad Avenue (LOS F)
  - northbound, northwest of Snyder Lane (LOS E)

- southbound, northwest of Snyder Lane (LOS F)
- Stony Point Road
  - northbound, north of Millbrae Avenue (LOS F)
- Millbrae Avenue
  - westbound, east of Stony Point Road (LOS F)
- Wilfred Avenue
  - eastbound, east of Stony Point Road (LOS E)
  - westbound, east of Stony Point Road (LOS F)

The traffic model used to identify these congested spots takes into account planned expansion of SSU to 10,000 FTE students. In addition to these traffic congestion spots during the PM peak commute hour, other school drop-off and pick-up locations will continue to experience congestion under General Plan buildout at the beginning and end of the school day. The SSU Concert Hall facility (in planning as of 1999) would be expected to generate traffic during special events. Most events would be expected to start and finish in the evenings, after the PM peak commute hour.

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**Figure 4.1-2**  
**Traffic Levels Of Service Under General Plan Buildout**

All maps are intended to be consistent with the General Plan Diagram.  
Additional adjustments to other maps may be made for consistency.  
Base data from County of Sonoma GIS department, City of Rohnert Park



## **REGIONAL ROADWAYS**

Plans and programs are in place for several regional roadways in the Rohnert Park Planning Area:

### **US 101**

In 1999, funds were allocated under the Metropolitan Transportation Commissions (MTC) funding-constrained Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for additional improvements to the Rohnert Park Expressway interchange. Widening of the overpass was complete as of 1999, and an eastbound to northbound loop onramp is planned. (The Rohnert Park Expressway interchange improvements are being funded with local funds.) In 1996, the widening between the freeway and Redwood Drive was completed, and in 1999 the widening of the overcrossing structure was completed. The balance of the widening to Commerce Boulevard and construction of the northbound loop on-ramp is scheduled for completion in 2000. A second loop onramp for southbound traffic and a second Park 'n Ride lot are scheduled for construction in 2002, pending final funding availability. Also, construction of high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes along the US 101 freeway from Wilfred Avenue in Rohnert Park north to Steele Lane in Santa Rosa is funded and scheduled to begin construction in winter 2000.

### **County-Monitored Transportation Network**

The 1991 Congestion Management Plan (CMP) established the Monitored Transportation Network. The CMP requires that all roadway segments in the network meet specific LOS requirements, and improvements are planned accordingly, on an on-going basis. In the Rohnert Park Planning Area, segments that are part of the network (as listed in Appendix B of the 1993 CMP) include:

- US 101;
- Rohnert Park Expressway, from Redwood Drive to the eastern Rohnert Park City limits. (The segment from Redwood Drive to State Farm Drive is grandfathered at LOS F); and
- SR 116.

### **Petaluma Hill Road**

Traffic congestion presently exists in Penngrove at the Petaluma Hill Road and Old Adobe Road intersection during commute times. Implementation of this General Plan will result in additional traffic in this area. As of 2000, planned County improvements along Petaluma Hill Road include signalization improvements at the Roberts Road intersection and a new left-turn pocket at the Keiser Avenue intersection. Long-term solutions to traffic congestion on Petaluma Hill Road require a cooperative, regional approach by Sonoma County, the Penngrove community, Sonoma State University, and the cities of Cotati, Petaluma, Santa Rosa, and Rohnert Park. The City of Rohnert Park commits to being a responsible participant in formulating measures to minimize traffic congestion on Petaluma Hill Road.

The City has been working with the County and other interested parties to identify potential improvements that will mitigate regional impacts to the extent feasible. It is anticipated that the process of studying and approving the selected improvements will take several years to complete.

Therefore, specific improvements to existing and future traffic congestion on Petaluma Hill Road have not been identified at this time, but a process to address the issues has been established. Policies are included in this General Plan to establish Rohnert Park's commitment to contribute financially to the selected improvements.

### **City of Cotati Roadways**

Because of the location of the City of Cotati between Rohnert Park and U.S. 101, a portion of Rohnert Park traffic passes through Cotati to reach the U.S. 101 corridor. Implementation of this General Plan may generate additional vehicle trips on City of Cotati roadways, particularly East Cotati Avenue. Long-term solutions to traffic congestion on East Cotati Avenue require a cooperative agency approach. Policies in this General Plan commit the City of Rohnert Park to being a responsible participant in developing measures to minimize the City's traffic effects on East Cotati Avenue.

### **GOALS: STREET SYSTEM**

- TR-A Promote safe and efficient vehicular circulation throughout Rohnert Park.
- TR-B Maintain high levels of mobility along all major street segments and at major intersections.
- TR-C Build new roads and improve existing roadways, where necessary, in conjunction with new development.
- TR-D Improve vehicular connections across US 101, to better link the western and eastern parts of the city.
- TR-E Discourage high-speed traffic and trucks from using local streets.
- TR-F Encourage alternative modes of travel—including transit, bicycles, and walking—by coordinating land use planning and development with transportation and by promoting compact, mixed-use development in targeted areas.
- TR-G Integrate street alignments with natural features, such as creeks and greenways.
- TR-H Coordinate with regional agencies on transportation improvements in the Rohnert Park Planning Area.

### **POLICIES: STREET SYSTEM**

#### **Street Classifications and Standards**

- TR-1 Establish LOS C as the minimum standard for all arterial and collector roadway segments (“segments”) and intersections, except for (1) those specified segments and intersections for which allowable LOS standards are otherwise established below; and (2) segments and

intersections that are operating at LOS D or lower at the time an application for a development project or a specified plan is submitted if no feasible improvements exist to improve the LOS. The then-existing LOS may be permitted to be the standard for those segments and intersections in category (2), provided that the LOS not be permitted to deteriorate further due to the proposed development project or specific plan.

*LOS shall be evaluated and determined on the basis of either the Highway Capacity Manual, or other means approved by the City.*

**Table 4.1-2**  
**Roadways and Intersections**

Segment	From	To	Existing <sup>1</sup> LOS NB/SB <sup>2</sup>	Standard <sup>3</sup> LOS NB/SB
Commerce Blvd.	State Farm Dr.	U.S. 101 Northbound Ramps	D/A	F/D
Commerce Blvd (southbound only)	Enterprise	Old Redwood Hwy	/A	D
Seed Farm Dr. (southbound only)	State Farm Dr.	Southwest Blvd.	/B	E
Petaluma Hill Rd.	Valley House Rd.	East Railroad Ave.	E/A	D/F

*Intersections:*

E. Cotati Ave./Snyder Lane (mitigation in EIR is not feasible)	B	D
Wilfred Ave./Redwood Dr.	B	D
Wilfred Ave./U.S. 101 Southbound Ramps (new intersection)	N/A	D
Commerce Dr./Golf Course (a newly configured intersection)	B	D
Commerce Blvd/U.S. 101 Northbound Ramps	B	D

1. Existing LOS based on General Plan Revised Draft EIR, May 2000

2. Northbound/Southbound Direction

3. With mitigation identified in Revised Draft EIR

- TR-2 Require mitigation measures, as needed, for new development that increases traffic such that LOS levels fall below the established minimum standard. Ensure that mitigation measures are coordinated with roadway improvements programmed for funding through transportation-related impact fees.

*Chapter 2: Land Use and Growth Management requires project proponents to pay for transportation improvements made necessary by development. Policy TR-1 establishes minimum LOS standards. A traffic analysis will be required for each specific plan area and mitigation measures will be required, as appropriate, both within and outside the City limits.*

- TR-3 Establish additional traffic flow benchmarks in order to evaluate and monitor changes in traffic flow over time.

*Potential traffic flow benchmarks include vehicle miles traveled (VMT) or vehicle hours traveled (VHT). Increases in VMT or VHT can be compared to increases in population. By way of example, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) establishes the ratio of population increase to VMT increase as the standard for evaluating compliance of local land use plans to the Clean Air Plan.*

- TR-4 Establish roadway classifications, as shown in Table 4.1-3. Require right-of-way dedications and design roadway improvements based on these classifications and Figure 4.1-1.

*Roadways are differentiated by function, width, number of lanes, presence or absence of on-street parking, speed, volumes, access, and design characteristics. Because width is not the only determinant, collectors can have four lanes, and arterials can have two lanes; thus, some collectors will be wider than some arterials. Based on the classifications, the City will develop detailed engineering standards for roadway improvements.*

*Designation of an existing local street as an arterial or collector does not necessarily mean that traffic volumes or speed are expected to increase. Instead, it means that streets are designed with the site access, parking, number of lanes, and other characteristics shown in Table 4.1-3. Traffic calming devices can be used to control volume and speed.*

*Figure 4.1-1 serves as the Master Street Plan. It shows only arterial and collector streets in areas of new development. Local streets, which are not shown on the map, but are necessary to provide adequate site access, will be required during Subdivision Map approvals.*

*The design of certain streets may differ from the roadway classifications, in accordance with the policies in this chapter and Chapter 3: Community Design. These streets include the one-way collector couplet along the linear park, the one-way arterial couplet along Five Creek, and Snyder Lane, designed with a greenway along its eastern edge.*

- TR-5 Require provision of local streets in accordance with the City's Subdivision Ordinance and the policies and standards in Chapter 3: Community Design.

## Roadway Improvements

- TR-6 Use the City's Capital Improvements Program as a means to prioritize and undertake roadway improvements listed in Table 4.1-4 and shown on Figure 4.1-1.

*Responsibilities for upgrading and maintaining roads that were outside the City's jurisdiction in 1999 (such as Keiser Avenue and Petaluma Hill Road) will be negotiated with the County and the County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) when the Sphere of Influence (SOI) is expanded.*

- TR-7 Explore the feasibility of extending Eleanor Avenue eastward to connect with Crane Canyon Road.

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**Table 4.1-3:**  
**Roadway Classifications**

	<i>Function</i>	<i>Traffic Lanes<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>Intersections</i>	<i>Driveways</i>	<i>Left-turn Pockets</i>	<i>Signalization</i>	<i>On-street Parking</i>	<i>Traffic Speed</i>	<i>Traffic Volume</i>
Major Arterial	Provides circulation between neighborhoods, activity centers, and highways and other regional routes.	4 (6 in specific locations; see Figure 4.1-1)	Intersections with local streets are permitted, provided that they are right-turn-only and at least 200 feet apart. <i>This provision is intended to maximum access between neighborhoods, particularly between the University District and the SSU campus along the Rohnert Park Expressway.</i>	Driveways are generally not permitted. Driveways are permitted to major traffic generators, provided they are right-turn-only. A deceleration lane must be provided for each driveway. <i>Major traffic generators include areas designated for Regional Commercial, Office, Mixed Use, and High Density Residential uses.</i>	Yes	Signal preference and synchronization.	No	High	High
Minor Arterial	Provides circulation between neighborhoods, activity centers, and highways and other regional routes. Also provides circulation in rural and open space areas.	2	Intersections with local streets are permitted, provided that they are right-turn-only and at least 200 feet apart. <i>This provision is intended to maximum access between neighborhoods.</i>	Driveways are permitted, provided they are right-turn-only and at least 100 feet apart. A deceleration lane must be provided for each driveway. <i>Some Rural Estate Residential lots may have direct access from a minor arterial. A 100-foot spacing allows a shared driveway for two adjacent lots with 50-foot frontages. Wider spacing would impede access to those lots.</i>	Yes	As traffic conditions require.	No	High	Moderate
Major Collector	Provides circulation within and between neighborhoods.	4	No restriction.	Driveways are permitted, provided they are right-turn-only and at least 50 feet apart.	Yes	As traffic conditions require.	No	Moderate	High
Minor Collector	Provides circulation within and between neighborhoods.	2	No restriction.	No restriction.	No	As traffic conditions require.	Yes; Required on both sides of each segment of a one-way couplet	Moderate	Low
Local	Provides access to individual sites.	2	No restriction.	No restriction.	No	As traffic conditions require.	Yes	Low	Low

1. All streets shall have sidewalks. Bikeways shall be provided in accordance with Figure 4.4-1.



**Table 4.1-4:**  
**Roadway Improvements**

Segment	From	To	Improvement
<i>Infill</i>			
Rohnert Park Expwy US 101	Commerce Blvd	Redwood Dr	Widen to 6 lanes
US 101 Crossing	State Farm Dr	Business Park Dr	New Minor Arterial
US 101 Underpass	Golf Course Dr	Wilfred Dr	New Major Arterial
Snyder Ln	Southwest Blvd	Hinebaugh Creek	Upgrade to Major Arterial (widen to 4 lanes)
<i>Eastside</i>			
Snyder Ln	North side of Creekside Middle School	South side of G Section Neighborhood	Upgrade to Major Arterial (widen to 4 lanes)
Rohnert Park Expwy	Snyder Ln	Petaluma Hill Rd	Upgrade to Major Arterial (widen to 4 lanes)
Petaluma Hill Rd	1,500 feet north of Keiser Ave	Railroad Avenue	Upgrade with intersection improvements and turn lanes (remains as 2 lanes, with designation as Minor Arterial).
Eleanor Ave	1999 City Limits	Rohnert Park Expwy	New Minor Collector
Keiser Ave	Snyder Ln	Petaluma Hill Rd	Upgrade to Minor Arterial or Major Collector
North-South Spine Rd	Eleanor Rd	North side of SSU	New Minor Collector
<i>Canon Manor and Southeast</i>			
East Cotati Ave	Bodway Pkwy	Petaluma Hill Rd	Upgrade to Major Arterial (widen to 4 lanes)
Bodway Pkwy	Camino Collegio	Railroad Ave	New Major Collector
Alice Dr	Bodway Pkwy	Petaluma Hill Rd	Upgrade to Minor Collector
<i>Westside</i>			
Golf Course Drive West	Stony Point Road	Redwood Drive	Upgrade to Major Arterial (widen to 4 lanes)
Dowdell Ave	Business Park Dr	Millbrae Ave	Upgrade to Minor Collector
Labath Ave	Business Park Dr	Urban Growth Boundary	Upgrade to Minor Collector (north of Wilfred Ave) New Minor Collector (south of Wilfred Ave)

Source: City of Rohnert Park, Crane Transportation Group

(Rev. 09/14)

TR-8 (Has been eliminated from General Plan)

TR-9 Design the Rohnert Park Expressway as a pedestrian-friendly boulevard between the 1999 City limits and Petaluma Hill Road.

*A pedestrian-friendly environment would be created through provision of pedestrian amenities, as called for in Policy TR-38. Chapter 3 contains additional policies to promote a pedestrian-oriented environment in the University District specific plan area and to create attractive streetscapes throughout the city.*

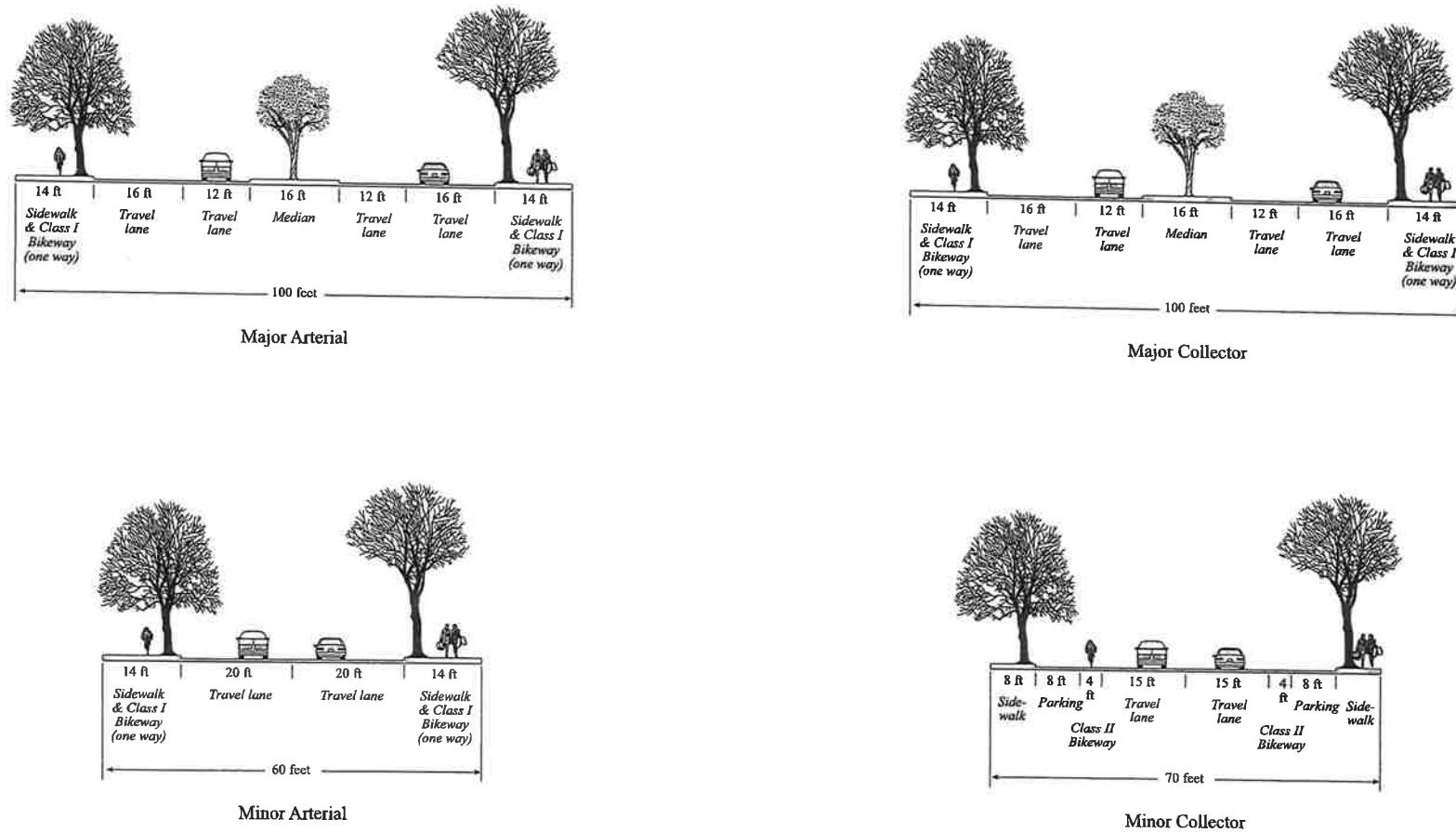
TR-10 Where street widening is proposed and the City owns an existing right-of-way that exceeds the minimum required width, according to the roadway classifications shown in Figure 4.1-3, the additional width shall be used for a greenway along one side of the street that has bikeways, pedestrian paths, and landscaping. Create smooth connections between other parts of the roadway that may have a narrower right-of-way or a different street configuration.

*Prior to adoption of this Plan, arterials were required to be 120 feet wide in order to include on-street parking. As shown in Table 4.1-3 and Figure 4.1-3, the updated arterial roadway classification prohibits on-street parking and thus requires a narrower right-of-way. As a result, excess right-of-way width may result along some arterial streets where the City has already secured the 120-foot right-of-way.*

*The primary example of such a street is Snyder Lane between the Creekside Middle School and the G Section neighborhood. The City owns a 120-foot right-of-way, but would only need 90 feet to accommodate a Major Arterial, as called for in Figure 4.1-1. Chapter 3: Community Design proposes specific street designs for Snyder Lane and establishes design policies for all such streets. The Rohnert Park Expressway does not have an excess right-of-way, because the 120-foot width is needed to accommodate frontage streets, as required in Policy TR-9.*

TR-11 Use the City's Capital Improvements Program as the mechanism to prioritize and undertake the intersection improvements listed in Table 4.1-5.

*This policy is intended to maintain intersections above the LOS standards established in Policy TR-1 and will help reduce traffic congestion, increase safety, and enhance traffic flows. Intersection improvements are designed to reduce delay and improve flow at congested intersections identified in the traffic model run conducted as part of the General Plan analysis*



*Figure 4.1-3*  
Illustrative Street Section Diagram for Roadway Classifications

TR-12 Use the CIP to establish priorities for roadway improvements and prepare an action program for implementation.

*Policy GM-15 in the Land Use and Growth Management Element calls for the City to prepare a CIP.*

TR-13 Explore the feasibility of undertaking measures to address localized congestion at school drop-off and pick-up locations.

*These would include:*

- Adjust signal timing at the Snyder Lane intersections with Rohnert Park Expressway, Southwest Boulevard, East Cotati Avenue, and at Creekside Middle School to accommodate traffic flow during school peak traffic periods.
- Identify traffic congestion problems that occur during school pick-up and drop-off periods for each school site in Rohnert Park, and implement appropriate measures to improve traffic conditions.

**Table 4.1-5:**  
**Intersection Improvements**

<i>Intersection</i>	<i>Improvement</i>
Golf Course Drive West/ Redwood Drive	Southbound: add an additional left turn lane; westbound: widen to provide an exclusive right, a combined through/right, an exclusive through and two exclusive left turn lanes; eastbound: widen to provide an exclusive right, a combined through-right, an exclusive through, and an exclusive left turn lane.
Golf Course Drive West/ U.S.101 Southbound Ramps	New intersection southbound: provide an exclusive southbound right, a combined right/left, and an exclusive left turn lane; westbound: provide two through lanes and an exclusive left turn lane; eastbound: provide two through lanes and an exclusive right turn lane.
Golf Course Drive West / Langner	Westbound: widen to include separate left, through, and right-turn lanes. Eastbound: widen to include a left-turn pocket and shared through-right-turn lane. Southbound: widen to include a left-turn lane and shared through-right lane.
Golf Course Drive West / Labath Avenue	Westbound: widen to include two through lanes and two left-turn lanes. Southbound: widen to include a left lane and through-right lane.
Golf Course Drive West / Dowdell Avenue	Southbound: widen to include dual left-turn lanes. Eastbound: add a right-turn pocket.  Northbound: reconfigure to include separate left, through, and right-turn lanes.
Business Park Drive/Dowdell Avenue	Install a traffic signal and construct an eastbound left-turn pocket.
Commerce Drive/ Golf Course Drive	Newly configured intersection southbound: provide a combined through/right and an exclusive left turn lane; westbound: provide a through/right, exclusive through, and an exclusive left turn lane; northbound: provide and exclusive right, exclusive through, and exclusive left turn lane; eastbound: provide two exclusive right, two through lanes and an exclusive left turn lane.
Rohnert Park Ex- pressway/ U.S.101 Southbound Ramps	Westbound: widen to provide one additional through lane; eastbound: widen to provide one additional through lane.
Rohnert Park Ex- pressway/ U.S.101 Northbound Ramps	Westbound: widen to provide one additional through lane.
Rohnert Park Ex- pressway/ Commerce Drive	Southbound: widen to provide an exclusive right, an exclusive through, a combined through/right, and an exclusive left turn lane; westbound: widen to provide a combined through/right, two an exclusive through, and an exclusive left turn lane; eastbound: widen to provide an exclusive right, two through lanes, and two exclusive

**Table 4.1-5:**  
**Intersection Improvements**

	left turn lanes.
Rohnert Park Expressway/ Snyder Lane	Southbound: widen to provide an exclusive right, two through lanes, and an exclusive left turn lane; northbound: widen to provide one additional left turn lane.
Rohnert Park Expressway/ Petaluma Hill Road	Eastbound: widen to provide an exclusive right and an exclusive left turn lane.
East Cotati Avenue/ Snyder Lane	None needed.
East Cotati Avenue/ Petaluma Hill Road	Eastbound: widen to provide an exclusive right and an exclusive left turn lane.

*Source: Crane Transportation Group.*

### Inter-jurisdictional Coordination

TR-14 Work with CalTrans to coordinate widening projects, interchange improvements, and other improvements along US 101.

TR-15 Encourage CalTrans, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), and the Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA) to plan, fund, and implement improvements to the Wilfred Avenue interchange along US 101.

*Improvement of the interchange would be appropriate in conjunction with construction of HOV lanes from Santa Rosa Avenue to Steele Lane in Santa Rosa. The Wilfred Avenue interchange, located about a ½-mile south of the Santa Rosa Avenue interchange, would serve as an important access point for HOVs.*

TR-16 Encourage CalTrans, in cooperation with the City of Cotati, to relocate the northbound on-ramp at the SR 116 interchange along US 101.

*Relocation of the onramp would potentially improve the flow of traffic accessing US 101 and would open up more space for potential improvements to Commerce Boulevard south of Southwest Boulevard.*

TR-17 Encourage CalTrans, Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), and Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA) to plan, fund, and implement high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes along US 101 between Santa Rosa Avenue and SR 116.

*This policy is intended to reduce traffic congestion along the Rohnert Park segment of US 101. HOV lanes between Santa Rosa Avenue and SR 116 are listed under "Track 2" projects in the 1998 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The "Track 2" designation means that the project is unlikely to receive funding from MTC with available funds.*

TR-18 Work with Sonoma County and the Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA) to maintain LOS standards along congested segments of the designated Monitored Transportation Network within the Rohnert Park Planning Area.

TR-19 Work with Sonoma County to coordinate improvements to major roads in the unincorporated parts of the Rohnert Park Planning Area.

*Major roads include Petaluma Hill Road, Railroad Avenue, Stony Point Road, Wilfred Avenue, Millbrae Avenue, and the Old Redwood Highway.*

TR-20 Work with Sonoma County and the Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA) to plan improvements to Petaluma Hill Road.

*Petaluma Hill Road serves as a bypass to US 101 and experiences peak-hour congestion. Table 4.1-4 calls for new turn lanes and intersection improvements to Petaluma Hill Road.*

TR-21 A Work with Sonoma County, the City of Santa Rosa, the City of Cotati, and the City of Petaluma ("Contributing Jurisdictions") and the Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA) to plan and implement selected improvements necessary to mitigate impacts of increased traffic congestion on major roads and intersections in Penngrove ("Regional Mitigation Plan"). The Regional Mitigation Plan shall include those roadway and other improvements necessary to mitigate the impacts of increased traffic congestion on major roads and intersections in Penngrove ("Regional Mitigation Projects"), and a financing plan that explains how those improvements will be funded and that determines each Contributing Jurisdiction's fair share. The City shall contribute its fair share of the total cost of the Regional Mitigation Plan provided that the City's participation is roughly proportional to the traffic impacts from new development in Rohnert Park.

The City's payment or other contribution of its fair share shall be provided when all of the following occur: (1) A Regional Mitigation Project is approved by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, and each of the Contributing Jurisdictions; (2) a financing plan for the Regional Mitigation Project has been approved by the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, and each of the Contributing Jurisdictions; (3) new development that contributes to the traffic impacts to be mitigated by the project receives final approval by the City; and (4) each of the Contributing Jurisdictions has appropriated its fair share to the Regional Mitigation Project. In the event that other jurisdictions do not contribute their fair share to the Regional Mitigation Project, and funding for their fair share is provided by some other means to ensure implementation of the Regional Mitigation Project, the City will contribute and be limited to its fair share.

*Traffic congestion presently exists in Penngrove at the Petaluma Hill Road and Old Adobe Road intersection during commute times. Traffic congestion is a result from growth and commute patterns in Sonoma County, SSU, and the Cities of Santa Rosa, Rohnert Park, Cotati, and Petaluma. Implementation of this General Plan will result in additional traffic in this area. Long-term solutions to traffic congestion on Petaluma Hill Road require a cooperative, regional approach by Sonoma County, the Penngrove area, Sonoma State University, and the cities of Cotati, Petaluma, Santa Rosa, and Rohnert Park. The City of Rohnert Park commits to being a responsible participant in formulating measures to minimize traffic congestion on Petaluma Hill Road. The City of Rohnert Park encourages the cities of Cotati, Petaluma and Santa Rosa, Sonoma County, and SSU to adopt policies demonstrating their commitment to participating in long-term solutions to these problems.*

*During the period in which this General Plan was being drafted, the City worked with the County and other interested parties to identify potential improvements to mitigate regional traffic impacts. Because of the regional nature of issues and solutions, it is anticipated that the process of studying and approving the selected improvements will take several years to complete. Therefore, specific projects to mitigate existing and future traffic congestion on Petaluma Hill Road had not been identified at the time this General Plan was adopted. However, the City of Rohnert Park is committed to continuing its participation in this regional effort.*

TR-21 B. Work with the City of Cotati and Sonoma State University to determine feasible measures to mitigate impacts of increased traffic on East Cotati Avenue (within the City of Cotati, beginning with the La Plaza intersection) associated with the proposed growth assumed in the 2000 General Plan. These measures shall be based on detailed (intersection-level) traffic studies that will be prepared with each specific plan. The Canon Manor Specific Plan, University Specific Plan, and Southeast Specific Plan shall include a detailed analysis of intersections within and outside of the city that are projected to be impacted by the specific plan project area; an analysis of the traffic impacts of the specific plan project area on East Cotati Avenue; a cumulative impact analysis; and feasible mitigation measures for lessening the potential traffic impacts.

Contribute the City's fair share to the feasible mitigation measures identified in each Specific Plan (Canon Manor Specific Plan, University Specific Plan, and the Southeast Specific Plan); provided that (1) the City's fair share is roughly proportional to the traffic impacts of development beyond the 1999 incorporated limits of the City of Rohnert Park; and (2) other jurisdictions that approve development that impacts traffic congestion at the impacted intersections on East Cotati Avenue contribute their fair share. In the event that the City of Cotati and/or SSU approve development that impacts East Cotati Avenue traffic congestion but do not contribute their fair share to fund the feasible mitigation measures, the City and City of Cotati will evaluate alternative feasible mitigation measures that can be implemented. The City's financial commitment is also contingent upon legal authority to collect payments through specific plans, development agreements, assessment districts, and/or ordinances to raise funds for needed improvements on East Cotati Avenue.

*Because of the location of the City of Cotati adjacent to U.S. 101, a portion of the traffic passing through Cotati to reach the U.S. 101 corridor is generated from jurisdictions outside the City of Cotati. Implementation of this General Plan may generate additional vehicle trips on City of Cotati roadways, particularly East Cotati Avenue. Long-term solutions to traffic congestion on East Cotati Avenue require a cooperative regional approach. Policies in this General Plan commit the city of Rohnert Park to being a responsible participant in developing and funding these solutions. Development within the Specific Plan areas may occur without implementation of the identified mitigation measures in the event that funding is not available from other jurisdictions to construct the improvements.*

## 4.2 TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT

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Policies in this section are designed to reduce peak-hour traffic congestion by limiting increases in transportation demand. The policies provide an alternative to roadway improvements, by making more efficient use of the existing transportation network. A variety of strategies can be used to limit demand, from emphasizing transit, ridesharing, and non-auto alternatives for the commute to work, to creating pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly development, to limiting excessive amounts of parking, which serves as a major incentive to drive.

Transportation demand management (TDM) programs are provided by employers to reduce the amount of peak-hour traffic by encouraging their employees to use modes other than single-occupancy automobiles for travel to the workplace and to travel during non-peak times. While public agencies can no longer impose mandatory employer-based trip reduction programs<sup>1</sup>, businesses can voluntarily participate in TDM programs, and local jurisdictions can still require TDM measures as mitigation for transportation and air quality impacts, under the auspices of CEQA review.<sup>2</sup>

### GOALS: TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT

- TR-I Develop a comprehensive transportation demand management (TDM) program that preserves Rohnert Park's quality of life, while maintaining a positive business environment.
- TR-J Reduce peak-hour traffic congestion and associated impacts, including air pollution, energy consumption, and noise.
- TR-K Reduce the need for roadway improvements by making more efficient use of existing roads, bikeways, transit service, and other transportation facilities and services.

### POLICIES: TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT

- TR-22 In cooperation with the Chamber of Commerce, adopt a non-mandatory employer-based transportation demand management (TDM) program for Rohnert Park businesses.

*This policy is intended to reduce the use of single-occupancy vehicles for the commute to work. While voluntary, a City program can alleviate the cost of establishing an independent program for each individual business. For example, the program could*

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<sup>1</sup> The Bay Area Air Quality Management District's Regulation 13, Rule 1, requiring employers with over 100 employees to decrease the average vehicle ridership, was overturned. According to Health and Safety Code §40717.9(a), “a [air quality] district, congestion management agency, ... or any other public agency shall not require an employer to implement an employee trip reduction program unless the program is expressly required by federal law and the elimination of the program will result in the imposition of federal sanctions...”

<sup>2</sup> Health and Safety Code § 40717.5(c); § 40717.6. The law also states that local jurisdictions can require trip reduction measures pursuant to a voter-mandated growth management program. However, no voter-mandated program has been proposed in Rohnert Park as of 1999. Growth management policies in the Land Use and Growth Management Element have not been subject to voter approval.

*provide carpool/vanpool matching, dividing the cost of coordinating the program among several businesses and thus removing a barrier to TDM.*

*Voluntary programs have come into use since the Bay Area Air Quality Management District's (BAAQMD) Rule 13 was overturned. In the 1997 Clean Air Plan (CAP), BAAQMD establishes Transportation Control Measure #1 to "support voluntary employer-based trip reduction programs."*

- TR-23 Allow reductions in transportation impact fees on new non-residential development commensurate with provision of transportation demand management (TDM) measures, and develop reduction parameters.

*This policy is intended to serve as an incentive for provision of alternatives to travel by single-occupancy vehicles. Project proponents taking advantage of reductions must agree to adopt and implement specified TDM measures as a condition of project approval.*

*As part of an ordinance establishing impact fees and other funding mechanisms for infrastructure improvements, the City shall determine what TDM measures are eligible for impact fee reductions. Also, the City shall determine the relative trip reduction benefit of each TDM measure and assign each measure an impact fee credit. Measures with the greatest trip reduction would have the greatest credit. The City should also consider imposing a maximum total reduction, to ensure that funding for public facility improvements in the CIP is not depleted.*

- TR-24 Adopt and implement a TDM program to encourage the use of alternative transportation modes by City employees.

*Potential components of the program include:*

- Designated commute coordinator/manager;
- Carpool/vanpool match program;
- Preferential parking for carpools and vanpools;
- Paid parking;
- Parking space cash-out for commuters who ride transit, walk, or bike.
- Secure bicycle storage facilities;
- Onsite shower facilities for employees who bike to work;
- Transit subsidies;
- Guaranteed ride home program;
- Telecommuting policy;
- Flex-time policy (4-40 or 9-80 schedules); and
- Educational program.

TR-25 As part of the Zoning Ordinance update and preparation of specific plans, establish parking standards that help reduce automobile trips by:

- *Reducing parking requirements for Mixed Use development and development adjacent to the University District Linear Park;*
- *Allowing shared parking facilities wherever possible, to reduce the total number of required parking stalls; and*
- *Considering use of cash-in-lieu payments for required parking in Mixed Use areas.*

*The 1999 Zoning Ordinance allows cash-in-lieu payments in the C-R Regional Commercial zoning district. Cash-in-lieu payments can also be considered for Mixed Use areas, where the pedestrian-oriented environment reduces the need for parking. The Zoning Ordinance will need to be amended to allow for shared parking, where the total number of required parking spaces for two adjacent uses is reduced to reflect differences in peak-hour parking need.*

## 4.3 TRANSIT

As of 1999, Rohnert Park was served by three transit agencies:

- Golden Gate Transit, which is oriented mainly to commuters traveling to Marin County and San Francisco;
- Sonoma County Transit, which serves Rohnert Park and other destinations within Sonoma County; intra-city routes operate on 30-minute to one-hour intervals;
- Rohnert Park Sunshine Bus, which serves elderly and disabled people.

These bus routes offer alternatives to auto use for regional, countywide, and local trips. Buses running to San Francisco via Golden Gate Transit carry the most passengers over the course of a year. However, Sonoma County Transit buses also carry a substantial number of riders, particularly between Petaluma and Santa Rosa. Ridership information by transit route is presented in Table 4.3-1.

**Table 4.3-1:  
Transit Ridership by Route, 1998**

Agency	Route Number	Route Description	Total Annual Ridership
Golden Gate Transit <sup>1</sup>	80	Santa Rosa to San Francisco	491,260
	72	Santa Rosa to San Francisco	212,510
	74	Santa Rosa to San Francisco	249,602
	71	Santa Rosa to San Rafael	34,862
	75	Santa Rosa to San Rafael	47,844 <sup>2</sup>
	76	Rohnert Park to San Francisco	187,769 <sup>2</sup>
Sonoma Co. Transit	10/11	Local	59,997
	12/14	Local	95,976
	26	Sebastopol to SSU	11,676 <sup>2</sup>
	44	Santa Rosa to Petaluma	233,213 <sup>2</sup>
	46	Santa Rosa to SSU	23,987 <sup>2</sup>
	48	Santa Rosa to Petaluma	173,513 <sup>2</sup>
Rohnert Park Sunshine Bus		Local, Elderly / Disabled	1,980

1. Total ridership numbers for Golden Gate Transit pertain only to patrons who originate or terminate in Sonoma County.  
 2. 1996-97.

Source: Crane Transportation Group

## RAIL SERVICE

The railroad line that runs through Rohnert Park has historically been used for freight service. The segment of railway through Rohnert Park is owned by the Northwestern Pacific Railroad

Authority, and leased to the North Coast Rail Authority (NCRA), a consortium of local government agencies. By the early 1990s, the line had fallen into disrepair, and train traffic had declined. The line was closed to rail traffic in 1998 as the result of storm water damage, and the line was reopened for minimal train service as of 1999.

The line has been considered for commuter rail service, as a strategy to alleviate existing and projected traffic congestion along US 101. The SCTA and the Marin Countywide Planning Agency (MCPA) conducted the 1997 Sonoma-Marin Multi-modal Transportation and Land Use Study, which recommended a 19-station commuter rail line between the Larkspur Ferry Landing and Windsor, with a station in Rohnert Park. The study also recommended a series of HOV lanes along US 101.

### **Funding**

Proposition 116 funding was used for purchase of the NP right-of-way, as the first step toward providing commuter rail service. However, additional Capital Rehabilitation funds will not be released until Sonoma and Marin counties can demonstrate a permanent source of operating funds. Measure C was placed on the November 1998 ballot in both counties to provide the operating funds, but failed to obtain a majority vote. It would have established a ½-cent sales tax and raised \$950 million. The associated Measure B, which listed specific projects to be funded by Measure C, passed by 72 percent. In the March 2000 ballot, both pro-rail and pro-Highway 101 widening measures were placed on the ballot in the County, but neither secured the necessary two-thirds margin.

### **TRANSIT CENTER**

Approximately \$750,000 of federal Transportation Efficiency Act (TEA21) funds have been earmarked for an intermodal (bus and rail) transit center in Rohnert Park, Cotati, and Santa Rosa, as part of a \$6 million earmark for transit centers countywide. The funds are available until October 2001. Transit centers funded with this earmark must have the potential for a future rail connection.<sup>3</sup> As of 1999, SCTA is implementing the county's first transit station in Windsor.

### **PARK-AND-RIDE**

Free-of-charge commuter parking lots in the Rohnert Park area include:

1. CalTrans lot, at the southwest quadrant of the US 101-Rohnert Park Expressway interchange.
2. Rohnert Park City lot, at the northwest corner of Roberts Lake Road and Golf Course Drive.
3. CalTrans lot, on Saint Joseph Way, off of Old Redwood Highway in Cotati.

An additional commuter parking lot is planned for the northeastern quadrant of the US 101-Rohnert Park Expressway interchange. Joint-use commuter parking is also available at 4627-4675 Snyder Lane, north of Eleanor Avenue.

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<sup>3</sup> Telephone Conversation with Brian Albee, Sonoma County Department of Public Works and Transportation, July 29, 1999.

## GOALS: TRANSIT

- TR-L Promote local and regional public transit serving Rohnert Park and facilitate transfers between transit routes and operators.
- TR-M Continue to encourage park-and-ride activity, in order to reduce congestion along US 101.

## POLICIES: TRANSIT

### Bus Service

- TR-26 Work with Sonoma County Transit and Golden Gate Transit to increase bus service between Rohnert Park and other cities in the Bay Area.
- TR-27 Work with Sonoma County Transit and Golden Gate Transit to develop an expanded bus route system, in order to serve areas of new development in Rohnert Park.
- TR-28 Work with Sonoma State University (SSU) to explore the feasibility of a campus shuttle.

*Ideally, a campus shuttle would connect the SSU campus, the adjacent University District, the transit center (if it is developed; see Policy TR-34), the City Center, major commercial centers, and high-density residential areas.*

- TR-29 Explore the feasibility of offering additional student discounts on monthly bus passes, in consultation with Sonoma State University (SSU), Sonoma County Transit, and Golden Gate Transit.

*Sonoma County Transit already offers a \$30 monthly student bus pass, compared to the \$40 adult pass. Golden Gate Transit does not offer a college student discount (only students under the age of 18 are offered discounts), and there is no discounted student rate for the Sonoma SuperPass, which allows unlimited rides on both Golden Gate Transit and Sonoma County Transit at a monthly cost of \$70 for adults. Providing additional discounts for students would help support transit use by a particularly transit-dependent population.*

### Bus Stops and Shelters

- TR-30 In consultation with Golden Gate Transit and Sonoma County Transit, determine appropriate locations of new bus stops, in conjunction with increased service and expanded routes.

*Policy TR-26 calls for increased bus service, and Policy TR-27 for an expanded bus route system to serve areas of new development.*

- TR-31 Require project proponents to provide bus stops and shelters in conjunction with new development.

*Policies for adequate public facilities in the Growth Management Element, which require developers to provide adequate public facilities, encompass provision of related bus stops and shelters. Criteria for allocating responsibilities will need to be developed.*

TR-32 Work with Sonoma County Transit, Golden Gate Transit, and private developers to ensure that bus stops and shelters adhere to the following standards:

- Bus pull-outs shall be required at bus stop locations, in order to prevent stopping buses from interfering with traffic flow;
- Bus stop locations shall allow direct, convenient pedestrian access to adjacent development;
- Pedestrian access to bus stops shall be safe and comfortable;
- Bus shelters shall provide adequate protection from sun, wind, and rain;
- Bus stops and shelters shall display schedules and routes; and
- Bus shelters shall be adequately designed and sized to accommodate waiting passengers during inclement weather.

#### **Rail Service and Transit Center**

TR-33 Encourage the Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA) to continue in their efforts to develop commuter rail service along the Northwestern Pacific (NP) right-of-way. Work with SCTA to resolve issues regarding commuter rail design and operation in Rohnert Park, including:

- Location of rail stations;
- Design of roadway crossings at the Rohnert Park Expressway, Southwest Boulevard, and Golf Course Drive; and
- Noise impacts and mitigation measures.

TR-34 Undertake a comprehensive study to evaluate and implement a multi-hub transit corridor along Rohnert Park Expressway with the following characteristics:

- Rail transit station in the vicinity of the Rohnert Park Expressway/Northwestern Pacific right-of-way;
- A bus transfer station, either in the vicinity of the station or in another location with frequent shuttle connections between the rail and the bus stations;
- Frequent shuttles between the rail/bus station(s) and the University District and Sonoma State University; and
- Parking either in vicinity of the rail/bus station (s) or in a location with shuttle access to the station (s).

*A transit center or corridor would provide a convenient place for transfers between bus routes and lines. As of 2000, the Rohnert Park Expressway-Commerce Boulevard intersection served as an informal transfer area, because many bus routes stop there. A*

*new transit center (either bus only, or bus and rail together) could potentially be located closer to pedestrian-oriented activity centers—such as the University District and City Center—because walking and riding transit are complementary modes of travel. Locations along the Northwestern Pacific (NP) railroad right-of-way could also potentially allow for future rail connections. A transit center, as opposed to the intersection, could also be associated with a park-and-ride and drop-off facilities.*

#### **Park-and-Ride Lots**

- TR-35 Work with CalTrans to implement plans for the park-and-ride lot in the northeast quadrant of the Rohnert Park Expressway interchange along US 101.

*The 1998 TIP allocated funding for the new park-and-ride lot. As of 1999, CalTrans started planning and preliminary design. However, the project was not initiated and may require additional funding.*

- TR-36 Explore the feasibility of additional park-and-ride lots at the Rohnert Park Expressway and Wilfred Avenue interchanges along US 101.

*In the future, additional park-and-ride facilities may be warranted in conjunction with the construction of HOV lanes along US 101. The HOV lanes that are being planned and built through Santa Rosa will terminate at Wilfred Avenue, making that interchange a strong candidate for additional park-and-ride facilities.*

## **4.4 PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE CIRCULATION**

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Rohnert Park's land uses and hierarchical street system were designed primarily for automobile circulation (see Chapter 2: Land Use and Growth Management and Section 4.1). While ensuring that automobile circulation flow is maintained, this General Plan makes a commitment to improved pedestrian and bicycle circulation, in order to provide alternatives to auto use.

### **PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION**

While many city streets have sidewalks, trees, and lighting, limited connections between neighborhoods and the distance between neighborhoods and activity centers (including SSU, commercial centers, offices, industrial areas) discourage walking for the purposes of going to work, shopping, or running errands. Walking is a major mode of travel for school-age children.

The city's numerous parks, recreational facilities, and open space areas encourage pedestrian trips for recreational purposes. Local streets within residential neighborhoods typically have slow-moving, low-volume traffic, allowing for comfortable pedestrian circulation between residences, schools, and neighborhood parks.

### **BIKEWAYS**

In 1995, bikeways existed in several parts of the city but did not form a comprehensive network, discouraging extensive bicycle use. In response to this deficiency, the City prepared and adopted the 1995 Bicycle Master Plan to establish a complete network of bikeways that connects all the different parts of the city. The Plan established three bikeway classifications:

- Class I. Paved paths on separate rights-of-way.
- Class II. Striped lanes within roadways, separate from vehicular travel lanes, parking, bus stops, and sidewalks.
- Class III. Designated bicycle routes within roadways, shared with either pedestrians or motorists.

As of 1999, many Class II bike paths outlined in the Master Plan were implemented, and some Class I bikeways were completed. The improvements have increased safety, facilitated bicycle access to sites throughout the city, allowed for greater choice in transportation modes, and improved recreational amenities. Bike commuters include an active bike club at the Hewlett Packard complex and student riders at SSU, and children make use of bikeways for going to school. Bikeways also are popular with recreational users on the weekends.

### **GOALS: PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE CIRCULATION**

TR-N Promote safe, efficient, and comfortable circulation for cyclists and pedestrians throughout Rohnert Park.

TR-O Create pedestrian-friendly activity centers that encourage local walking trips between to and from adjacent uses.

- TR-P Provide continuous, direct pedestrian routes and bikeways between and through neighborhoods and activity centers, and job centers and residential areas, including the University District, the City Center, and commercial and industrial areas.
- TR-Q Provide pedestrian routes and bikeways that link residential areas to city parks and open space areas outside the city.
- TR-R Continue to develop a comprehensive network of bikeways that promote bicycle riding for transportation and recreation.
- TR-S Provide adequate bicycle parking facilities.

## **POLICIES: PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE CIRCULATION**

### **Pedestrian Circulation**

- TR-37 Provide continuous sidewalks along all existing and future streets.

*The City shall establish specific engineering standards for sidewalks.*

- TR-38 Establish pedestrian-friendly amenities along streets that run through or adjacent to areas designated for Mixed Use, High Density Residential, Public, or Parks. Ensure that:
- Sidewalks are wide enough to accommodate pedestrian use;
  - Sidewalk intersection bulbs (rounded curves that extend the area of the sidewalk intersection corner) are provided to reduce the walking distance across streets;
  - Pedestrian lighting, benches, street trees, and other sidewalk amenities are provided; and
  - Landscaping complements pedestrian circulation and eliminates barriers to pedestrian access.

*Pedestrian-friendly environments are created not only by amenities, but also by the use, intensity, location, orientation, and character of buildings. Chapter 2: Land Use and Growth Management includes policies to establish uses and intensities that encourage pedestrian activity in key areas throughout the city, particularly in the University District and City Center. Chapter 3: Community Design includes policies that promote pedestrian-friendly building design. Street connections and block size also influence the accessibility and permeability of areas to pedestrians. Policies in Chapter 3: Community Design address these issues as well.*

*Pedestrian connections between the University District and SSU are particularly important. Heavy high-speed traffic along the Rohnert Park Expressway could potentially discourage pedestrian activity.*

## Bicycles

- TR-39 Update the Bicycle Master Plan to incorporate Class I bikeways shown in Figure 4.4-1. Develop locations and alignments for Class II and III bikeways.

*Class I bikeways are located along major streets, as well as creeks, linear parks, open space areas, and the NP railroad right-of-way. Class II and III bikeways are not shown in Figure 4.4-1.*

- TR-40 Implement comprehensive design standards for bikeways, as part of the Bicycle Master Plan. Ensure that adequate lighting, signage, and other amenities are provided.

*In 1995 Bicycle Master Plan, classifications for Class I, II, and III bikeways are based on the State Street and Highways Code and specify function, typical width, road striping, and signage. Separately, Goal 6 of the Plan calls for amenities such as water fountains, emergency telephones, lighting, and convex mirrors at blind intersections. Comprehensive design standards would consolidate existing standards and provide more detail on the design, function, and character of bikeway classifications.*

- TR-41 Ensure that bikeways are continuous and interconnected, and that access points into bikeways minimize conflicts with pedestrian and traffic circulation.

*The 1995 Bicycle Master Plan calls for traffic lights where bikeways cross busy streets, removal of barriers to bicycle crossings at these locations, and consideration of bicycle-activated signals at major intersections. These policies already help minimize conflicts between bicycles and other modes of traffic.*

- TR-42 Make bikeway improvements a funding priority by:

- Incorporating bikeway improvements as part of the CIP;
- Requiring developers to provide bikeways and associated amenities in conjunction with new development; and
- Pursuing regional and other funding sources for new bikeways to the extent possible under federal and State law.

- TR-43 Establish requirements for bicycle parking as part of the Zoning Ordinance update. Ensure that secure bicycle parking is provided in conjunction with new development in areas designated for Mixed Use, Commercial, Industrial, Office, Public, Park, and High Density Residential uses.

*These requirements could include the minimum number of bicycle parking spaces that must be provided, as well as the type of rack or locker, for each use.*

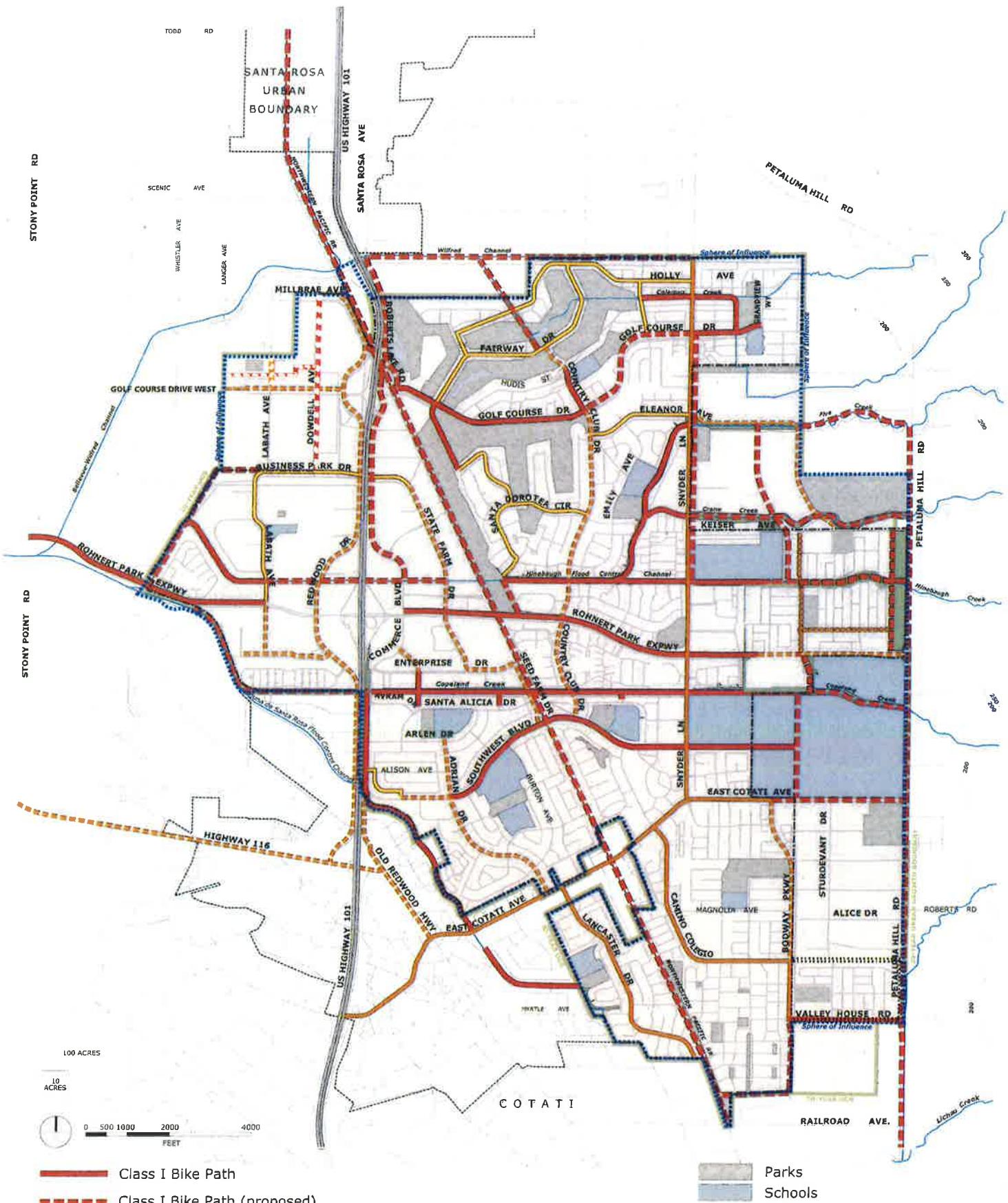


Figure 4.4-1  
Bicycle System

Revised 09/14

## **4.5 CENTRAL ROHNERT PARK, CIRCULATION AND CONNECTIVITY**

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This section provides goals and policies to implement circulation and connectivity objectives with the Central Rohnert Park area, including vehicular roadways, regional and local transit services, and bicycle and pedestrian travel routes. Arrival of the Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) commuter rail station will be an opportunity to shape future development by creating a transportation hub in the city, supported by a new town center in the Station Center subarea and coordinated with regional and local bus service.

Circulation and connectivity concepts for Central Rohnert Park focus on enhancements to the city's existing roadways and potential for new roadways that support and improve: overall multimodal connectivity; efficient utilization of roadway right-of-way; and safe vehicular connections and continuous bike and pedestrian access to destinations in Central Rohnert Park and surrounding neighborhoods.

In addition to addressing transportation goals and policies provided earlier in this Chapter, development in Central Rohnert Park will be subject to the following circulation and connectivity goals and policies:

### **GOALS: ROADWAY DESIGN**

TR-T Balance the need of arterial and collector roadways to efficiently carry traffic, with establishing Central Rohnert Park as a walkable, bikable community, with pedestrian-oriented streets, centers, and mixed-use subareas.

### **POLICIES: ROADWAY DESIGN**

TR-44 Implement recommended intersection improvements identified in the Central Rohnert Park, Priority Development Area Plan, Table 5.1.

TR-45 To support safe bike and pedestrian access to the SMART station and where a pedestrian-friendly town center atmosphere is desired within and in the vicinity of the City Center and Station Center subareas, allow for lower level of service (LOS) standards (than LOS C), called for in General Plan policy TR-1, for the following arterial and collector roadway intersections within Central Rohnert Park, where no other feasible improvements exist to improve LOS:

- At the intersection of Rohnert Park Expressway (RPX) and Commerce Boulevard (already operating at LOS D during PM peak hours, under existing conditions);
- At the intersection of Rohnert Park Expressway and State Farm Drive (already operating at LOS D during PM peak hours, under existing conditions);
- At the intersection of Commerce Boulevard and State Farm Drive; and
- At the intersection of Enterprise Drive and State Farm Drive.

TR-46 Recognize that future development of Central Rohnert Park Plan will contribute to unacceptable operation on U.S. 101. The type of transit-supportive, pedestrian-oriented development pattern envisioned by the Plan plays an important role in reducing regional traffic impacts through smart growth.

### **GOALS: MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION**

Goal U Design streets that integrate walking, biking, transit use, and green infrastructure.

Goal V Connect Central Rohnert Park to the existing roadway, bike, and pedestrian networks in the City.

Goal W Coordinate transit improvements to connect the SMART rail station to surrounding land uses, commercial areas, and residential communities.

Goal X Ensure appropriate levels of parking, associated with new development.

### **POLICIES: MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION**

#### **Street Design**

TR-47 Retrofit existing streets as complete streets, in addition to providing vehicular access that supports safe and continuous bike and pedestrian facilities and landscape improvements.

TR-48 As recommended in the street sections in Section 5.3 of this Plan, retrofit or design new roadways and/or landscape right-of-ways to incorporate low impact development features such as, stormwater management curb extensions, infiltration planters, bioswales, and other similar measures.

TR-49 Expand bike and pedestrian connections within Central Rohnert Park, including connections to the SMART station and multi-use path through:

- Off-Street Bicycle/Pedestrian Trail Improvements
  - Adding bicycle trails and bicycle boulevards within new development in the Station Center subarea.
  - Completing trail gaps along the Copeland Creek and Hinebaugh Creek corridors.
  - Improving the meandering sidewalks along RPX to a wider, meandering bike/pedestrian multi-use path.
  - Extending the bike/pedestrian multi-use path from Enterprise Drive to Rohnert Park Expressway.
  - Planning and implementing new east-west and north-south walkways or paseos, as shown in the Central Rohnert Park, Priority Development Area

Plan, Figure 5.12, in association with the development of new roadways or as separate facilities, integrated with new development.

- On-Street Bike Facility Improvements
  - Completing gaps to on-street bicycle lanes along Commerce Boulevard.
  - Improving bicycle facilities along Professional Center Drive, with potential for an at-grade connection across the SMART rail tracks to connect to the SMART multi-use path.
  - Coordinating with property and business owners to establish a new multi-use path on the northern end of Enterprise Drive to help facilitate safe east-west bike and pedestrian access from the SMART station to commercial and mixed-use centers in Central Rohnert Park.
  - Adding enhanced or protected bicycle lanes along busy arterial and collector roadways, including State Farm Drive, Commerce Boulevard, and Rohnert Park Expressway.
  - Continuing and adding bicycle lanes on Enterprise Drive and Hunter Drive.
- Pedestrian Facility Improvements
  - Adding and providing more defined north-south walkways in the City Center subarea that connect to Hinebaugh Creek.
  - Establishing defined pedestrian walkway and landscape improvements in the existing commercial shopping centers to support safe pedestrian access from adjoining residential areas and neighborhoods.

TR-50 Improve at-grade street crossings for intersections throughout Central Rohnert Park, particularly at busy traffic intersections, that will support active or high volume bike or pedestrian use.

TR-51 Establish midblock crossings on:

- Rohnert Park Expressway, at the SMART MUP and as a pedestrian link between the City Center and Station Center subareas, at Lynne Conde Way, with pedestrian refuges in the median and the potential for a pedestrian hybrid beacon or HAWK signal, coordinated with the timing of signals along RPX, SMART rail gate operations, and fire station emergency signals.
- Enterprise Drive to connect with existing trail links or greenways to Copeland Creek. This crossing should be coordinated with future roadway networks in the Station Center subarea and designed with bulb-outs, a median refuge, high visibility markings, and if needed a pedestrian signal.

TR-52 Consider the feasibility of grade separated pedestrian crossings at the following locations:

- Provide an undercrossing of the greenway trail along the southern side of Hinebaugh Creek at the SMART rail tracks to connect Central Rohnert Park to the SMART multi-use path and neighborhoods east of Central Rohnert Park.
- Consider the future feasibility of an over-crossing or undercrossing of U.S. 101 along Hinebaugh Creek.

### **Transit Facility Improvements**

TR-53 Plan for improvements to existing bus services or other future circulation modes within Central Rohnert Park to coordinate with SMART rail service to meet the transportation demands in Rohnert Park, including:

- Coordinate with the Sonoma County Transit and the property owners for the Station Center subarea to plan for expansion of existing bus transit lines and facilities to serve the SMART rail station and adjacent Station Center subarea.
- Work with the Sonoma County Transit, SMART, and private property owners in Central Rohnert Park to ensure safe and convenient access to bike and pedestrian facilities that support transit use and needs of cyclists and pedestrians, who may choose to continue their journey in Rohnert Park by bicycle or foot.
- As transit demand warrants, plan for development of a community circulator such as a shuttle service that travels to key destinations in the community, including Sonoma State University and the Graton Rancheria Casino.

### **Parking**

TR-54 Provide parking in Central Rohnert Park at the parking ratios shown in Table 5-2.

TR-55 Encourage use of shared parking facilities within multi-tenant buildings and between adjacent private developments, particularly on larger development sites. Use leftover spaces for landscape improvements and to provide other community facilities.

TR-56 To the extent feasible, encourage private parking entities to allow public parking after typical business hours.

TR-57 Facilitate a “park once” strategy in Central Rohnert Park by implementing pedestrian connectivity strategies and promoting the development of a parking district and common parking lots or structures within the Station Center and City Center subareas, as parking demands warrant.

TR-58 Develop a parking management plan to consider long-range parking strategies that may be needed to support a “park once” strategy in Central Rohnert Park in the long-term. As part of this Plan, consider implementation of programs that support flexibility in meeting the City’s parking needs, including through:

- In-lieu fees;
  - Metered or paid parking;
  - Unbundled parking;
  - Off-site parking strategies;
  - Wayfinding and other necessary public and private improvements, relevant to the conditions and issues in Central Rohnert Park.
- TR-59 Encourage car share or bike share programs within Central Rohnert Park through partnership with car sharing or bike sharing entities.

## 5 Open Space, Parks, and Public Facilities

Open space areas within and around Rohnert Park are valuable resources and provide the city a scenic setting. Parks are a necessity for active and passive recreation. The Open Space, Parks, and Public Facilities Element addresses these and other related topics. Also addressed in this Element are public facilities, including schools, water service, and wastewater collection, and disposal.

According to Government Code § 65910, four types of open space must be considered in the General Plan. These are addressed in different parts of the Plan, as described below:

1. *Open space for the preservation of natural resources*: Section 5.1 addresses farmland and open space conservation; open space as habitat for biological resources is addressed in Chapter 6: Conservation;
2. *Open space for the managed production of resources*: Farmland resources are addressed in Section 5.1;
3. *Open space for outdoor recreation*: Section 5.2 addresses park land and outdoor recreational facilities; and
4. *Open space for public health and safety*: Chapter 7: Health and Safety addresses seismic conditions and flood hazards.



## 5.1 OPEN SPACE

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Since Rohnert Park's founding in the 1950s, the city has maintained a compact urban form surrounded by open space. With the exception of the City of Cotati to the southwest and rural residential subdivisions such as Canon Manor, the sense of open space around the city's edges is pervasive. While much of the open space is used for grazing, orchards and cultivated land as well as Crane Creek Regional Park are also notable uses. This element seeks to ensure that land outside the designated extent of urban uses in the Planning Area is maintained as open space. In addition, it addresses issues related to buffers between urban uses and open space.

Two classifications of open space are included in the Land Use and Growth Management Element (Chapter 2):

- *Open Space for Environmental Conservation* includes sites with environmental and/or safety constraints, such as riparian corridors, sensitive habitats, and wetlands (see Chapter 6: Conservation).
- *Open Space for Agriculture and Resource Management* includes orchards and cropland, grasslands, cemeteries, and rural residential areas. This classification also accommodates greenbelts and urban buffers - open space, park land, and agricultural areas outside urban areas, as opposed to urban parks, which are located within developed areas and serve as outdoor recreational facilities.

Excluding creekside greenways and parkways alongside streets, no designated open space is located within the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). Between the UGB and the Sphere of Influence (SOI), two open space areas are included – the 50-acre Community Fields, located north of Crane Creek, and a 30-acre open space buffer south of G Section. In addition, open space buffers are located between within the SOI between Petaluma Hill Road and the UGB in the University District and in the southeast.

### OPEN SPACE AND COMMUNITY SEPARATORS

One of Sonoma County's unique characteristics is the diversity and abundance of open space. Approximately 92 percent of the County's land area is used for mixed agricultural-residential uses, intensive and extensive agriculture, resource extraction, and watershed-wildlife habitat. Economic pressure on farmers and ranchers to subdivide or convert their land to non-agricultural uses is increasing with growth. Conflicts between urban and agricultural also occur at urban/agricultural edges. The reduction of this pressure and competition, through mechanisms such as the designation of community separators and agricultural preserves under the Williamson Act, is essential to the long-term preservation of open space. Open Space around Rohnert Park is shown on Figure 5.1-1.

#### Community Separators

Two Community Separators are located in the Rohnert Park-Cotati area. The Petaluma-Rohnert Park separator is located between Petaluma, Penngrove, and Rohnert Park-Cotati. The second separator is generally located north and northwest of Rohnert Park, between Rohnert Park and Santa Rosa (see Figure 5.1-1). Measure D, approved by County voters in November 1996,

establishes procedures for changes to boundaries or use regulations applicable to Community Separators established in the 1989 County General Plan. Essentially, the Measure establishes that, with limited exceptions, County voter approval is required for changes (in use or boundaries) of the separators.

However, because the County's ability to maintain the separators is limited without the cooperation of the cities, the Measure "associated" each separator with an adjacent city. The Rohnert Park-Santa Rosa "north" Separator (north of the flood control channel, and the portion east of US 101) is associated with the City of Santa Rosa, while the Northwest Community Separator south of the flood control channel is associated with Rohnert Park. (See Figure 2.2-1). Such an initiative has been passed by Santa Rosa, but not by Rohnert Park voters. Thus, while the North Separator is currently governed by the provisions of Measure D, the Northwest Separator is not. This General Plan outlines efforts, including those requiring City/County cooperation, to mitigate impacts of growth into the Northwest Community Separator.

This General Plan designates approximately 180 acres of Northwest Community Separator land for inclusion in the urban area. It is LAFCO's policy to disapprove annexations within the designated Community Separator. Pursuant to LAFCO and County direction, removal of the Community Separator will require mitigation in the form of providing permanent protection of other similar open space land within the Rohnert Park Planning Area. A four-member policy makers' "Working Group" has been formed between the City and County to address the Community Separator mitigation issue. This General Plan includes provisions for effective enforcement mechanisms to ensure implementation of a Community Separator mitigation program.

### **Williamson Act Lands**

Several agricultural sites surrounding Rohnert Park are designated agricultural preserves under Williamson Act contracts. The Williamson Act, also known as the California Land Conservation Act of 1965 (Government Code § 51200 et seq.), is intended to discourage the unnecessary conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural uses and conserve land within a scenic highway corridor or wildlife habitat. Agricultural preserves are assessed with lower property tax rates, providing owners with an incentive to continue agricultural activity. The initial term of the contract is ten years and is automatically renewed each year unless cancelled.

Three parcels outside the existing and proposed City limits are currently subject to Williamson Act contracts (1999). One of these parcels is located just west of Petaluma Hill Road and north of Keiser Avenue. The two other parcels are located with the Community Separators.

### **Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District**

The Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District was established as part of the Open Space Element of the Sonoma County General Plan to acquire and administer open space lands. The formation of the District and the establishment of a 1/4-cent sales tax to fund land purchases and conservation easements over 20 years were approved by County voters in 1990.

The District adopted an Interim Acquisition Plan in 1991 and an Acquisition Plan in 1993, which was revised in 2000. The new plan establishes five-year objectives, specific selection criteria, and implementation strategies, and includes greenbelt purchases as a priority. The District collects applications from landowners, working only with willing sellers. As of 1999, over 25,000 acres have been protected under the program. There have been six District transactions in the Rohnert Park area. Three transactions involved the purchase of conservation easements, and three involved the purchase of a fee title. A total of 360 acres of open space have been preserved, as shown in Figure 5.1-1.

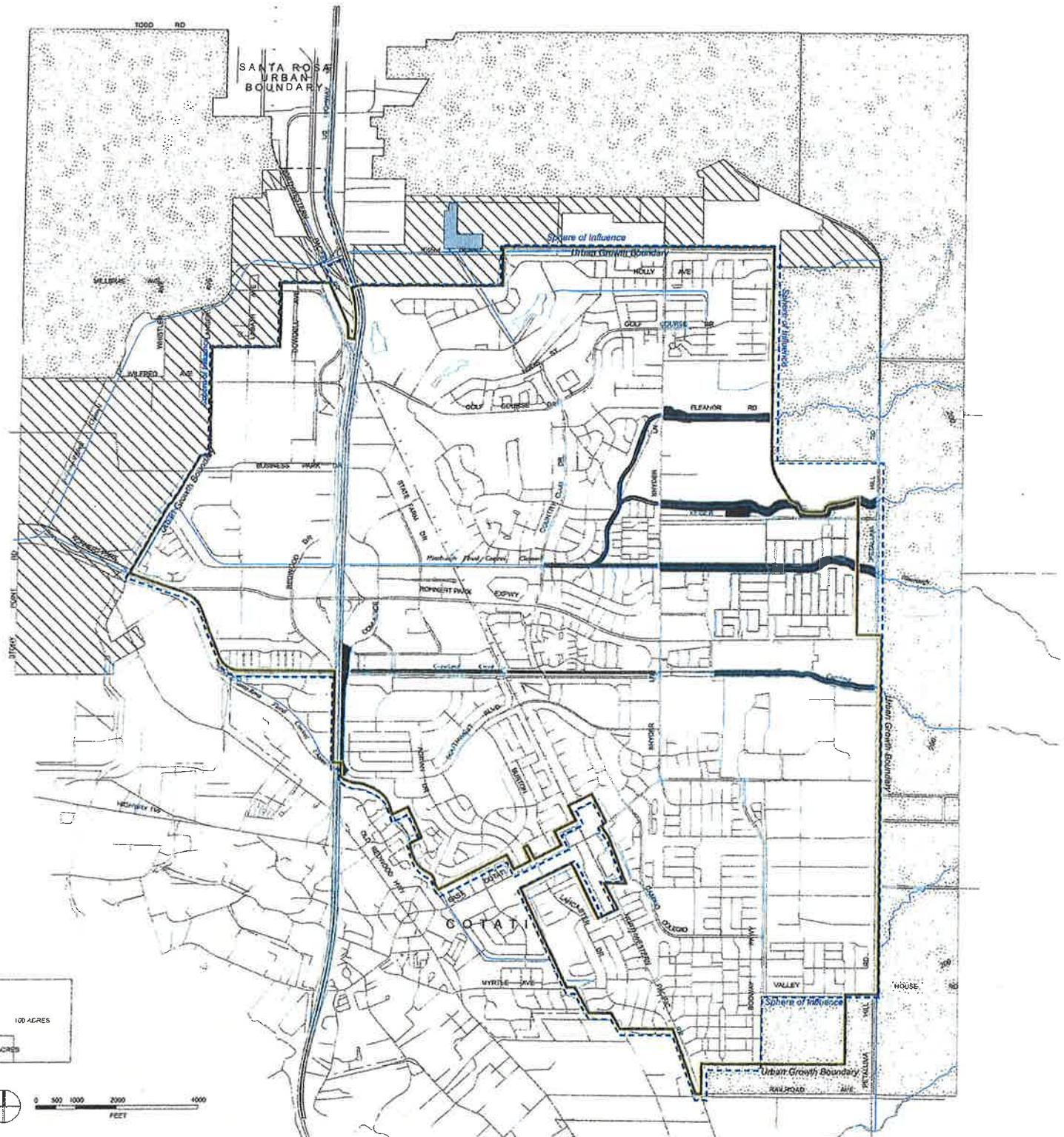
## **URBAN OPEN SPACE**

### **Street Rights-of-Way**

Extensive landscaping within urban open space areas along street rights-of-way is one of Rohnert Park's unique features. The redwood trees planted along the median of the Rohnert Park Expressway, median treatments along other streets such as Snyder Lane, the landscaped buffer area between US 101 and Commerce Boulevard are examples of open space along streets. Approximately 26 acres of such open space are found within the City limits.

### **Business Campuses**

Several office, commercial and industrial sites in the city contain substantial landscaped areas. While these are privately owned, they serve as visual resources for the community. Two parcels retain significant amounts of urban open space. The State Farm site has about five acres of open space, and the Hewlett Packard campus has about 21 acres of open space, which includes recreational facilities for employees.



- Open Space/Agriculture and Resource Management
- Open Space-Environmental Conservation
- SCAPOSD Conservation Easement
- SCAPOSD Fee
- County Community Separator (outside proposed Urban Growth Boundary)

*Figure 5.1-1*  
**Open Space**

Revised 12/13

## GOALS: OPEN SPACE

- OS-A Maintain a greenbelt around the city that provides a physical and visual space between Rohnert Park-Cotati and Santa Rosa, Petaluma, and Penngrove.
- OS-B Maintain land surrounding the city as open space for the enjoyment of scenic beauty, recreation, and protection of natural resources of the community.
- OS-C Minimize conflicts between agricultural and urban uses.
- OS-D Maintain and enhance the Petaluma Hill Road scenic corridor.
- OS-E Maintain publicly owned open space areas in their natural state; provide public access in a manner that is compatible with the conservation of habitat.

## POLICIES: OPEN SPACE

- OS-1 Work with Sonoma County to ensure that land in the Planning Area designated as Open Space in the Rohnert Park General Plan is maintained in rural use or as permanent open space.

*Because the City is not contemplating annexation of any land to the east of Petaluma Hill Road or open space land in the northeast, development in these areas will continue to be regulated by the County General Plan and Zoning Ordinance. The City can take several steps to encourage the County to maintain the area as in open space or rural land uses, including:*

- Formal agreement with the County to ensure that the County and the City will maintain land outside the Rohnert Park Urban Growth Boundary as open space in their general plans at least until the year 2020; and
  - Seeking language in the County General Plan requiring the County to consult with the City for any development within the Rohnert Park Planning Area.
- OS-2 Encourage dedication of the open space buffers along the westside of Petaluma Hill Road as part of the University District and Northeast Specific Plans.

*Crane Creek marks the northern edge of the University District Specific Plan Area. As shown on the General Plan Diagram, the open space buffer between the University District Specific Plan Area and Petaluma Hill Road is about 30 acres in size. Policy CD-34 requires preparation of an Open Space Plan as part of the Specific Plan and a minimum 17-acre open space buffer. Open Space buffers in the Northeast Specific Plan area would include the proposed Community Fields. A buffer about 100 acres in size is located along Petaluma Hill Road in the Southeast Specific Plan area.*

- OS-3 As part of the Northwest Area Specific Plan, which will include development in the County-designated Northwest Community Separator, require the permanent preservation of open space in an area that provides visual relief from continuous urbanization and is a special type of scenic border. Except as provided in OS-4A, a minimum of one acre of

open space land will be required for each acre of Community Separator land converted to urban uses. (Rev. 10/02)

**OS-4** Approximately 180 acres of land will be required to be preserved based upon approximately 180 acres of land in the Northwest Community Separator that will be developed with urban uses.

**OS-4A** The geographic area suitable for Community Separator mitigation is limited to lands within the Rohnert Park Planning Area, (as defined in Figure 1.5-2).

Within this Planning Area, give first priority to preservation of:

- Lands adjacent to the Urban Growth Boundary;
- Lands that would serve as “green belts” around the City of Rohnert Park; and
- View corridors along Petaluma Hill Road.

Give second priority to:

- View corridors along Railroad Avenue and Stony Point Road;
- Prime Farmland (as defined by the State and shown in Figure 4.9-1 of the General Plan EIR);
- Lands under Williamson Act agreements; and
- Environmentally sensitive habitat areas (defined as areas that are classified as having high wildlife habitat value, high wetlands potential, or high vernal pool and rare plant habitat potential).

These priority lands are shown in Figure 5.1-2. If lands in second priority areas or lower priority areas in the planning area are selected for mitigation, the ratio of replacement shall be 2 acres for each acre of Community Separator land converted to urban uses.

**OS-4B** Require permanent preservation of open space as mitigation for development in the Northwest Community Separator as a condition of development included within the Northwest Specific Plan. Prior to annexation approval, require applicants to demonstrate the ability to ensure the permanent preservation of open space land.

**OS-4C** Ensure that permanent preservation of open space takes the form of grants in fee title or easement to the appropriate governmental body (other than the City of Rohnert Park) or third party land trust, and that provision is made for the maintenance of the open space.

**OS-4D** The City shall adopt an adequate and appropriate mechanism to ensure that the required open space mitigation will occur through acquisition of open space land within the areas described in OS-4A or payment of a fee in lieu of acquisition. Payment of an in lieu fee will be permitted in the event that the Council finds that unique circumstances warrant payment of a fee rather than provision of land and that payment of a fee is consistent with implementation of this policy. Whether the land is acquired by the developer or through

fees paid to the City by the developer, the acquisition of the open space land must be in place prior to City issuance of any grading or building permits .

- OS-5 Ensure that open space parcels are aggregated to the maximum extent feasible, in order to avoid piecemeal acquisition that would not serve to mitigate the loss of Community Separator lands. However, acquisition of individual open space parcels may occur, consistent with the County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District's acquisition plan.

*The City's commitment to the preservation of open space is more than a written statement of public policy. The City believes that the effective preservation of open space is best approached on a regional, multi-agency level. To that end, the City supports exploring cooperative methods such as a joint powers agreement between the City of Rohnert Park, Sonoma County, the Sonoma County Open Space District, and other interested agencies. Such an agreement would provide for the identification, acquisition, maintenance, and preservation of open space.*

*As part of preparation of the Park, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan (see Section 5.2), the City should identify open space priorities and work with the district for their inclusion in the district's acquisition plan.*

- OS-6 Require property developers adjacent to sites where agricultural use is permitted or being conducted to inform subsequent buyers of potential continued agricultural production and the lawful use of agricultural chemicals, including pesticides and fertilizers.

- OS-7 Use creek protection zones (see Section 6.2) for permanent public open space and compatible purposes including habitat conservation, bike and walking paths, wildlife habitat, and native plant landscaping.

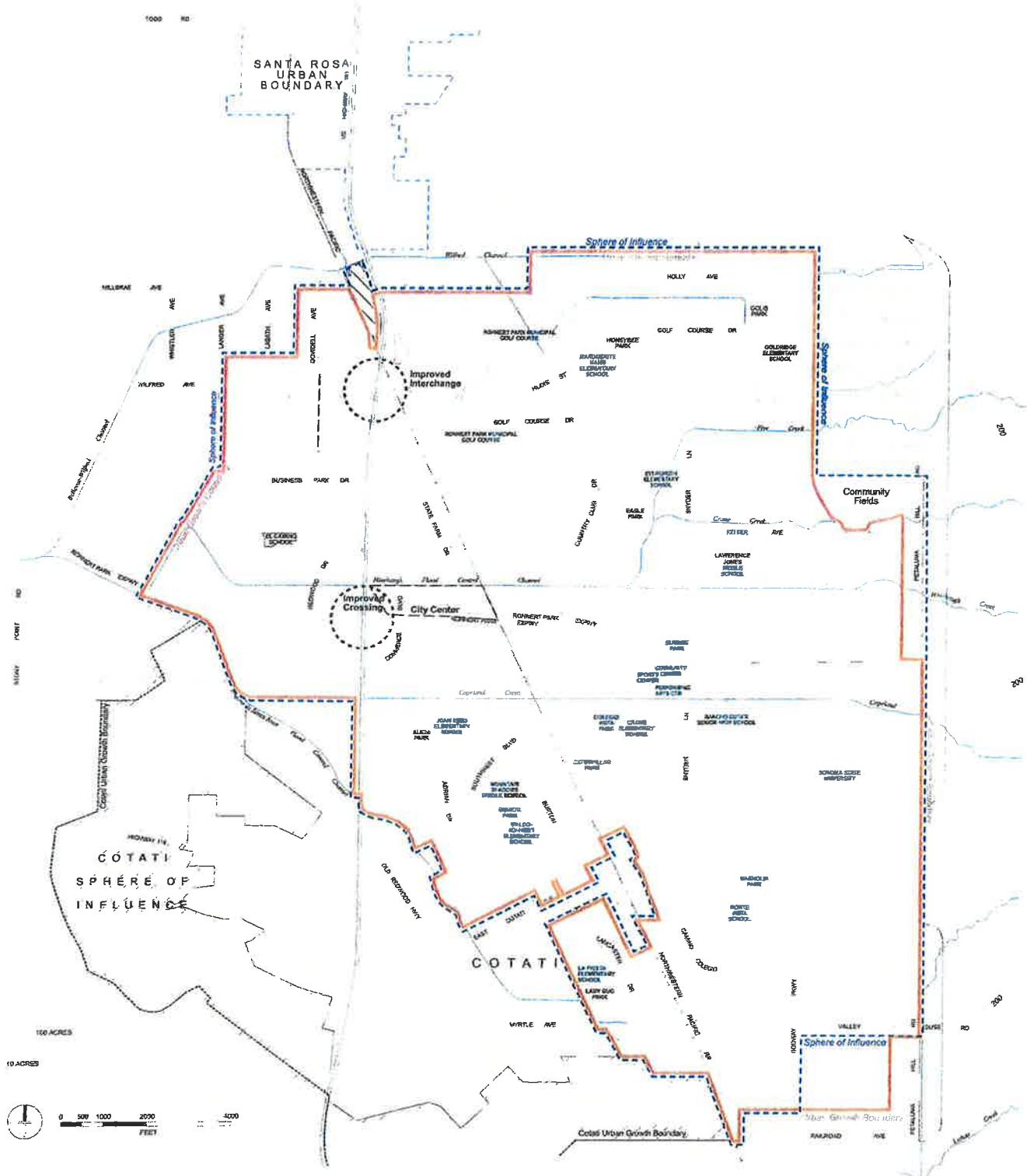
*Creeks are located in close proximity to residential neighborhoods, providing accessible open space getaways for residents. Adverse impacts to ecologically sensitive habitat, wildlife, and wetlands should be minimized in the planning, construction, and maintenance of paths.*

- OS-8 Explore the feasibility of integrating natural and restored wetlands and vernal pool areas with new development or open space areas.

- OS-9 As part of the specific plan process, institute mechanisms for maintenance of Open Space west of Petaluma Hill Road. Establish standards and schedules for the maintenance and management of any City-owned open space.

*Maintenance should include measures to cut back grass and brush to reduce the risk of fire, reduce flood hazards, and perform related maintenance activities.*

- OS-9A Undertake a study to explore the feasibility of mitigating open space loss on the East Side.



### Open Space Priority Acquisition Areas

Note: Refer to EIR Figure 4.7-3 for a map of Special Status Species Habitat

*Figure 5.1-2*  
**Open Space  
Priority Acquisition Areas**

Revised 12/13

## 5.2 PARKS

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### CITY PARKS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

As of 1999, Rohnert Park contained 469 acres of park and recreation land, or approximately 11 percent of the total net city area. This amounts to 17.8 acres per 1,000 existing residents. Even after excluding school-parks, creek-side open space and other open spaces along streets, the City's parkland availability still equals 11.8 acres per 1,000 residents. A large portion—310 acres—of this area is contained in the two municipal golf courses — the North Rohnert Park Municipal Golf Course covers 166 acres and the South Rohnert Park Municipal Golf Course covers 144 acres.

Key park and recreational facilities include:

- *Community Center Complex.* Located near the intersection of the Rohnert Park Expressway and Snyder Lane, this complex includes:
  - 20,000 square foot Community Center Building;
  - 33,000 square foot Sports Center;
  - 37,000 square foot Performing Arts Facility, including a 500-seat main stage and 100-seat second stage; and
  - Planned Indoor Pool.
- *Rohnert Park Stadium.* The home of the Crushers Baseball Team, the stadium was built in 1981 at 5900 Labath Avenue.
- *Roberts Lake.* Located at 5010 Roberts Lake Road, this five-acre artificial lake has adjacent recreational facilities.
- *Scout Hut.* This 1,328 square foot facility is located at 295 Santa Alicia Drive.
- *Parks.* The City has the following major parks:
  - Alicia Park (includes outdoor pool);
  - Benicia Park (includes outdoor pool);
  - Caterpillar Park;
  - Collegio Vista Park;
  - Dorothea Park;
  - Eagle Park;
  - Golis Park;
  - Honeybee Park (includes outdoor pool);
  - Ladybug Park (includes outdoor pool);
  - Magnolia Park (outdoor pool to be constructed in 2000);
  - Hinebaugh Creek Park;

- Rainbow Park;
- San Simeon Park; and
- Sunrise Park.
- *Senior Citizen Center.* The center is currently 10,000 square feet.
- *Neighborhood Recreation Centers.* These include:
  - Benicia Park Recreation Center, 3,024 square foot, at 7450 Santa Barbara Drive;
  - Burton Avenue Recreation Center, 6,700 square foot, at 7421 Burton Avenue; and
  - Ladybug Park Recreation Center, 1,145 square foot at 8517 Liman Way.
- *Pools.* Community pools are located in neighborhood parks and are listed above under “Parks.”

**Table 5.2-1:**  
**Parks, Recreational Facilities, and Open Space Acreage, Inside 1999 City Limits**

	Acres	Total Per 1,000 residents <sup>4</sup>
Neighborhood Parks and Mini-parks <sup>1</sup>	116	2.9
Golf Courses	310	7.8
Other Recreational Facilities	43	1.1
Creekside Open Space	96	2.4
Open Space along Street Rights-of-Way <sup>2</sup>	26	0.7
Schools <sup>3</sup>	126	3.2
Total	712	17.8

1. Includes underwater area of Roberts Lake, which is 5 acres in size.

2. Along Rohnert Park Expressway and between US 101 and Commerce Boulevard.

3. Includes 35-acre Creekside Middle School. Total school acreage is 180. Assuming 30 percent of school sites are covered with structures, the remaining areas are recreational and open space, totaling 126 acres. However, the School District does not allow scheduled public use of the field facilities at Creekside Middle School, as they do at other facilities, as a mitigation measure from the EIR for the project. Monte Vista School, by virtue of fencing and locked gates. Is also not available for community use of the playground after school hours.

4. Based on 1999 DOF population of 40,032 residents.

Source: Dyett & Bhatia

Six new neighborhood and linear parks are proposed in the General Plan, along with two open space parks and two special purpose parks. Mini parks, greenways, and plaza parks are not included in this summary. These parks are located in areas where new residential and mixed use development is proposed. The total amount of proposed parkland ranges from 56 to 64 acres, as shown in Table 5.2-2. Existing and proposed parks are shown in Figure 5.2-1.

**Table 5.2-2:**  
**New Parks Under the General Plan<sup>1</sup>**

	<i>Acres</i>
University District	10-20
South Eastside Park	5-8
North Eastside Park	8
North Eastside Linear Park <sup>2</sup>	4
Community Fields	27-50
Westside Park	2-4
Sonoma Mountain Village	23
Infill Park	2
Total	83-114

*1. Excluding mini-parks, plazas, and greenways.*

*Source: Dyett & Bhatia*

## STANDARDS AND CLASSIFICATION

### Standards

#### *Residential Development*

Although there are no State standards for parks, the Quimby Act (Government Code §66477) allows local agencies to require dedication standards—at up to three acres per 1,000 residents, or a higher amount matching existing availability, up to five acres/1,000 residents—for residential subdivisions to provide land or in-lieu fees for developing new or rehabilitating existing neighborhood or community park or recreational facilities to serve the subdivision.

#### *Non-residential Development*

In addition to parkland need that stems from residential development, employment-generating uses also have recreation and open space needs. In business park kind of developments, open space on the site often suffices for lunchtime open space needs. However, in more urban settings, plazas and mini-parks may be necessary. Thus, in addition to the residential parkland standards, the City may require plazas, mini-parks, and other appropriate open spaces from non-residential developments in locations such as the University District, subject to a maximum of one acre per 250,000 square feet of non-residential space.

### Classification

Community and neighborhood parks are defined as follows:

- *Community Parks.* Community parks serve a citywide population and usually include sports facilities, such as lighted fields, courts, swimming pools, recreation buildings, and other special use facilities. Restrooms and off-street parking are generally provided.

Although community parks have a much larger service area than neighborhood parks, they often serve a neighborhood function as well.

- *Neighborhood Parks.* Neighborhood parks are devoted primarily to serving a small portion of the city, usually within easy walking and biking distance from residences. These parks are designed for unorganized and unsupervised recreation activities. Play equipment, open turf areas, and picnic tables may be provided, although restrooms and off-street parking may not. Neighborhood parks typically measure between three and fifteen acres.

Based on a standard of 5.0 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, buildout of the General Plan would result in the need for an additional 60 acres of neighborhood and community parkland. This is the amount of parkland that the City could require of developers submitting subdivision maps; the City may provide additional park and recreation facilities independently.

**Table 5.2-3:**

**New Community and Neighborhood Park Need**

	<i>Standard (Acres per 1,000 residents)</i>	<i>Population in New Housing Units<sup>1</sup></i>	<i>Acres Needed</i>
Community and Neighborhood Parks	5.0	11,700	59

*1. Based on the total addition of 4,450 housing units at buildout and assuming 2.62 persons per household at buildout. This is the total population based on 100% occupancy of housing units, which is the method used to assess in-lieu fee or land requirements under the Quimby Act. Increase in population at buildout is projected to be lower (see Table 2.3-3), since projected household size at buildout is lower than in 2000, and vacancy rates are included in calculating buildout projections.*

*Note: This table does not include parkland need from non-residential development, which would be in the form of plazas and mini-parks.*

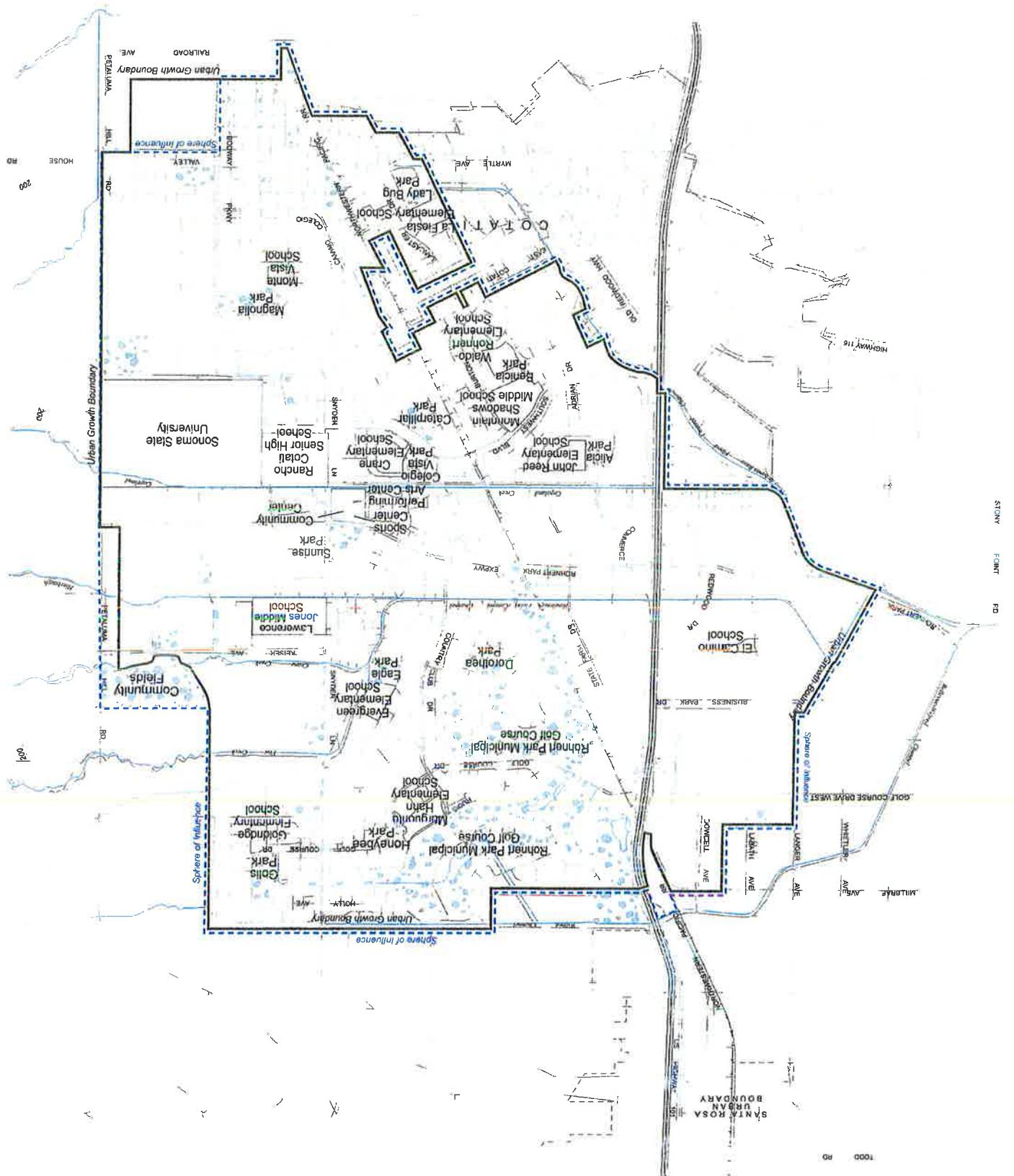
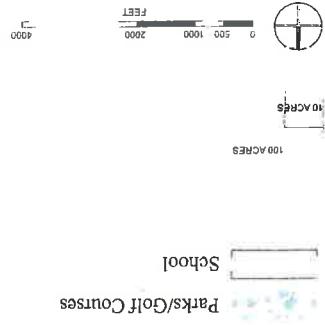
Source: Dyett & Bhatia

## CREEK CHANNELS

The City, in cooperation with the Sonoma County Water Agency, owns and maintains creek channels within Rohnert Park. These channels include Coleman Creek, Copeland Creek, Crane Creek, Five Creek, and the Five Creek Diversion. The Wilfred Channel, located adjacent to the northern City boundary, also is an urban open space resource for the community. The amount of urban open space along creek channels totals approximately 96 acres. Public access to these channels is generally not restricted. The City has constructed pedestrian/bicycle paths along Coleman, Copeland, Crane, Five, and Hinebaugh creeks.

# Parks and Schools

## Figure 5.2-1



## SCHOOL SITES

The Cotati-Rohnert Park School District maintains 15 schools on 14 sites. Eleven of the school sites are located within 1999 City limits, and in addition, Creekside Middle School is located immediately outside the 1999 City limits. The land within 11 school sites plus Creekside totals 180 acres. Each school site includes playing fields and other urban open space areas. Most of the school sites are located adjacent to City parks, thereby compounding the amount of urban open space at each locale. If school buildings and grounds are assumed to occupy approximately 30 percent of the site areas, the amount of recreational space would be 126.2 acres.

## GOALS: PARKS

- OS-F Provide an integrated system of parks and trails throughout the City to meet the community's recreational needs.
- OS-G Develop additional parkland in the city to meet the standards of required park acreage for new residents.
- OS-H Ensure adequate funding for parks and recreation facilities acquisition, development, and maintenance.

## POLICIES: PARKS

- OS-10 Prepare a Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Master Plan as the implementing tool for General Plan park and recreation policies and proposals. Ensure that the Plan includes phasing and priority acquisitions. As part of the Plan development, explore financing mechanisms, including methods for upfront acquisition and development of priority parklands and fields.

*The PROS Master Plan will cover several topics related to park and recreational open space, such as: precise location of parks and financial planning to improve undeveloped park land and trails, maintain existing facilities, develop new trails, and acquire land for new parks. The PROS Master will also establish standards and identify funding for both specific park facilities and City-owned, non-park open space areas, such as street medians and open space buffers.*

- OS-11 As part of the update of the Subdivision Regulations, establish parkland dedication or in lieu fee at a standard of five acres of community and neighborhood parks per 1,000 new residents. Require development in high-intensity employment-generating areas—such as the University District—to provide additional parkland for employees at 1 acre per 250,000 square feet of non-residential development.

*The standards set out in this policy will generate a need for approximately 60 acres of new neighborhood and community parkland, as shown in Table 5.2-3, as well as plazas and mini-parks in high-intensity centers. Policy LU-1 calls for an update of the Subdivision Regulations.*

- OS-12 Acquire and develop new parks in the approximate locations and sizes shown on Figure 5.2-1 and Table 5.2-2.

*The General Plan proposes several new parks that will provide acreage to meet the standard, as indicated in Table 5.2-2. Locations shown on Figure 5.2-1 are generalized, with precise locations to be determined during implementation. At buildout, the parkland acreage for neighborhood and community parks will increase to about 175 acres. The ratio of this acreage to 1,000 residents will remain roughly the same.*

### **Recreation Facilities**

- OS-13 Develop the approximately 50-acre area north of Crane Creek west of Petaluma Hill Road as community recreation fields, within City limits. Ensure that development of the fields is a priority and that this land will not be used for any other use, including affordable housing, for the life of the General Plan. Ensure that fields are designed to have minimal impacts on adjacent residential uses to the west, and have ingress and egress from several roads to minimize traffic impacts. Ensure that only a small portion of the fields is lit for nighttime recreation.

- OS-14 Continue cooperating with the Cotati-Rohnert Park School District to develop parks near schools as joint use facilities and coordinate maintenance and management of park/school sites.

- OS-15 Integrate citywide plans for bicycle and pedestrian paths with park plans.

*The network of paths will allow alternative access routes to parks. The development of a network of bikeways and pedestrian trails is a key principle of the General Plan Diagram.*

- OS-16 Expand the city's network of bike and pedestrian paths in areas of new development.

*These paths, which should be located along creek rights-of-way, should be linked to the existing path system. Paths should also run along the University District Linear Park, connecting new residential areas with the SSU campus. The access needs of a variety of users, including school-age children, college students, the elderly, and persons with disabilities should be considered in the path design. More detail on bikeways and pedestrian trails is included in Chapter 4: Transportation.*

- OS-17 Ensure that parks and recreation facilities are safe secure areas.

*The City should request Department of Public Safety review and comment on park and recreation facility projects. The design and construction of these facilities should allow for safety, security, and reliable patrol and response.*

## **5.3 SCHOOLS**

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### **FACILITIES, 1999**

Rohnert Park schools are under the authority of the Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District (CRPUSD). The District operates 15 schools, including nine elementary schools, three middle schools, and one high school, and two continuation high schools. There are 14 school sites in all, with a combined elementary and middle school program at the Thomas Page School, and eleven sites are found inside Rohnert Park's 1999 City limits. The CRPUSD also runs an alternative secondary program. School sites are shown on Figure 5.2-1.

As in many cities, the District and the City work closely to provide complementary services. The City maintains turf areas and playing fields on school grounds as part of regular park maintenance, and the District reimburses the City for the service. School buildings and recreational facilities are available for community use during non-school hours<sup>1</sup>. Parks located adjacent to schools provide additional outdoor recreational space for students.

The boundaries of the CRPUSD are shown on Figure 5.3-1. The Bellevue Union School District (BUSD) and Santa Rosa High School District (SRHSD) are located on the north side of the CRPUSD. As of 1999, the boundaries of the BUSD-SRHSD include areas planned for new development under this General Plan on both the eastside and the westside.

### **ENROLLMENT AND CAPACITY, 1999**

In 1999, approximately 8,120 students were enrolled in the CRPUSD. This number is reduced to 7,970, if Independent Study students are subtracted out.<sup>2</sup> The CRPUSD had excess capacity (7,970 students enrolled, vs. 9,110 capacity). Moreover, all school levels—elementary, middle, and high school—had some excess capacity (see Table 5.3-1).

### **PROJECTED ENROLLMENT**

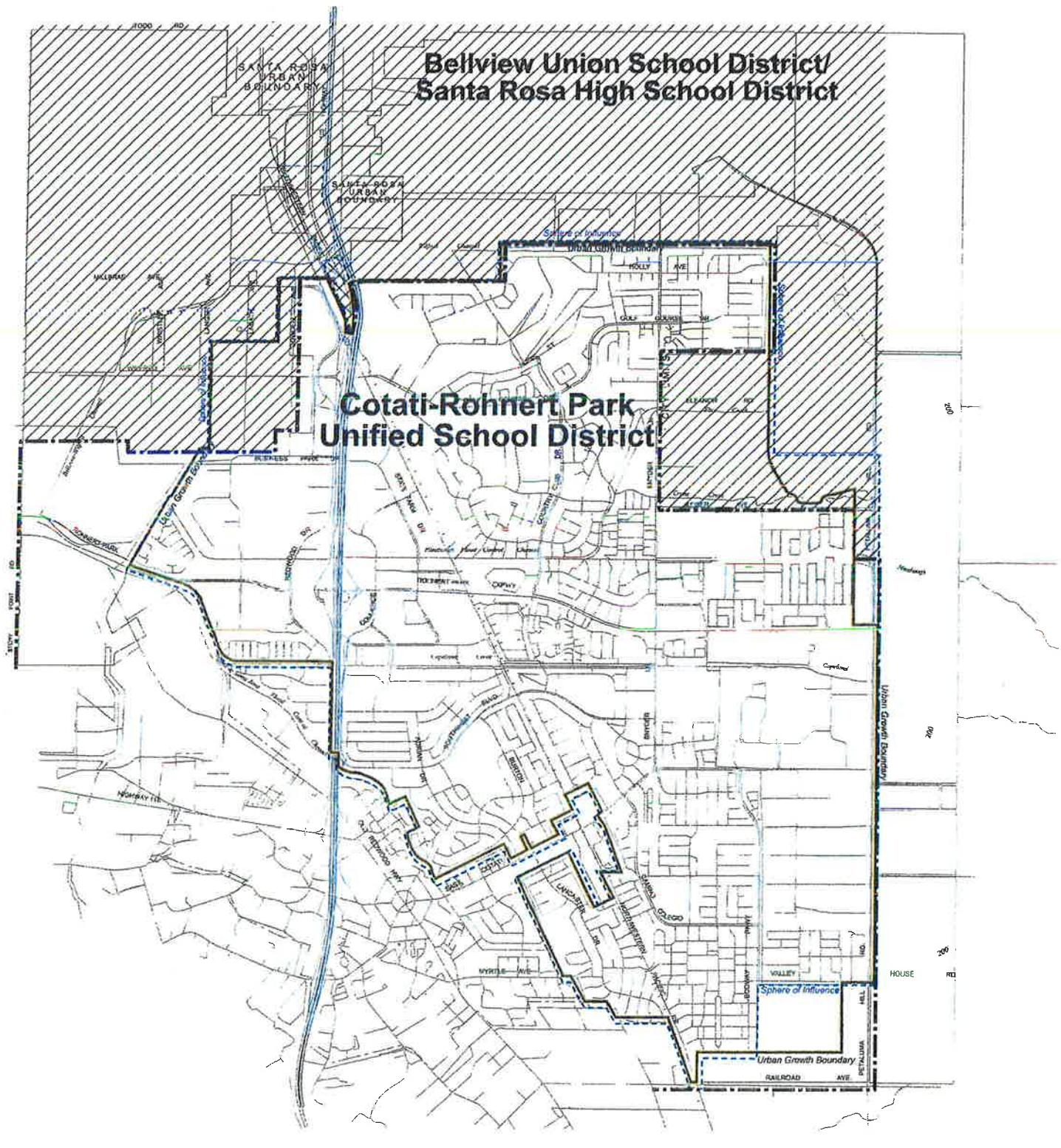
Buildout of the General Plan will result in the addition of approximately 5,382 housing units, with a total buildout population of approximately 51,332. According to the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), Cotati is projected to have a population of 9,400 by 2020.

Based on General Plan buildout population, Cotati's 2020 population projection, ABAG age-class projections, and Sonoma County grade-level enrollment projections, decreased enrollment is expected among elementary school students; middle school enrollment is

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<sup>1</sup> Creekside Middle School is not available for scheduled use of its athletic fields as a mitigation measure of the project EIR. Monte Vista School, by virtue of fencing and locked gates, is not available for community use of the playgrounds after school hours.

<sup>2</sup> Independent Study students are students involved in home-study, work-study, or other alternative educational programs. Independent Study students spend most of their class time outside the classroom.



*Figure 5.3-1*  
**School Districts**

Revised 12/13

expected to remain about the same as in 1999; and increased enrollment is expected among high school students. Enrollment estimates under General Plan buildout are shown in Table 5.3-1. Enrollment is estimated under two scenarios: with existing CRPUSD boundary and with an enlarged CRPUSD boundary that includes all areas of new development under the General Plan.

**Table 5.3-1:**
**Estimated Enrollment and Projected School Needs<sup>1</sup>: Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District (With Existing CRPUSD Boundary / With Expanded CRPUSD Boundary<sup>2</sup>)**

	<i>Enrollment 1999<sup>3</sup></i>	<i>Buildout Enrollment<sup>4</sup></i>	<i>Change 1999 – Buildout</i>	<i>1999 Capacity<sup>5</sup></i>	<i>Capacity Needs at Enrollment<sup>6</sup></i>
K-5	3,908	3,662/3,977	246/72	4,815	1,153/838
6-8	2,067	2,023/2,207	44/149	2,154	131/53
9-12	1,992	2,700/2,940	948/418	2,142	558/798
Total	7,967	8,385/9,124	418/1,157	9,111	726/13

1. Includes estimated enrollment for the City of Cotati, based on 2020 population in ABAG's Projections '98.

2. With existing CRPUSD boundaries, some Rohnert Park school-age children would attend school in the Bellevue Union and Santa Rosa High School Districts. An expanded boundary change considers the scenario of school enrollment in the CRPUSD if the school district boundaries were redrawn to include all development under the Rohnert Park General Plan.

3. Excludes Independent Study students.

4. Reflects anticipated 55% buildout of Sonoma Mountain Village through 2020.

5. Excludes the two classrooms used for Independent Study students.

6. A negative number means that capacity exceeds enrollment, which means that there would be extra classroom space.

Source: Dyett & Bhatia

(Rev. 08/10)

CRPUSD estimates in the *1997 School Facility Analysis and Justification Report for School Facility Fees* are projected only until the 2010-2011 school year. Enrollment projections in that report are based on constant rates of students per household,<sup>3</sup> while current ABAG Projections '98 expect a decrease in household size and children per household.

### Projected School Needs

As shown in Table 5.3-1, the estimated decrease in elementary school enrollment, combined with existing excess capacity in 1999, would generate an excess capacity of about 1,200 under General Plan buildout if the school district boundary is changed. The average capacity of the CRPUSD's nine elementary schools is 550, suggesting than two or three elementary schools could potentially be closed as a result of decreased enrollment. In addition, the elementary school site reserved by CRPUSD on the eastside adjacent to the Creekside Middle School may no longer be needed. The drop in enrollment is primarily the result of projected decreases in household school-age children per household, which would counteract the increased number of housing units and households in Cotati and Rohnert Park.

3 The report expresses the rates on a "per home" basis, not specifying whether the unit of measure is "housing unit" or "household." Because the report states that "housing vacancy rates are assumed to remain constant and do not affect [the rates]," households—defined as occupied housing units—are implied.

Because middle school enrollment is expected to increase only very slightly at buildout with a boundary change, assuming 27 students per classroom (the State rate), capacity and enrollment are likely to be in balance. The estimated increase in high school students is expected to exceed 1999 capacity at the Rancho Cotate and extension high schools. Additional space would be necessary. This would be true regardless of whether the school district boundary is changed or not.

## SCHOOL DISTRICT BOUNDARY CHANGES

The City does not control school boundaries. However, however, the City can encourage actions that will promote a cohesive community. Procedures for reorganizing the boundaries of a school district are described in § 35700 of the California Education Code. There are two alternative procedures for changing the school district boundaries:

- *Negotiated Agreement.* The CRPUSD and each of the other two districts would mutually agree that they would be reorganized “on the basis of a substantial community identity” and that the reorganization would not cause a “substantial negative effect on the fiscal management or fiscal status of...any existing district affected by the proposed reorganization.” The three districts would file a petition with the County Superintendent of Schools asking for a reorganization action. A “county committee” comprised of two representatives from each of the supervisorial districts and one at-large member would vote on the petition. Its recommendation would be sent to the State Board of Education for action, which is likely to approve the transfer if two or all three districts support it.
- *Petition.* Petition for reorganization by 25 percent or more of registered voters within the transfer territory in each of the BUSD and SRHSD districts. This alternative could be pursued if agreement could not be reached among the three districts and would be initiated by one or more of the property owners. If the county committee grants the petition but one or more of the districts opposes it, an election would be called in the territory of the districts to vote on the reorganization. The vote would occur at the next available regular election.

## GOALS: SCHOOLS

- PF-A Work with the Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District (CRPUSD) to ensure that all school-age children living in Rohnert Park can attend public schools in Rohnert Park, without having to travel to adjacent jurisdictions.
- PF-B Work with the Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District (CRPUSD), with the Bellevue Union School District (BUSD), and the Santa Rosa High School District (SRHSD), to ensure availability of adequate sites for schools.
- PF-C Work with Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District (CRPUSD) to find alternative uses for facilities that are closed or sites and facilities that may not be needed in the future because of decreased enrollment.

## POLICIES: SCHOOLS

- PF-1 Work actively with the Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District (CRPUSD) to amend school district boundaries, so that all new development under this General Plan is included in the CRPUSD. Encourage CRPUSD, the Bellevue Union School District (BUSD), and the Santa Rosa High School District (SRHSD) to reach a negotiated agreement on the boundary changes.
- PF-2 Work with the Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District (CRPUSD) to provide adequate high school sites and facilities.

*If students from new development in the Rohnert Park Planning Area, including those areas within the BUSD and SRHSD as of 1999, were to enroll at the Rancho Cotate High School, demand at buildout is likely to exceed 1999 capacity, creating the need for additional facilities. The City should encourage CRPUSD to undertake a comprehensive assessment of facility needs and work with the district to accommodate the districts needs. Options to the district include, but are not limited to:*

- *Expansion of Rancho Cotate High School, or use of temporary classrooms at the high school;*
- *Construction of a second high school. As of 1999, capacity at Rancho Cotate High School was approximately 2,100. Buildings, parking lots, and playing fields already occupy the most of the site, limiting the potential for expansion. Construction of a smaller 500-student high school can be considered;*
- *Retrofit and reuse of an elementary school. According to projected enrollment levels, two to three elementary schools can potentially be closed by 2020, while additional space will be needed for high school students. Reuse of an elementary school site could be a considered as an alternative to building new high school classrooms.*
- *This option raises issues of displacement of elementary school students from their home neighborhoods, proximity of the "satellite" high school to the Rancho Cotate High School, compatibility with residential neighborhoods, and the feasibility and cost of retrofitting an elementary school to high school needs. The only elementary school within walking distance of Rancho Cotate High School is Crane Elementary School, which is approximately a 1/4-mile or 5-minute walk away.*

- PF-3 Require developers to dedicate any necessary school sites to the Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District (CRPUSD).

*At the time Specific Plans are developed, an analysis of the need for additional school sites shall be conducted in consultation with the appropriate school district.*

- PF-4 Work with the Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District (CRPUSD) to ensure that CRPUSD land that is part of the Creekside Middle School site and is not needed for school facilities is developed in accordance with the General Plan Diagram.
- PF-5 Work with the Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District (CRPUSD) to reuse any closed elementary school sites, and ensure that new uses are compatible with adjacent uses.

*Reuse of elementary school sites should be consistent with surrounding uses. In case CRPUSD determines that one or more of the sites is no longer needed, appropriate alternatives should be considered for each closed site. The Naylor Act allows cities and counties to acquire surplus school properties for recreational purposes, so recreational reuse is a possibility. Reuse could include a community service center, occupied by a group of non-profit organizations, and managed by the City or a lessee. The lessee could be a non-profit organization that also occupies the facility.*

- PF-6 In case CRPUSD determines that the vacant elementary school site on the eastside adjacent to Creekside Middle School is no longer needed for school use, encourage its development with Medium Density Residential use.

*The appropriateness of developing this site for an elementary school, in view of the projected declining enrollment, will need to be determined by CRPUSD. If CRPUSD determines that the site is not needed for an elementary school, Medium Density Residential would be a use compatible with the surrounding land use designations, according to the General Plan Diagram. The CRPUSD can consider and decide on the appropriate mechanism (sale, lease, or other) for realizing residential use of the site.*

## **5.4 WASTEWATER**

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### **SEWER SERVICE, 1999**

All development within the 1999 City limits was connected to sewer service as of 1999. The City also provides sewer service to the Sonoma State University (SSU) campus, located east of the 1999 City limits. Residential development in Canon Manor, located outside the 1999 City limits but within its SOI, is served by septic systems, not City sewers. Sewer mains collect wastewater and transport it to the Rohnert Park Pumping Station. As of 1999, the wastewater mains were adequate in size to serve the area within the 1999 City limits. A 24-inch interceptor sewer main extends westward from the pumping station to the treatment plant.

### **SUBREGIONAL WASTEWATER DISPOSAL SYSTEM**

Rohnert Park is a partner in the subregional wastewater disposal system, which also serves Santa Rosa, Sebastopol, and Cotati. The City of Santa Rosa is the managing partner and has a contractual obligation to meet the wastewater treatment and disposal needs of the other partners. Wastewater from the subregional system is treated at the Laguna Water Reclamation Treatment Plant (LWRTP), located about two miles northwest of Rohnert Park.

The LWRTP provides primary, secondary, and tertiary treatment. Agricultural and urban irrigation is the primary method used to dispose of tertiary wastewater, and river discharge is used only as necessary during wet weather. After treatment, tertiary water is stored in containment ponds. Water levels in the ponds are monitored, and when they reach maximum capacity, water is discharged into the Russian River, which empties into the Pacific Ocean. Based on the City of Santa Rosa's NPDES permit for the treatment plan, discharged water cannot exceed 5 percent of the river flow.

The City of Rohnert Park is currently allotted a capacity of 3.22 million gallons per day (mgd) in the subregional system, including 0.10 for SSU. Estimated 1999 wastewater flows are shown in Table 5.4-1. The City of Cotati funnels wastewater through the Rohnert Park system, but has been developing its own connection to the LWRTP and will no longer direct wastewater through Rohnert Park as of fall 1999. Cotati has an allocation of 0.62 mgd.

**Table 5.4-1:**

**Wastewater Treatment Flows, 1999<sup>1</sup>**

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Average Dry Weather Flow (mgd)	3.50
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Average Annual Flow (mgd)	4.09
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<sup>1</sup>. Includes flows from Rohnert Park, SSU, and Cotati.

*Source: City of Rohnert Park*

### **Geysers Recharge Project**

In the early 1990s, the City of Santa Rosa initiated the Subregional Long Term Wastewater Project to bring the subregional system into compliance with the needs of partner cities through

2010. The wastewater project included expansion of treatment capacity at the LWRTP from 18 to 21.2 mgd and an increase in reclaimed water storage and distribution capacity.

Several alternatives were considered for the wastewater project, including a reclaimed water reservoir south of Rohnert Park. The Geysers Recharge alternative was selected in February 1997 as the preferred alternative. This project will enable the Laguna Water Reclamation Treatment Plan to treat the higher capacity of wastewater, because the Plant is constrained by the amount of available online storage, rather than by the amount of water it can physically treat. The City of Santa Rosa has opened bids on the first phase of the construction project, and the pipeline is projected to become operational by 2002<sup>4</sup>.

The City of Santa Rosa has a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit to release treated wastewater from the treatment plant. On March 1, 2000, the State Board approved an incremental capacity increase for the Subregional System, increasing the permitted amount of released water from 18 mgd to 19.2 mgd. The allocation of this increased capacity has yet to be negotiated. On March 15, 2000, the State Board approved an additional capacity increase for the Subregional System to 21.2 mgd, pending completion of the Geysers Recharge project<sup>5</sup>.

### **Storage Pond Expansion**

Because the Geysers Recharge project was developed over many years, starting in the early 1990s, the City of Santa Rosa initiated and has now completed an interim project to meet wastewater needs throughout the county. Online pond storage is the major constraint on wastewater treatment capacity, because no wastewater can be directly discharged into the Russian River. A storage pond has been completed northwest of Rohnert Park, and the State Board has approved an incremental capacity increase for the Subregional System, as described in the previous section.

### **TREATMENT CAPACITY NEEDS**

In 1999, average dry weather wastewater flow from Rohnert Park, SSU, and Cotati was 3.50 mgd. In 1998 however, Rohnert Park, SSU, and Cotati exceeded their combined 1999 allocation capacity of 3.84 mgd with an average dry weather wastewater flow of 3.93 mgd, although Cotati was actually under capacity. Rohnert Park uses the excess capacity of other subregional system partners, and pays its proportionate share of operation and maintenance costs based on its actual flow, not on its allocation. Rohnert Park is the only subregional partner over its allocation.

For the purpose of the wastewater project, the wastewater needs of partner cities were based on adopted General Plans that were current when the wastewater project was being planned. Buildout of the 1995 Rohnert Park General Plan warranted an increase in capacity from 3.22 to 3.81 mgd for Rohnert Park and SSU (or from 3.84 to 4.65 mgd, including Cotati). As shown in Table 5.4-2, additional capacity is needed to accommodate buildout of this General Plan. This

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<sup>4</sup> Email correspondence with Joe Gaffney, City Engineer, City of Rohnert Park, April 12, 2000.

<sup>5</sup> Email correspondence with Scott Stinebaugh, Deputy Director, Utilities Department of the City of Santa Rosa, April 26, 2000.

finding implies that another wastewater capacity expansion project will be required to meet Rohnert Park's needs, after the Geysers Recharge project.

**Table 5.4-2:**  
**Estimated Wastewater Flows in Rohnert Park, Under  
General Plan Buildout**

	<i>Average Daily Dry Weather Flows (mgd)<sup>1</sup></i>
Rohnert Park	4.83
Sonoma State University	0.321 <sup>2</sup>
Total	5.151
Capacity Allocation with Geysers Recharge	3.81 <sup>3</sup>
Storage Pond Capacity Allocation	0.50 <sup>4</sup>
Additional Capacity Need	0.841
	+ contingencies

1. Based on City of Santa Rosa wastewater generation rates: 192.8 gallons/day/dwelling; 30.8 gallons/day/employee; 19.8 gallons/day/student.

2. Based on Master Plan buildout of 10,000 FTE students.

3. Expected to be on line in 2002.

4. Pending State Board approval.

Sources: Dyett & Bhatia; City of Santa Rosa, Santa Rosa Subregional Long Term Wastewater Project: Wastewater Flow Projections, July 1996; Sonoma State University Master Plan Revision: Draft Environmental Impact Report, November 1999.

Table 5.4-2 provides an estimate of when additional capacity may be needed. Rohnert Park's increased capacity allotment from the Geysers Recharge project would be adequate to accommodate an additional 2,751 dwelling units and about 2.53 million square feet of non-residential development, assuming balanced residential/non-residential use development, sufficient for residential development to about 2012-13.

If Canon Manor hook-ups are not provided, additional capacity will not be needed until 2014-15, and about 3,155 units could be accommodated. A more detailed analysis will need to be prepared in order to determine wastewater needs and timing with greater precision.

**Table 5.4-3:**  
**Use of Rohnert Park's Geysers Recharge Capacity Allocation (mgd)**

	<i>With Sewer Provision in Canon Manor</i>	<i>W/out Sewer Provision in Canon Manor</i>
Capacity Allocation with Geysers Recharge	3.81	
Storage Point Capacity Allocation	0.50	
Total Capacity Allocation	4.31	
1998 Average Dry Weather Flow (July-October)	3.36 <sup>1</sup>	
Excess Capacity	0.95	
Less Contingency	0.05	
Less Amount reserved for Pipeline Projects and SSU Expansion	0.12 <sup>2</sup>	
Less Canon Manor Sewer Provision	0.10 <sup>3</sup>	0.00
Net Capacity Available for New Development	0.68	0.70
Supportable Housing Units <sup>4</sup>	2,751	3,155
Supportable Non-Residential Space (million s.f.)	2.53	2.90
Year when additional capacity is expected to be needed <sup>5</sup>	2012-13	2014-15

1. Dry weather flow for Rohnert Park, SSU and Cotati was 3.93 mgd; Cotati flow of 0.57 mgd is subtracted out. Cotati 1998 flow is estimated using City of Santa Rosa wastewater generation rates: 192.8 gallons/day/dwelling; 30.8 gallons/day/employee; 19.8 gallons/day/student; 1998 DOF population estimate; and 2000 ABAG employment projection.

2. Includes Wilfred-Dowdell, all non-residential infill development within the 1999 City limits, and 72 infill residential units. 3. Based on General Plan Diagram and City of Santa Rosa wastewater generation rate of 192.8 gallons/day/dwelling. Under General Plan buildout, the Canon Manor, which is designated for Estate Residential and Low Density Residential uses, would have about 540 housing units at buildout.

4. Assumes residential uses will use up 80 percent of capacity, consistent with projected flows.

5. Assuming 225 units per year.

Sources: Dyett & Bhatia; City of Santa Rosa, Santa Rosa Subregional Long Term Wastewater Project: Wastewater Flow Projections, July 1996; Letter from Linda Spiro to Miles Ferris, August 17, 1997, Attachments A and B.

## PUMPING CAPACITY NEEDS

The capacity of Rohnert Park's pumping station is 26 mgd, whereas pumping needs under buildout of the General Plan are expected to be 21.9 mgd.<sup>6</sup> Thus, no additional pumping station capacity is needed.

## GOALS: WASTEWATER

- PF-D Ensure that adequate wastewater facilities and services are available to meet the needs of existing and new development.

<sup>6</sup> Pumping capacity must be greater than average dry weather flows and must be sufficient to pump peak hour wet weather wastewater flows. Pumping needs are estimated by multiplying total estimated wastewater flows (5.04 mgd) by 1.45 to estimate peak day wet weather flows and by 3.0 to estimate peak hour wet weather flow.

## POLICIES: WASTEWATER

- PF-7 Continue participation in the planning, financing, and construction of wastewater treatment capacity expansions of the Subregional Wastewater Disposal System. Explore opportunities for increasing reclaimed water use and decreasing potable water demand.
- PF-8 Undertake a detailed evaluation of the wastewater capacity needs associated with General Plan buildout. Seek from the City of Santa Rosa an increase in Rohnert Park's wastewater treatment capacity allocation that would become available in time to serve anticipated growth. Re-examine General Plan growth projections and development approval processes if additional capacity does not become available by 2012.

*The background analysis in this section provides a preliminary estimate of wastewater needs and indicates that additional treatment capacity may be needed by about 2012-13, if Canon Manor's needs are also included.*

- PF-9 Require developers to install or pay for new sewer lines and other sewer improvements needed to accommodate new development.

*Sewer mains on both the eastside and westside will need to be expanded in order to accommodate new development. Developers shall be required not only to install on-site sewers, but also to contribute to the cost of improvements to sewer mains. Chapter 2: Land Use and Growth Management includes specific policies for assessing costs and prioritizing and implementing infrastructure improvements.*

- PF-10 Continue to work with residents in Canon Manor to coordinate the provision and timing of wastewater services and facilities.

## 5.5 WATER SUPPLY AND CONSERVATION

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The City of Rohnert Park currently derives its drinking-water supply from a wellfield consisting of 42 municipal supply wells, 31 of which were active in 1999; and eight active connections to the Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA) Petaluma Aqueduct, which supplies water from the Russian River. The Sonoma County Water Agency operates and maintains a water transmission system authorized by the Agreement for Water Supply and Construction of Russian River-Cotati Intertie Project. Parties to the Agreement are the Agency and eight public entities, including Rohnert Park. Table 5.5-1 shows the amount of water supplied by each source. The total amount of water pumped from the 31 operational wells in 1999 was approximately 1.5 billion gallons. Agricultural users in the vicinity of Rohnert Park use a combination of private well water and reclaimed water for irrigation. Canon Manor residences use both shared and individual wells as their water supply.

**Table 5.5-1:**  
**Rohnert Park Water Sources and Consumption, 1999**

	<i>Water Provision (mgd)</i>	<i>Percent of Total</i>
Municipal Wells	4.19	61
SCWA Petaluma Aqueduct	2.68	39
Total	6.87	100

*Source: City of Rohnert Park*

### EXISTING SUPPLY

#### Municipal Wells

Municipal wells are typically 280 to 1,500 feet below ground and tap into an aquifer that lies under the Santa Rosa plain. The aquifer is recharged from the mountains around the Cotati Valley. The majority of the wells pump from water-bearing zones present within the alluvial fan deposits, Glen Ellen Formation, and Wilson Grove Formation located from 200 to 1,200 feet below ground surface (bgs).

No sites within the existing City limits use private wells for drinking-water supply, although many sites outside the City limits do, including Canon Manor and Sonoma State University. The private wells in the Canon Manor area are usually less than 200 feet in depth. Sonoma State University maintains and operates their own municipal well field that consists of three municipal supply wells. In 1999, two wells were operated by SSU which produced a total of approximately 13 million gallons of water for the year (0.04 mgd).

Since at least 1966, it was less expensive for the City to pump groundwater as a source to supplement water-supply requirements, than to purchase water from the SCWA. However, over time, purchasing water from the SCWA became less expensive due to increased energy costs and capital and operation costs associated with maintaining a wellfield. Also, groundwater pumping has been affected by increasing well maintenance requirements. Hence, since the mid-1990s, the City has used additional SCWA water and relied less on their municipal wellfield; the excess well

capacity serves as a back-up system in case of emergency situations or drought conditions. The production rates range from an annual average of approximately 0.8 mgd in 1970 to 4.8 mgd in 1994.

### **Sonoma County Water Agency**

"SCWA provides potable water to more than 500,000 people in Sonoma and Marin counties. Rohnert Park receives SCWA water from the Petaluma Aqueduct. The sources of the aqueduct water are the Dry Creek and Russian River Watersheds. To facilitate water supply, the SCWA stores water in two reservoirs, Lake Mendocino and Lake Sonoma. Water from these reservoirs is conveyed as released flows to Dry Creek and the Russian River to diversion facilities located near the community of Forestville. Water is then diverted, treated, and delivered to the SCWA's contractors including Rohnert Park, via the Agency's water transmission system.

In 1999, Rohnert Park's entitlement to SCWA water was 1.0 mgd, but the City was able to purchase additional water beyond its entitlement. In 1998, the City used 2.62 mgd (annual average) of SCWA water.

Rohnert Park was provided additional water from the unused allocation of another SCWA member, the North Marin Water District (NMWD). In 1991, the City of Petaluma entered into an agreement with the NMWD that allows NMWD to take excess water from Petaluma's allocation in exchange for granting the City of Petaluma permission to connect to the NMWD aqueduct. Since then, Rohnert Park has continued to use NMWD's excess allocation.

To continue to provide a safe, economical, and reliable water supply to meet the future needs of SCWA's service area, SCWA proposed the Water Supply and Transmission System Project (WSTSP) in 1998. When fully constructed and operational, the WSTSP will increase the amount of water that can safely be diverted, and increase SCWA's delivery capacity to its service area.

However, due to delays in implementation resulting from litigation and regulatory constraints, all facilities associated with the WSTSP have not been constructed. As a result of SCWA's ongoing Federal Endangered Species Act compliance efforts for listed salmonid species and current litigation on the WSTSP Environmental Impact Report, SCWA estimates their new water facilities will not be constructed for ten years. Consequently, current limitations exist in the Transmission System primarily due to temporary impairment during summertime water production and new development within the service area.

### **PROJECTED DEMAND AND CAPACITY NEEDS**

In 1999, average annual water use in Rohnert Park was 6.87 mgd (Table 5.5-1); an annual average of 4.19 mgd of water was derived from the City of Rohnert Park's municipal well system and an annual average of 2.68 mgd of water was obtained from SCWA water allocations to Rohnert Park (1.0 mgd entitlement) and an unused portion of NMWD's allocation (1.68 mgd). As of 1999/2000, Rohnert Park's population is approximately 41,000. Applying the 1999 average annual water use of 6.9 mgd and a population of 41,000, it is projected that the City's water

supply requirement to meet the year 2020 buildout at a population of 50,400 is estimated to be an annual average of 8.5 mgd.<sup>78</sup>

As of 2000, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Regarding Water Transmission System Capacity Allocation During Temporary Impairment has been established between the SCWA and the eight public parties to whom the SCWA provides water supply. The purpose of the MOU is to establish a procedure to optimize allocation of the available supply of SCWA water among the eight public parties during the projected period of temporary impairment of Transmission System capacity. As part of the MOU, a temporary delivery capacity allocation (that remains in effect until September 2010) was developed which includes the schedule presented in Table 5.5-2 for the City of Rohnert Park. The delivery rates are based on historic maximum monthly demand.

**Table 5.5-2:**  
**Temporary Delivery Capacity Allocation – Rohnert Park**  
**SCWA Average Day Maximum Month Delivery Rate**

Year	Rates in mgd
2000	4.8
2001	4.8
2002	4.8
2003	5.2
2004	5.3
2005 – 2010	5.3

*Source: Sonoma County Water Agency*

On the basis of SCWA's allocation schedule developed for Rohnert Park as presented in Table 5.5-2, and the planned increase for an entitlement of 15 mgd by 2010, the City's reliance on groundwater from their municipal wellfield to meet future demands through the 2020 buildout is summarized below in Table 5.5-3. As indicated, the planned SCWA entitlement of 15.0 mgd by 2010 would fulfill future growth demands from 2010 through 2020, and allow the City to reserve municipal wellfield production for backup and emergency supply purposes. However, during the interim, the City will continue to rely on their municipal wellfield as a source of water to supplement the SCWA allocation schedule. Production requirements from the municipal wellfield are estimated to range from 1.9 mgd in 2004, to 2.3 mgd in 2009.

Groundwater conditions were assessed based on historical data and a groundwater study prepared for the City in May, 2000 entitled City of Rohnert Park Groundwater Study. Conditions indicate that in previous years, production has exceeded recharge. Comparison of the range of estimated

<sup>7</sup> Total Rohnert Park water consumption divided by the number of residents.

<sup>8</sup> An alternative way to project future water consumption is to use wastewater flow rates, assuming than all water supplied to land uses is ultimately discharged again. For this method, separate rates are used for residential and non-residential uses, as well as students. As discussed in Section 5.4, projected wastewater flows are 5.04 mgd under buildout. The 5.04 mgd water consumption implies a consumption rate of only 100.8 gallons per person per day. At another 40 percent less than 1998 rates, the rate does not reflect known amounts of consumption.

annual average recharge rates (0.66 to 3.28 mgd) with the City's municipal wellfield requirements during implementation of the General Plan (1.9 to 2.3 mgd as indicated in Table 5.5-3), indicates the potential for short-term impacts to occur during years of implementation from 2000 through 2009 if annual average recharge is less than 1.9 to 2.3 mgd. Annual average recharge would be less than 1.9 to 2.3 mgd if annual precipitation is less than 36 to 44 inches. The magnitude of the impact, if any, depends on the amount of precipitation in years 2000 through 2009. Policies have been developed to ensure that groundwater levels are not substantially lowered.

**Table 5.5-3:**  
**Schedule and Sources for Projected Water Supply Requirements**  
**Average Annual Estimates**

	<i>Water Supply Requirement (mgd)</i>	<i>Allocation from SCWA (mgd)</i>	<i>City of Rohnert Park Municipal Wellfield (mgd)</i>
2000	6.89	4.8	2.09
2001	6.97	4.8	2.17
2002	7.05	4.8	2.25
2003	7.12	5.2	1.92
2004	7.20	5.3	1.90
2005	7.28	5.3	1.98
2006	7.36	5.3	2.06
2007	7.44	5.3	2.14
2008	7.52	5.3	2.22
2009	7.60	5.3	2.30
2010	7.68	15.0	Backup & Emergency Supply
2020	8.47	15.0	Backup & Emergency Supply

*Source: City of Rohnert Park Groundwater Study*

Although the infrastructure associated with the current water distribution system is adequate to serve areas within the existing City limits, new development extending to the 2020 Urban Growth boundary would necessitate the installation of additional distribution lines to serve the new areas.

## **WATER CONSERVATION**

Use of reclaimed water, discharge reduction programs, and water metering are used to promote water conservation.

### **Discharge Reduction Programs**

Discharge reduction programs are used to limit wastewater discharge, and reuse of reclaimed water, rather than discharge, is the primary method of wastewater disposal. Discharge reduction programs include the use of water-efficient devices and water-efficient use patterns for both residential and non-residential uses. Strategies used by Rohnert Park include:

- Distribution of information and conservation devices;

- Required low flush toilets and low flow showers for new residential development (required by State law);
- Toilet and shower replacement program, which includes give-aways, rebates, and direct installation; and
- Water metering of all new residential uses (although all single-family homes continue to pay a flat rate).

### **Reclaimed Water**

Rohnert Park uses approximately 10 million gallons of reclaimed water per month in summer months and is one of the largest users of reclaimed water in the county. Approximately 270 acres in Rohnert Park and on the SSU campus use reclaimed water, out of 570 “urban” acres countywide.<sup>9</sup> Rohnert Park uses reclaimed water for irrigation of trees and landscaping throughout the city. Sites in Rohnert Park that use reclaimed water include all parks and school grounds south of Golf Course Drive, the North and South Rohnert Park Municipal Golf Courses, Roberts Lake, and various commercial and industrial sites, including Hewlett Packard, State Farm, Press Democrat, Compumotor, and Fresh Choice.

### **Water Metering and Dry-Weather Thresholds**

To reduce water consumption, Rohnert Park requires water meters on all new construction. The City’s Water Shortage Contingency Plan establishes water supply thresholds that trigger automatic restrictions on water use during dry weather.

### **GOALS: WATER SUPPLY AND CONSERVATION**

- PF-E Provide sufficient quantities of water for Rohnert Park residents and businesses, while ensuring that safe groundwater yield is not exceeded.
- PF-F Utilize purchased water supplies (Table 5.5-2), and reduce reliance on groundwater drawn from municipal wells, except for emergency use.
- PF-G Continue to encourage water conservation through use of reclaimed water and reduction of water consumption and discharge, for both existing and new development.
- PF-H Ensure that groundwater withdrawal does not exceed safe yield.

### **POLICIES: WATER SUPPLY AND CONSERVATION**

#### **Water Supply**

- PF-11 Based upon the groundwater study prepared for the City in May, 2000 entitled City of Rohnert Park Groundwater Study, monitor the operation of the municipal well field on a

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<sup>9</sup> Letter from Scott Stinebaugh, Deputy Director of Utilities Operations, City of Santa Rosa, Subregional Water Reclamation System, to Joseph Ferrucci, Dyett & Bhatia, July 27, 1999.

monthly basis to ensure that production does not exceed the recharge rates quantified in the study so as to result in a substantial lowering of groundwater levels in the vicinity of the Urban Growth Boundary.

PF-11A Develop a monthly municipal wellfield monitoring program that (i) identifies points of compliance; (ii) establishes the factors to be considered in determining when production which exceeds the recharge rates will result in a substantial lowering of groundwater levels (“thresholds”); and (iii) includes any other information necessary to implement PF 11.

PF-11B In the event that the monthly municipal wellfield monitoring program concludes that a substantial lowering of groundwater levels in the vicinity of the Urban Growth Boundary will occur because development proposed in the area outside the existing City limits as of July 1, 2000 requires production that exceeds the appropriate recharge rates, the City shall either disapprove such development or deny such development connection to the water system until such time that the program concludes that the City is in compliance with the standard established in PF-11.

PF-12 Work with the Sonoma County Water Agency and other water contractors who rely on the Petaluma Aqueduct System to ensure adequate water deliveries for all the contractors' needs.

*Purchasing additional SCWA water supply can be considered an alternative, after execution of the Memorandum of Understanding, until the increased entitlement is implemented. An additional 1.8 mgd (annual average) of water is necessary to accommodate buildout. Because provision of the 15.0 mgd entitlement may be delayed by litigation, purchase of additional water may be necessary in the interim. Purchasing water from SCWA is less expensive than building and operating wells.*

PF-13 Continue to collect and analyze monthly groundwater level data to assist in management and operation of Rohnert Park's municipal wellfield. Coordinate with other agencies on regional drawdown impacts.

PF-14 Require developers to dedicate new well sites in locations identified by the City and to pay for the cost of new wells, water lines, and other water supply infrastructure needed to accommodate new development.

*Water mains may need to be expanded and new wells may be required in order to accommodate new development. Sites dedicated to the City will need to be returned to the dedicatees if not needed for the purpose, unless the City's Subdivision Regulations seek multi-purpose dedications.*

*Developers should be required not only to install onsite water supply lines, but also to contribute to the cost of offsite improvements. Chapter 2: Land Use and Growth Management includes specific policies for assessing costs and prioritizing and implementing infrastructure improvements through a Capital Improvement Program.*

## Conservation

PF-15 Continue to require water-conserving devices for all new development.

*Devices include low-flush toilets and low-flow showers and faucets.*

PF-16 Require non-residential uses to implement water conservation practices as a condition of development.

*SCWA's Water Conservation Section currently consists of five full-time staff members who assists Rohnert Park and other SCWA members. The City imposes the following requirements on new development:*

- *All new construction is reviewed for water and wastewater conservation; and*
- *City Ordinance No. 76 requires the City to monitor for water leaks and to notify customers of identified leaks. Water service may be discontinued if the leak is not repaired within five days of receipt of notice.*

*The City can consider imposing additional requirements, such as water-efficient landscaping and use of treated wastewater during construction.*

PF-17 Develop a comprehensive wastewater flow reduction program for existing and new non-residential uses.

*Non-residential uses are already required to install low flush toilets and low flow faucets. The program would also include best management practices, rebates, and water audits, as called for in Policies PF-18 through PF-20 in this section.*

PF-18 Work with SCWA to offer rebates on water bills for non-residential uses that reduce water usage.

*This policy would be an effective use of water meters, which track the amount of water used. By way of comparison, the City of Santa Rosa offers rebates of \$100 to industrial users for every 1,000 gallons of reduced wastewater flow. The same principle can be used to reduce water intake in Rohnert Park.*

PF-19 In cooperation with the business community, develop best management practices for water conservation for Rohnert Park business, and then make the information available to the public.

*Best management practices are intended as guidelines, not requirements, for water conservation. For example, restaurants can conserve water by giving drinking water to customers only upon demand. SCWA's Urban Water Management Plan includes best management practices that Rohnert Park can consider adopting.*

PF-20 At the request of businesses, conduct water audits and work with them to develop plans for reducing wastewater and discharge.

PF-21 Continue to use reclaimed wastewater to irrigate parks, recreational facilities, and landscaping.

*Landscaping includes trees and vegetation planted along streets, as well as private business facilities.*

PF-22 Adopt and implement a comprehensive water conservation program to encourage efficient water use by City employees and other users of City facilities.

*The City should consider the following measures for inclusion in the program:*

- *Develop a leak detection and repair program for City facilities;*
- *Reduce washing streets and flushing water mains and storm drains to the level necessary to maintain health and safety standards;*
- *Use water-efficient landscaping, in accordance with the City's established landscaping guidelines;*
- *Cover community pools when not in use in order to reduce evaporation;*
- *Install automatic turn-off fixtures in City facilities;*
- *Use treated wastewater in City construction projects; and*
- *Install flow restricters on hoses and faucets.*

PF-23 Commit to implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) of water conservation. Such measures include:

- Requiring meters for all new connections and billing by volume;
- Establishing a program for retrofitting existing un-metered connections and billing by volume;
- Identifying intra- and inter-agency disincentives or barriers to retrofitting mixed-use commercial accounts with dedicated landscape meters; and
- Conducting a feasibility study to assess the merits of a program to provide incentives to switch mixed-use accounts to dedicated landscape meters.

PF-24 Implement applicable large landscape conservation programs and incentives, as identified in the proposed MOU Regarding Water Transmission System Capacity Allocation During Temporary Impairment (4/24/00).

PF-25 Adopt a water conservation rate schedule that: increases as the quantity of water used increases (i.e., a tiered rate schedule); and/or provides seasonal rates or excess-use surcharges to reduce peak demands during summer months.

## **5.6 CENTRAL ROHNERT PARK, UTILITIES AND COMMUNITY SERVICES**

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This section provides goals and policies relating to the major utilities and community services needed to support development envisioned for Central Rohnert Park.

### **GOALS: CENTRAL ROHNERT PARK UTILITIES AND SERVICES**

- PF-I Anticipate and plan for utility improvements, including water, wastewater, recycled water, and storm drainage demands of development in Central Rohnert Park.
- PF-J To ensure the public's safety, restrict groundwater use at known contamination sites.
- PF-K Provide recreational and cultural facilities serving residents and visitors.

#### **Water**

- PF-26 Ensure that adequate water supply is available to serve existing and new development projected in Central Rohnert Park.
- PF-27 Ensure that water infrastructure facilities are in place before project development.
- PF-28 Require new development in Central Rohnert Park to install water-saving devices, consistent with the California Green Building Standards Code and implement best management practices as outlined in the City's water conservation program.

#### **Wastewater**

- PF-29 Maintain existing levels of wastewater service and ensure that sewer capacity is available to serve existing and new development projected in Central Rohnert Park.
- PF-30 Ensure that sewer infrastructure facilities are in place before project development.

#### **Storm Drainage**

- PF-31 Require new development and capital improvement projects to reduce pollution and runoff affecting creeks in Central Rohnert Park by following the adopted Low Impact Development Technical Design Manual.
- PF-32 Require new development to upgrade or install storm drainage facilities, including on-site facilities, as needed to serve the project. Improvements shall be designed to be consistent with the City's storm drain standards, including the Low Impact Development Technical Design Manual.

#### **Solid Waste**

- PF-33 Ensure solid waste disposal needs of existing and new development projected in Central Rohnert Park can be met by the city's solid waste disposal services.

PF-34 New groundwater wells intended for potable use or for non-potable landscape irrigation shall not be permitted at any of the sites within Central Rohnert Park where contaminated groundwater plumes are present.

### **Community Services**

PF-35 Condition new development to provide park and open space facilities, in accordance with parkland requirements in the City's General Plan, or provide an in-lieu fee to support development of new park and open space facilities.

PF-36 Allow development that provides additional community amenities and complies with Central Rohnert Park standards to density bonus incentives.

PF-37 Use the City's Capital Improvement Program, Public Facilities Fee Program, federal and state grant funds, and other funding sources to implement community-wide or area-wide improvements that cannot be conditioned as part of private development projects.

PF-38 Utilize business improvement districts or other types of land-secured financing districts to provide a long-term revenue source for maintaining Central Rohnert Park amenities.

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## **6 Environmental Conservation**

Rohnert Park and its environs are endowed with a bounty of natural resources, including undeveloped and developed open spaces, creeks, agricultural resources, and areas with high potential to sustain wetlands, vernal pools, and wildlife. An overriding goal of the General Plan is to conserve these natural resources to ensure that future development does not adversely affect the environment. The Environmental Conservation Element contains goals and policies to encourage the conservation and proper management of the community's resources. The Element seeks to:

- Guide development in order to make wise and prudent use of the city's natural and cultural resources;
- Maintain and enhance the city's valuable natural resource areas necessary for the continued survival of significant wildlife and vegetation; and
- Ensure the continued protection of the city's natural resources.



## **6.1 HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

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### **NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURAL RESOURCES**

The city is located in an area which, prior to Euro-American contact, was inhabited by the Coast Miwok Indians and the Southern Pomo Indians. On the alluvial planes in the eastside of the city, there are three recorded Native American (CA-SON-1061, CA-SON-1147, and CA-SON-1923) archaeological sites.<sup>1</sup> These sites contain scattered chert and obsidian stone tool manufacturing debris, and stone tools. There are no recorded cultural resources located on the westside.

The possibility of identifying additional Native American cultural resources can be determined by assessing ethnographic information, environmental setting, and the locations of recorded archaeological sites. Native American cultural resources in this portion of Sonoma County tend to be situated on alluvial plains and at the base of hills, as well as near former and existing sources of water.

The eastside of the city has high potential for discovery of additional Native American cultural resources, for two reasons. First, the presence of recorded sites suggests that there may be others nearby. Second, the area includes broad alluvial flats near Crane, Copeland, and Hinebaugh creeks, and it is next to an area that was once part of a marsh.

The area west of Rohnert Park encompasses a broad alluvial flat that lies within the boundaries of an historic marsh. Areas within a historic marsh are less likely to contain artifacts than areas beside the historic marsh. No archaeological sites have been recorded on the westside. Consequently, there is a low possibility of identification of unrecorded cultural resources in this area.

### **HISTORIC RESOURCES**

There are two recorded historic archaeological sites (C-728 and CA-SON-1913H) on the eastside. In addition, there are two unofficially recorded historic ranching complexes located in the eastside (C-727 and C-728). A third archaeological site located within the eastern project area (CA-SON-1574) consists of materials that have been redeposited as a result of analysis conducted at Sonoma State University (SSU).

On the westside, there are two recorded historic structures, but they are located west of the Bellevue-Wilfred Channel, outside the areas contemplated for growth. Resource C-728 is a tank house and windmill stand that may have belonged to Robert Crane, an early settler. Resource CA-SON-1913H is the archaeological remains of a house that was shown on the 1877 Thompson Atlas.

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<sup>1</sup> Northwest Information Center (NWIC) at Sonoma State University, October 1997.

In addition to the recorded sites, several historic period buildings and structures located on the eastside and westside are depicted on historic maps. Some of them are still standing, while only archaeological remains may be left of others. Although several properties along Wilfred Avenue on the westside have been identified as being potentially historically significant in State and federal inventories, these properties have been determined ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The possibility remains that additional historic cultural resources will be identified in both the eastside and westside in the future.

Several State laws, most notably CEQA Guidelines § 15064.5(f) and Public Resources Code § 5020-5029 and 21083.2 of the Public Resources Code, protect archaeological and historic resources. CEQA requires assessment of the impacts to unique archaeological resources or Native American culturally significant sites. If a development project is found to cause damage to the resource, reasonable efforts may be required to preserve the resources or leave them in an undisturbed state, or undertake additional mitigation measures if avoidance is not possible. To protect historic resources, the State has formed the State Historical Resources Committee that conducts the State Historic Resource Inventory and maintains the California Register of Historic Resources, which identifies historical landmarks and points of interest. The Committee also provides recommendations for the National Register of Historic Resources.

## GOALS: HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

EC-A Conserve historic and archaeological resources for the aesthetic, educational, economic, and scientific contribution they make to Rohnert Park's identity and quality of life.

## POLICIES: HISTORIC AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCES

EC-1 Undertake an inventory of historic resources to determine sites or buildings of federal, State, or local historic significance.

*The State Office of Historic Preservation has determined that buildings or structures 45 years or older have the potential to be historically significant. Sections 5020-5029 of the State Public Resources Code addresses historic resource assessment and protection. Since Rohnert Park was first developed in the mid-1950s, the City should undertake this inventory over the next decade. Identified historic resources should be recorded on the State Department of Parks and Recreation Historic Resources Inventory Form (DPR Form 523).*

EC-2 Insure the protection of known archaeological resources in the city by requiring a records review for any development proposed in areas that are considered archaeologically sensitive for Native American and/or historic remains. Require construction activities and development adjacent to sites of historic or archaeological resources to avoid degradation by:

- Studying the potential effects of development and construction in the resource;
- Requiring pre-construction surveys and monitoring during any ground disturbance for all development in areas of historical and archaeological sensitivity; and

- Implementing appropriate measures to avoid the identified impacts.

*Portions of Rohnert Park's eastside are considered to have the potential to contain additional archaeological resources. Since these areas are designated for future development, adequate policies and measures for protection of known and unknown archaeological resources that can supplement CEQA requirements may need to be incorporated into future plans (including the University District Specific Plan) and development activities. The City should collaborate with SSU to conduct searches, monitor sites, and take appropriate steps.*

- EC-3 In accordance with CEQA and the State Public Resources Code, require the preparation of a resource mitigation plan and monitoring program by a qualified archaeologist in the event that archaeological resources are discovered.

*CEQA requires assessment of a project's potential impact on archaeological resources. In the event that historical or unique archaeological resources are accidentally discovered during construction, materials and their surroundings shall not be altered or collected. A qualified archaeologist must make an immediate evaluation and avoidance measures or appropriate mitigation should be completed, according to CEQA Guidelines § 15064.5 (f). Public Resources Code § 21083.2 includes additional provisions protecting these resources. City involvement in the identification, mitigation, and monitoring of project impacts on these resources will ensure the protection of Rohnert Park's cultural heritage and compliance with State law.*

## **6.2 HABITAT AND BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

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Several sites in the Planning Area have the potential to support wetlands, vernal pools, rare plants, and wildlife, and special status species have been found in the Rohnert Park area. Habitat areas and locations of special status species are shown on Figure 6.2-1.

### **WETLANDS**

Mapped soil types (USDA 1972), mapped wetlands (USFWS 1987)<sup>2</sup>, aerial photographs (Aero Cartographics 1995), and field assessment conducted in 1997 were used to rank the potential for wetland occurrence in the Planning Area, focusing on areas considered for development. The site classifications include high, moderate, and low wetlands potential.

Sites with high wetlands potential include riparian areas, ditches with hydrophytic vegetation, mapped wetland areas (USFWS 1987), areas with hydric soils (USDA 1972), and other likely wetland areas seen in the field and on aerial photographs (Aero Cartographics June 1995).

Areas in flat or rolling agricultural fields that had no immediately obvious signs of wetlands presence were classified as having a moderate potential to contain wetlands. These areas contained mapped soil types that may have hydric soil inclusions, but aerial photograph and field analysis did not reveal any well-defined wetland indicators.

Mounded, sloping, or urbanized areas that showed little capacity for ponding or conveying water were characterized as having a low potential to contain wetlands. These characterizations were made entirely from aerial photographs and reconnaissance-level field ground truthing.

Because wetlands can occur in existing and abandoned agricultural areas and in riparian areas, large portions of the areas considered for development have the potential to contain wetlands. A large stretch of land approximately 20 acres in size with high potential for wetlands occurs in the area immediately north of the SSU campus, spreading north from Copeland Creek. These are only potential areas, however, and wetlands have not been documented in many of areas designated as having potential.

### **Regulation of Activities in Wetlands**

The US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) has primary federal authority for administering regulations that concern wetlands within the Planning Area under the Clean Water Act § 404, which governs specified activities in "waters of the United States," including wetlands. The Corps requires that a permit be obtained if a project includes any activity that adversely affects wetlands and involves placement of dredged or fill material into wetlands. The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS), and several other agencies provide comment on Corps permit

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<sup>2</sup> US Fish and Wildlife Service. 1987. National Wetland Inventory Map, Cotati quadrangle. US Fish and Wildlife Service, Portland, OR.

applications. The EPA has provided the primary criteria for evaluating the biological impacts of Corps permit actions in wetlands.

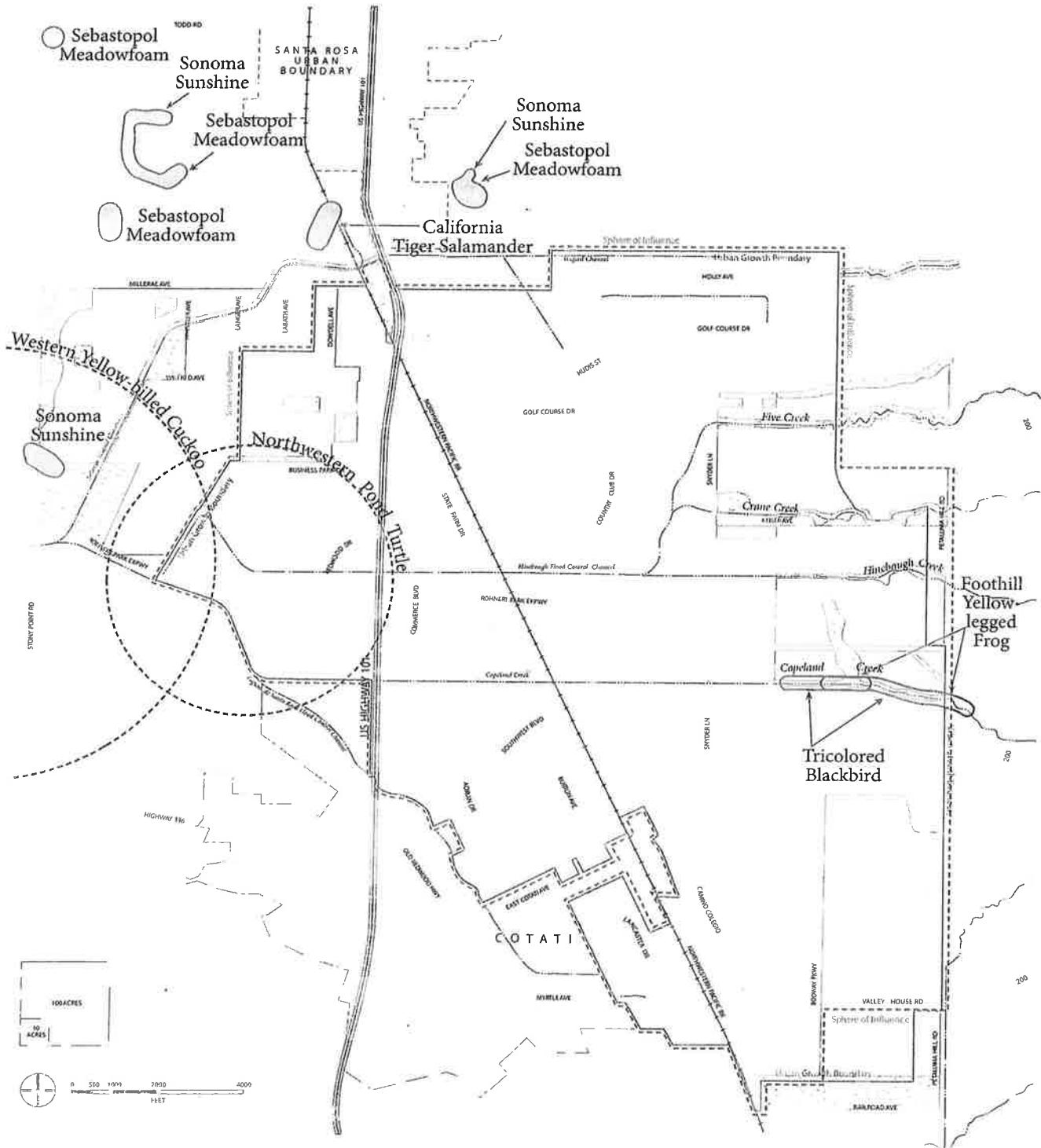
The State's authority in regulating activities in wetlands and waters at the site resides primarily with the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) and the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). The CDFG provides comment on Corps permit actions under the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act. CDFG is also authorized under the State Fish and Game Code § 1600-1607 to develop mitigation measures and enter into a Stream Alteration Agreement (SSA) with applicants that propose a project that would substantially divert, obstruct, or change the natural flow of a river, stream or lake; substantially change the bed, channel, or bank of a river, stream or lake; or use material from a streambed. The SWRCB, acting through the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), must certify that a Corps permit action meets State water quality objectives (Clean Water Act § 401). In addition, CEQA requirements must be met.

### **VERNAL POOLS AND RARE PLANT HABITATS**

Agricultural activity and urbanization in the Rohnert Park area has eliminated most natural habitat and vegetation, including native vernal pool species. Areas that have not been farmed, have been abandoned for some time, or have been used for grazing, have the potential to contain vernal pools with vernal pool endemic plant species. The potential occurrence of vernal pools and special status plant species habitat was assessed and ranked as high, medium, or low. Vernal pools may provide habitat for rare plants and other species.

Based on analysis of aerial photographs and soil types, several sites in the Rohnert Park area were found to have high potential for vernal pools. On the west side, the two identified high-potential sites are located along the Bellevue-Wilfred Channel. On the east side, the only identified high-potential site is found along Railroad Avenue near Petaluma Hill Road.

High vernal pool and rare plant habitat potential occurs in areas used for grazing or open space, with known mapped vernal pool soil types, and clear signatures on aerial photographs. Existing and abandoned agricultural fields or areas used for grazing with flat to rolling topography were classified as having a moderate potential to contain vernal pools. Mounded, sloping, farmed, riparian, or urbanized areas were characterized as having a low potential to contain vernal pools.



High Potential Wetlands Area

Moderate Potential Wetlands Area

Special Status Species Occurrence Areas

Figure 6.2-1

## Habitat Areas and Special Status Species

## **WILDLIFE**

Riparian corridors on the eastside are the primary areas designated as having high potential to support wildlife as the presence of surface water and dense vegetation attracts many species of wildlife, including those from other habitat types.

The fields adjacent to eastside riparian habitats are characterized with moderate to low potential to support wildlife since agricultural activities result in the loss of native vegetation that attracts wildlife. A few species of common birds (such as killdeer and red-tailed hawks) and mammals (such as western fence lizards, raccoons, and gopher snakes) may occasionally utilize these fields for foraging and resting, but existing vegetation provides minimal cover.

Areas that have been developed and are subject to regular human disturbance generally provide low habitat value for native amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals. Species diversity and abundance is very low.

## **CREEKS**

Rohnert Park's creeks are one of the city's most treasured natural resources. The creeks, notably Five, Crane, Hinebaugh, and Copeland creeks, have been characterized as areas of high potential for wetlands, vernal pool, and rare plant habitat. In addition, creeks provide the opportunity for community members to enjoy their aesthetic qualities through use of the pedestrian and bike paths located along existing creeks in the city. Most of the creeks are channelized to provide flood protection and are intermittent, flowing only part of the year because they receive water from seasonal sources. The creeks have a well-defined channel with distinguishable bed and bank; evidence of scour or deposit of rock, sand, gravel, or soil; and evidence of riparian vegetation or aquatic organisms.

Vegetation along waterways is limited to grass and sedge species and introduced landscape species within the 1999 City Limits. One exception is the Laguna de Santa Rosa Flood Control Channel southwest of the city, which contains thicker native riparian vegetation including various willow and alder trees. The creek corridors in the eastside have a high potential to sustain biological resources and for providing habitat for wildlife as they include several species of riparian vegetation. In addition to willows and alder trees, these corridors may also contain native vegetation such as California blackberry, wild grape, wild rose, and non-native species such as fennel and hemlock. Riparian vegetation helps stabilize banks, decreasing erosion and siltation, and filters sediment, improving water quality.

## **SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES**

As shown in Table 6.2-1, only four special status species are potentially found within the Rohnert Park Urban Growth Boundary. Figure 6.2-1 shows where the species have been observed and the potential extent of area that potentially serves as the species' habitat.

Two species—the Tri-colored Blackbird and the Foothill Yellow-legged Frog—have been detected around the Laguna de Santa Rosa, near the western 1999 City Limits, where no new

development is planned under General Plan. In addition, two other species—the Northwestern Pond Turtle and the Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo—have been observed in the Copeland Creek area on the eastside, between the SSU campus and the planned Concert Hall.

**Table 6.2-1:**  
**Special Status Species That May Inhabit the Rohnert Park Sphere of Influence (SoI)**

Common Name	Species	Status
<b>Westside</b>		
Northwestern Pond Turtle	<i>Clemmys marmorata</i>	FSC, CSC
Western Yellow-billed Cuckoo	<i>Coccyzus americanus occidentalis</i>	SE
<b>Eastside (Copeland Creek)</b>		
Tricolored Blackbird	<i>Agelaius tricolor</i>	FSC, CSC
Foothill Yellow-legged Frog	<i>Rana boylii</i>	FSC, CSC

*FSC - Federal Species of Concern*

*SE - State Endangered*

*CSC - California Department of Fish and Game Species of Special Concern*

*Note: There are other species in the Planning Area that are found outside the Urban Growth Boundary. These include: the Sebastopol Meadowfoam (*Livananthes vinculans*) on the west side of the Laguna de Santa Rosa, and the California Tiger Salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*) and Jepson's Linanthus (*Linanthus jepsonii*) about one mile east of Petaluma Hill Road.*

*Source: California Natural Diversity Data Base, Overlay Map designed for use with USGS Quadrangle Cotati 38122C6, August 16, 1999.*

## GOALS: HABITAT AND BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

- EC-B Protect special status species and supporting habitats within Rohnert Park, including species that are State or federally listed as Endangered, Threatened, or Rare.
 

*New development projects in ecologically sensitive areas should consider impacts on valuable and sensitive natural habitats.*
- EC-C Protect sensitive habitat areas and wetlands in the following order of protection preference: 1) avoidance, 2) on-site mitigation, and 3) off-site mitigation.
 

*These priorities are in accordance with the California Department of Fish and Game guidelines.*
- EC-D Maintain existing native vegetation and encourage planting of native plants and trees.

## POLICIES: HABITAT AND BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

### Special Habitat Areas

- EC-4 Cooperate with State and federal agencies to ensure that development does not substantially affect special status species appearing on any State or federal list of rare, endangered, or threatened species. Require assessments of biological resources prior to approval of any development within 300 feet of any creeks, high potential wetlands, or habitat areas of identified special status species, as depicted in Figure 6.2-1.

*Ecologically sensitive sites include areas that are classified as having high wildlife habitat value, high wetlands potential or high vernal pool and rare plant habitat potential. Also, special status species have been observed in the vicinity of Rohnert Park. Conservation will provide for the perpetuation of threatened, endangered, and other rare species, as well as the protection of the unique and diverse ecology of these areas as a whole.*

*Development located in or adjacent to these ecologically sensitive areas must complete a site-specific assessment of biological resources as part of the development review process. The City's environmental review process would be used to impose appropriate mitigation measures on development to reduce impacts on sensitive habitat and special status species.*

### Wetland Conservation

- EC-5 Require development in areas with high and moderate wetlands potential and habitat areas delineated in Figure 6.2-1, as well as other areas where wetland or habitat for special-status species is present, to complete assessments of biological resources.”

*Assessments of biological resources would consider the impacts on wetlands and the special status species supported by this habitat. Appropriate mitigation measures may be required as a condition of approval for development that significantly impacts wetlands or special status species. If any development is permitted within wetlands, mitigation measures must be considered. This mitigation may include providing wetland habitat of the same type as the lost habitat, equal in size or larger than existing conditions. Off-site mitigation in designated open space, the community separator, or other similar areas should be required in cases where on-site avoidance or mitigation is not possible. Off-site mitigation sites should be as close to the project site as possible.*

*Wetlands are a subset of “waters of the United States” and receive protection under the Clean Water Act § 404. Wetlands are defined by the federal government [CFR § 328.3(b), 1991] as those areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Under normal circumstances, the federal definition of wetlands requires all three wetland identification parameters to be met, whereas the CDFG definition requires the presence of at least one of these parameters. For this reason, identification of wetlands by CDFG consists of the union of all areas which are periodically inundated or saturated, or in which at least seasonal dominance by*

*hydrophytes may be documented, or in which hydric soils are present. The CDFG does not normally have direct jurisdiction over wetlands unless they are subject to jurisdiction under Streambed Alteration Agreements or they support State-listed endangered species. The CDFG recommends a minimum buffer, measured outward from the edge of any wetland, be established to protect the wetlands.*

- EC-6 Work with private, non-profit conservation, and public groups to secure funding for wetland protection and restoration projects.

*Since the City's ability to fund these projects is limited, funding for restoration projects should be sought from a variety of sources. The City should consider creation of a "wetlands bank" on the westside areas not contemplated for development or in the proposed golf course. The bank would provide a large area for off-site mitigation of development located elsewhere in the city, in the event that onsite avoidance or mitigation is not feasible.*

### **Native Species**

- EC-7 Encourage planting of native vegetation in new development sites, parks, public areas, and open space.

*Guidelines should be developed that include a list of native species that may be planted as part of landscaping associated with future development. Drought tolerant and low maintenance species should be emphasized.*

- EC-8 As part of the City's Park, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan (see Chapter 5: Open Space, Parks, and Public Facilities), institute an ongoing program to remove and prevent the re-establishment of invasive plant species from ecologically sensitive areas, including City parks and other City-owned open space.

*Removal of invasive species from public parks and open space or in areas with high wetland potential, is required only where these species are known to threaten habitat for special status plant and animal species. Removal of invasive species may also be required if they are a notable fire hazard in parks or open space.*

### **Vegetation**

- EC-9 As part of the City's Capital Improvement Program (see Policy GM-15 in the Chapter 2: Land Use and Growth Management), incorporate a tree planting program for new and existing streets and maintenance of existing trees.

*Trees growing in urban settings provide environmental benefits including energy carbon-dioxide absorption, reduced air and noise pollution, and erosion control. Trees also beautify, shade, and mitigate the 'urban heat island effect' by shading pavement and other dark surfaces and through the cooling effects of their evapotranspiration. Funding should be sought from a variety of sources, including local conservation groups. Existing businesses and residents should be encouraged to plant more trees in parking areas and building landscaping. Native tree species should be encouraged over non-native species.*

*The City should consider instituting an urban forest management program, establishing varieties, size and spacing requirements, maintenance standards, and priority planting schedules.*

- EC-10 As part of development approval in any new growth area, require participation in a landscape assessment district, with responsibility for maintaining creekways, open spaces, landscaped medians, and other similar features.

*Planting of native vegetation with minimal water demand should be encouraged in the district.*

- EC-11 As part of the update of the City's Zoning Ordinance, establish landscape and tree planting standards, including provisions for large paved areas such as parking lots.

- EC-12 Protect oaks and other native trees that are of significant size through the establishment of a Heritage Tree Preservation Ordinance.

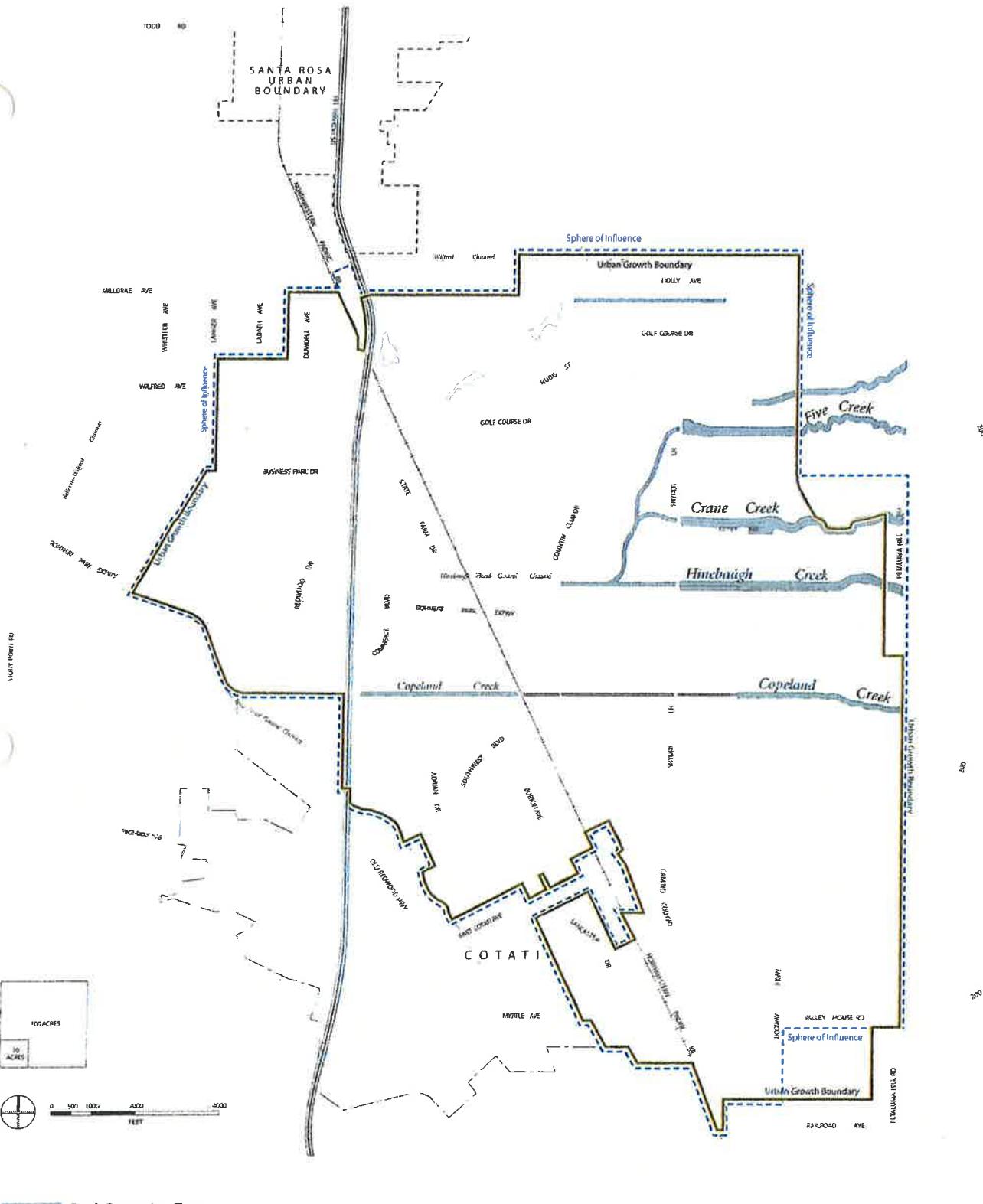
### Creeks

- EC-13 Maintain creek protection zones extending a minimum of 50 feet (measured from the tops of the banks and a strip of land extending laterally outward from the top of each bank) for creeks, with extended buffers where significant habitat areas or high potential wetlands exist (Figure 6.2-2). Where high potential wetland or other biological resources exist, require appropriately wide buffers to encompass and protect the resource. Development shall not occur within this zone, except as part of greenway enhancement (for example, trails and bikeways). Require City approval for the following activities within the creek protection zones:

- Construction, alteration, or removal of any structure;
- Excavation, filling, or grading;
- Removal or planting of vegetation (except for removal of invasive plant species); or
- Alteration of any embankment.

*Rohnert Park's creeks are a key part of the City's open space network. They are valuable physical, aesthetic, recreational, and ecological assets. Protection of creeks protects not only surface water quality, but also reduces flood risks, preserves bio-diversity and habitat, minimizes erosion of stream banks, and prevents downstream siltation. The General Plan designates 3.5 miles of creekways in the new growth areas on the City's eastside. Wider buffers—up to about 150 feet from the creek bank—could be required because high potential wetland areas alongside creeks in some areas extend to about a 150-foot width.*

- EC-14 As part of specific plans, require evaluation and implementation of appropriate measures for creek bank stabilization, and any necessary steps to reduce erosion and sedimentation, but preserve natural creek channels and riparian vegetation.



*Figure 6.2-2*

# Creek Protection Zones

REVISED 12/13

## **6.3 WATER QUALITY**

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Protection of water quality is critical for the health and safety of Rohnert Park residents and employees, especially since the City relies on wells for the majority of its water supply. Water quality is a regional issue that is regulated at county, State, and federal levels.

### **REGIONAL REGULATION**

Point sources of pollution are regulated through the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit process. Permits are required under NPDES for all publicly operated treatment plants and for surface-water runoff in urban areas. These permits specify the discharge limits for certain pollutants and ensure that local industries pre-treat the pollutants they discharge into treatment plants.

For the purposes of administering NPDES, the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) has jurisdiction over nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCB) in California. Rohnert Park falls under the authority of the North Coast RWQCB, which is responsible for implementing State policy through the preparation of regional plans for water quality control and the regulation of all activities affecting water quality.

### **NONPOINT POLLUTION SOURCES**

The quality of groundwater and water flowing into the city's creeks is most likely to be affected by nonpoint pollution sources in Rohnert Park, simply because they are not as rigorously regulated as point sources. Development can potentially pose a threat to surface and groundwater quality through construction sediment, materials used on-site, and related increases in automobile use. The RWQCB has limited the amount of treated wastewater that can be discharged into the Russian River. Use of reclaimed water for irrigation helps reduce the amount of water discharged to the River.

Rohnert Park currently derives its water supply from 31 active wells (in 1999) and 8 active connections to the Sonoma County Water Agency's (SCWA) Petaluma Aqueduct, which supplies water from Lake Sonoma, the Russian River, and other sources. The City's water supply and water system are regulated by the State Health Service Department. This Department requires that the City's water supply be tested on a regular basis to guarantee water quality. Tests are conducted to assure that maximum contaminant levels are not exceeded. The City and SCWA have conducted such tests continually and water supplies have consistently met all State requirements.

The City periodically obtains well water samples and submits them for laboratory analysis. The laboratory tests are capable of detecting minute levels of bacteria, pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, organic chemicals, inorganic chemicals, nitrates, radioactivity, corrosivity, trihalomethanes, iron, manganese and other substances for a total of 139 separate items.

In 1999, well water did not exhibit concentrations of any pollutants that would be considered health hazards. In 1997, well water did not meet water quality standards for iron and manganese

in five wells prior to treatment. These are not considered health hazards, only nuisance problems. After treatment, the levels of iron and manganese were reduced below the Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCL).

### **GOALS: WATER QUALITY**

- EC-E Comply with the Regional Water Quality Control Board's regulations and standards to maintain and improve the quality of both surface water and groundwater resources.
- EC-F Enhance the quality of surface water and groundwater resources and prevent their contamination.  
*Contamination may result from erosion, sedimentation, and the dumping of debris and refuge.*
- EC-G Undertake steps to minimize the depletion of groundwater resources.
- EC-H Where feasible, given flood control requirements, maintain the natural condition of waterways and flood plains and protect watersheds to ensure adequate groundwater recharge and water quality.
- EC-I Ensure that the City's drinking water continues to meet or exceed water quality standards.
- EC-J Discourage use of insecticides, herbicides, or toxic chemical substances within the city and encourage development and use of pesticide and fertilizer management plans for landscaped areas.

### **POLICIES: WATER QUALITY**

- EC-15 Continue working with the Regional Water Quality Control Board to protect water quality.  
*The City is currently exempt from the NPDES requirement, but the City will be required to comply with NPDES when the population of Rohnert Park grows beyond 50,000 people, which it is projected to do at buildout. (See Chapter 7: Health and Safety.)*
- EC-16 Regularly monitor water quality to maintain high levels of water quality for human consumption and ecosystem health.
- EC-17 Work with the relevant agencies to ensure that groundwater supplies are not contaminated in the recharge areas east of the city.
- EC-18 Protect waterways by prohibiting the dumping of debris and refuse in and near waterways and storm drains.
- EC-19 Require new construction to utilize site preparation, grading, and foundation designs for erosion control to prevent sedimentation and contamination of streams.

*Construction activities such as grading, excavating, and filling, may result in the exposure of bare soil. Rain and wind may erode this soil, transporting soil particles to creeks and storm drain systems and resulting in declining water quality. The sedimentation can reduce the water flow capacity of these waterways, contributing to increased risk of flooding.*

- EC-20 Prepare and disseminate information about the potentially harmful effects of toxic chemical substances and safe alternative measures, including information about safe alternatives to toxics for home and garden use.
- EC-21 Establish development standards for new construction adjacent to riparian zones to reduce sedimentation and flooding.

*Standards should include:*

- *Requirements that low berms or other temporary structures such as protection fences be built between a construction site and riparian corridor to preclude sheet-flooding stormwater from entering the corridors during the construction period.*
- *As part of construction permits, require the installation of storm sewers before construction occurs to collect stormwater runoff during construction.*

*Development standards could also include minimizing paved areas, retaining large areas of undisturbed, naturally vegetated habitat to allow for water infiltration, and intermixing areas of pavement with the naturally vegetated infiltration sites to reduce the concentration of stormwater runoff from pavement and structures.*

## 6.4 AIR QUALITY

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While air quality is largely a regional issue, the protection of air quality is vital to the overall health of the environment and the attractiveness of any locality. Since Rohnert Park is located in a valley, temperature inversions may occur, preventing the dispersal of pollutants.

### SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA AIR BASIN

Rohnert Park is located in the northern region of the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area air basin. Air quality in the basin is monitored by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD), which operates a regional network of air pollution monitoring stations. BAAQMD determines if the federal and State standards for criteria air pollutants and emission limits of toxic air contaminants are being achieved.

Under the federal Clean Air Act, the EPA classifies air basins, or portions thereof, as either "attainment" or "nonattainment" for the national standards. Likewise, an air basin is classified under the California Clean Air Act with respect to the achievement of the State standards. The Bay Area is considered "attainment" for all of the national standards, with the exception of ozone. It is considered "nonattainment" for State standards for ozone and suspended particulate matter (PM-10).

In 1991, the *Bay Area '91 Clean Air Plan* (1991 Clean Air Plan) was developed to address the nonattainment status of the Bay Area with respect to the State ozone standard. The 1991 Clean Air Plan included more control strategies than the corresponding Bay Area federal ozone plan since the State ozone standard is more stringent than the national ozone standard. The 1991 Clean Air Plan has been updated twice, in 1994 and 1997, with the continued goal of improving air quality through tighter industry controls, cleaner fuels and combustion in cars and trucks, and increased commute alternatives.

The Bay Area's air quality is influenced largely by motor vehicle use. Automobile ownership and use are increasing at fast rates. However, the trend towards a newer, cleaner vehicle mix will serve to counteract some of the negative air quality impact associated with increased vehicle use. Overall, a net reduction in the emissions of ozone precursors and carbon monoxide is expected, while particulate matter emissions are expected to increase into the future.

### CRITERIA AIR POLLUTANTS

The federal Clean Air Act requires the EPA to identify National Ambient Air Quality Standards (national standards). The EPA has established national standards for six criteria air pollutants, including ozone, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide, PM-10, and lead. Under State law, the California Air Resources Board (CARB) has established State ambient air quality standards (State standards) that are generally more stringent than the corresponding national standards. Pollutants for which ambient air quality standards have been established are referred to as "criteria air pollutants."

The BAAQMD air quality monitoring station nearest to Rohnert Park is located in Santa Rosa, ten miles north of Rohnert Park. Relatively few days of poor air quality with measured pollutants exceeding State standards were recorded at the Santa Rosa monitoring station and improvements in air quality have been documented during the past 15 years. The air pollutant summary for the Santa Rosa monitoring station is included in Table 6.4-1.

**Table 6.4-1:**  
**Santa Rosa Air Pollutant Summary, 1997-1998, 5<sup>th</sup> Street Monitoring Station**

Pollutant	Standard <sup>2</sup>	Monitoring Data by Year		
		1996	1997	1998
<b>Ozone</b>				
Highest 1-hr. average, ppm <sup>2</sup>	0.09	0.082	0.093	0.068
Number of days above standard		0	0	0
<b>Carbon Monoxide</b>				
Highest 8-hr. average, ppm	9.0	3.00	3.34	3.24
Number of days above standard		0	0	0
<b>Nitrogen Dioxide</b>				
Highest 1-hr. average, ppm	0.25	0.062	0.061	0.057
Number of days above standard		0	0	0
<b>Sulfur Dioxide</b>				
Highest 1-hr. average, ppm	0.25	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Number of days above standard		0		
<b>Particulate Matter (PM-10)</b>				
Highest 24-hr. average, µg/m <sup>3</sup>	50	37	85	52
Number of days above standard		0	2	1

1. ppm = parts per million; µg/m<sup>3</sup>

2. State standard, not to be exceeded.

3. µg/m<sup>3</sup> = micrograms per cubic meter

Source: California Environmental Protection Agency, Air Resources Board, California Air Quality Data, 1996, 1997 and 1998.

## TOXIC AIR CONTAMINANTS

Unlike criteria air pollutants, ambient air quality standards have not been established for toxic air contaminants. These pollutants are typically carcinogens, mutagens, or reproductive toxins. Regulation of toxic air contaminants is achieved through federal and State controls on individual sources. The preferred technique for reducing toxic air emissions is source reduction. As part of a local control strategy in the Bay Area, all applications for new stationary sources are reviewed to ensure compliance with required emission controls and limits.

BAAQMD's 1997 Annual Report on its Toxic Air Contaminant Control Program lists four dry cleaners and the Weyerhaeuser Company at 5600 State Farm Drive. These sources do not emit hazardous quantities of toxic contaminants. The Weyerhaeuser Company's facilities emit 7.2 pounds of benzene per year, considered a small quantity. By way of comparison, various large

service stations emit more than 7.2 pounds of benzene per year. The amount of pollutants from the four dry-cleaning establishments are very low.

### Sensitive Receptors

Some people are more sensitive than others to air pollutants. Heightened sensitivity may be caused by health problems, proximity to the emissions source, and duration of exposure to air pollutants. Sensitive receptors are facilities that house or attract children, the elderly, people with illnesses, or others who are especially sensitive to the effects of air pollution. Hospitals, schools, convalescent facilities, and residential areas are examples of sensitive receptors. Residential areas are considered sensitive to poor air quality as people in residential areas are often at home for extended periods.

### GOALS: AIR QUALITY

- EC-K Continue to work toward improving air quality and meeting all federal and State ambient air quality standards and by reducing the generation of air pollutants both from stationary and mobile sources, where feasible.

*While Rohnert Park's air quality meets State standards, the City has a responsibility to contribute to regional air quality improvement efforts.*

- EC-L Encourage land use and transportation strategies that promote use of alternatives to the automobile for transportation, including bicycling, bus transit, and carpooling.

*Motor vehicle emissions, regulation of which is preempted by State laws, are the major source of criteria air pollutants in the Bay Area Air Basin, accounting for the vast majority of carbon monoxide and particulate matter and over a quarter of the reactive oxygen gas and nitrogen dioxide in the region. A majority of automobile emissions in the city result from regional through trips on US 101. Thus, while reduced traffic congestion or vehicle miles traveled in Rohnert Park will only minimally impact the Bay Area's air quality, the City's planning decisions can help to moderately reduce motor vehicle use, contributing to cumulative reductions in emissions across the entire Bay Area. Increased use of transit and carpooling, coupled with land use and circulation patterns that promote walking and bicycling, can lead to a decrease in daily trips, less emissions, and improved air quality.*

*Reducing the reliance on automobiles will minimize air pollution in the city. The Transportation Element includes policies for bicycle and pedestrian circulation to reduce emissions and alleviate traffic congestion. Chapter 2: Land Use and Growth Management includes policies that encourage pedestrian and transit travel between home and work and provide housing near SSU, reducing negative air quality impacts. Of particular importance are proposals designed to expand the bicycle route system in Rohnert Park and encourage the use of bicycles, development of a rail transit system on the Northwestern Pacific railroad and encouraging use of bus transportation systems. See Chapter 4: Transportation for related goals and policies.*

## POLICIES: AIR QUALITY

EC-22 Cooperate with the Bay Area Air Quality Management District to achieve emissions reductions for nonattainment pollutants, including carbon monoxide, ozone, and PM-10, by implementation of air pollution control measures as required by State and federal statutes.

EC-23 Use the City's development review process and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) regulations to evaluate and mitigate the local and cumulative effects of new development on air quality.

*BAAQMD's CEQA Guidelines should be used as the foundation for the City's review of air quality impacts under CEQA.*

EC-24 Adopt the standard construction dust abatement measures included in BAAQMD's CEQA Guidelines.

*These measures would reduce exhaust and particulate emissions from construction and grading activities.*

EC-25 Prohibit emission-generating facilities in the Northwest Specific Plan area or in the planned industrial areas in the southeast.

EC-26 Encourage new residential development and remodeled homes to install clean-burning fireplaces and wood stoves.

*Many homes in Rohnert Park are equipped with fireplaces, which are a growing source of localized air pollution. Wood smoke released from fireplaces and wood stoves contains carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, and PM-10. Wood burning should be encouraged only in stoves and fireplaces designed to minimize air pollutants. Pollution can be reduced by installing gas fireplaces or EPA certified wood heaters and operating existing fireplaces and wood stoves more efficiently.*

## 7 Health and Safety

State law requires that the Health and Safety Element address the protection of the community from risks posed by environmental hazards. These include effects of seismically induced surface rupture, ground shaking, and ground failure, geologic hazards including landslides and subsidence, flooding, and hazardous materials and waste. The Health and Safety Element addresses these topics as well as emergency preparedness and management.



## 7.1 SEISMIC AND GEOLOGIC HAZARDS

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### GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Rohnert Park is located in the Santa Rosa-Petaluma Valley where the underlying geologic structure is characterized by sediments deposited by streams on floodplains, alluvial deposits, and basins. This geologic structure is depicted in Figure 7.1-1. Overall, general geologic conditions, slopes, and soils do not vary significantly from one part of the city to another.

The geologic formations in Rohnert Park range in age from Jurassic to Holocene. The Franciscan Complex of Jurassic-Cretaceous age is the oldest geologic unit and constitutes the basement rock in the vicinity. The Franciscan Complex consists of a chaotic mixture of deformed sedimentary, igneous, and metamorphic rocks. Although at a great depth beneath Cotati valley, the Franciscan is exposed in the surrounding highlands. During the late Tertiary age, marine sediments and volcanic rocks were deposited over a large area of the Franciscan Complex. Sedimentary rocks of the Petaluma formation and volcanic rocks of the Sonoma group underlie the valley alluvium and are exposed in the hills to the east. Several hundred feet of alluvial sediments of Quaternary age have been deposited in the Cotati Valley by streams draining the surrounding highland area<sup>1</sup>.

Soils within the city are almost entirely Clear Lake clays, as shown in Figure 7.1-2. The soils, typical of poorly drained basins and floodplains, were formed from alluvial sediments derived from the surrounding highlands. Clear Lake clays typically have low permeability, slow runoff characteristics, low erosion potential, high shrink-swell potential, and may be corrosive to uncoated steel products<sup>2</sup>.

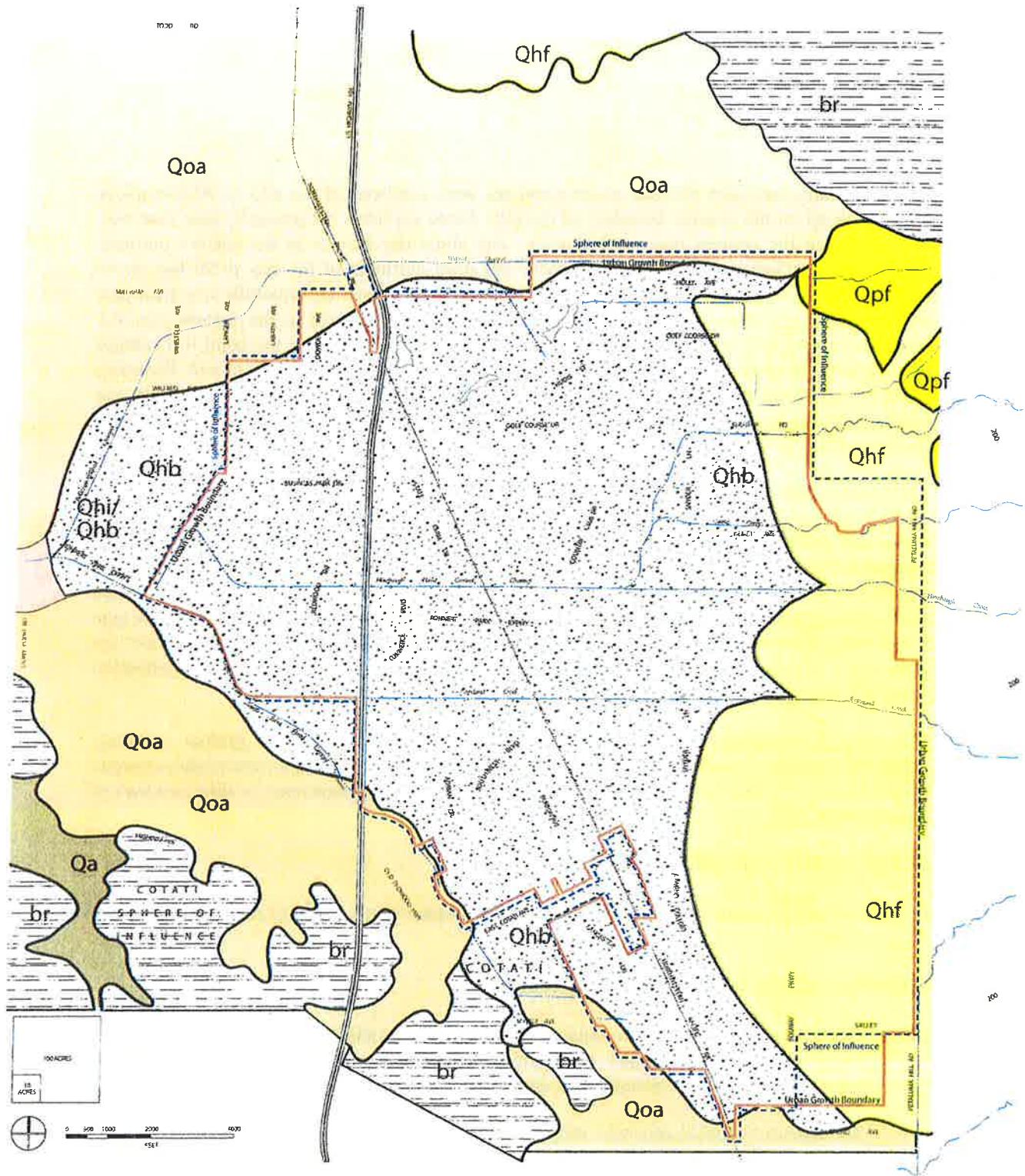
### SEISMIC HAZARDS

There are no known active faults within Rohnert Park. The Healdsburg-Rodgers Creek fault zone lies about five miles to the east of the city. The San Andreas Fault System is located approximately 15 miles west of the city. During the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake, Rohnert Park experienced sustained shaking lasting 15 seconds and little damage. Secondary seismic hazards that could affect Rohnert Park include ground-shaking, liquefaction, and ground settlement. Since virtually all construction in Rohnert Park occurred after the incorporation of earthquake safety design in California construction, there are no known structures in Rohnert Park that would be specifically hazardous during an earthquake, such as unreinforced masonry buildings. The City's Emergency Management Plan is discussed in Section 7.5.

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<sup>1</sup> Herzog Associates, Preliminary Geologic and Soil Evaluation, New Civic Center, Rohnert Park, CA, 1989

<sup>2</sup> USDA, 1972



- Qhf/Qhb Latest Holocene flood plain and basin deposits
- Qhb Holocene basin deposits
- Qhf Holocene fan deposits
- Qao Late Pleistocene to Holocene alluvium, undifferentiated
- Qpf Late Pleistocene fan deposits
- Qfa Early or middle Pleistocene alluvium
- br Pre-Quaternary deposits and bedrock.  
Includes Quaternary landslides

Source: William Letts & Associates, 1994, Maps showing Quaternary Geology and Liquefaction Susceptibility in the Napa, California, 1:100,000 Sheet

Figure 7.1-1  
Geology  
REVISED 12/13

Elevations range between 230 feet above mean sea level northeast of the city to 90 feet above mean sea level on the western boundary of the city. Slope gradients are generally less than one-half percent in the western portions of the city and about one percent in the eastern portions. Elevations range between 230 feet above mean sea level northeast of the city to 90 feet above mean sea level on the western boundary of the city. Slope gradients are generally less than one-half percent in the western portions of the city and about one percent in the eastern portions. Maximum slopes of five to eight percent exist northeast of the city along the bend in Petaluma Hill Road at the foot of the Taylor Mountain. The area within the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) is relatively flat and the potential for landslides is low. The area outside the UGB but within the Planning Area slopes eastward to the ridge of Sonoma Mountain, approximately 2,300 feet in height.

### **LANDSLIDE AND LIQUEFACTION HAZARDS**

Given the relatively flat topography and the nature of soils, there is little risk of mudslides, landslides, or erosion in the immediate Rohnert Park area. Soil liquefaction has the potential to impact the Rohnert Park area during a significant earthquake. Liquefaction occurs when soils lose their bearing capacity during a seismic event. The potential for liquefaction depends on the type of soil and the extent that the soils are saturated with ground water. Soils underlying almost the entire area within the city exhibit moderate susceptibility to liquefaction. Liquefaction susceptibility is shown on Figure 7.1-2.

The seasonal expansion and contraction of Clear Lake clays can cause gradual cracking, differential settling, and weakening of structures and roadways. Perhaps the most visible example of the effects of Clear Lake clays is the cracked driveways and foundations in older sections of Rohnert Park.

### **GOALS: SEISMIC AND GEOLOGIC HAZARDS**

HS-A Minimize the risk to life and property from seismic and geologic hazards in Rohnert Park.

### **POLICIES: SEISMIC AND GEOLOGIC HAZARDS**

HS-1 Require new construction to utilize site preparation, grading, and foundation designs in accordance with site specific soil conditions. Require submittal of a preliminary soils report, prepared by a registered civil engineer.

*Development should undertake necessary studies and structural precautions to prevent structural damage due to soil expansion and contraction. The existing Subdivision regulations require submission of a soils report. For areas in the city that have a moderate or high liquefaction potential, information is available in the California Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 117, Guidelines for Evaluating and Mitigating Seismic Hazards in California.*

- HS-2 Continue requiring all new buildings in the city to be built under the seismic requirements of the Uniform Building Code and Uniform Plumbing Code.

*The City has adopted the Uniform Building Code and the Uniform Plumbing Code, which mandates earthquake resistant building construction design standards. The City has amended these codes, in part, to address soil conditions. The amendments require added reinforcement of slabs and slab floors, protection of slabs from ground water, use of non-expansive fill for building pads and beneath footings, and non-corrosive water piping material underground.*

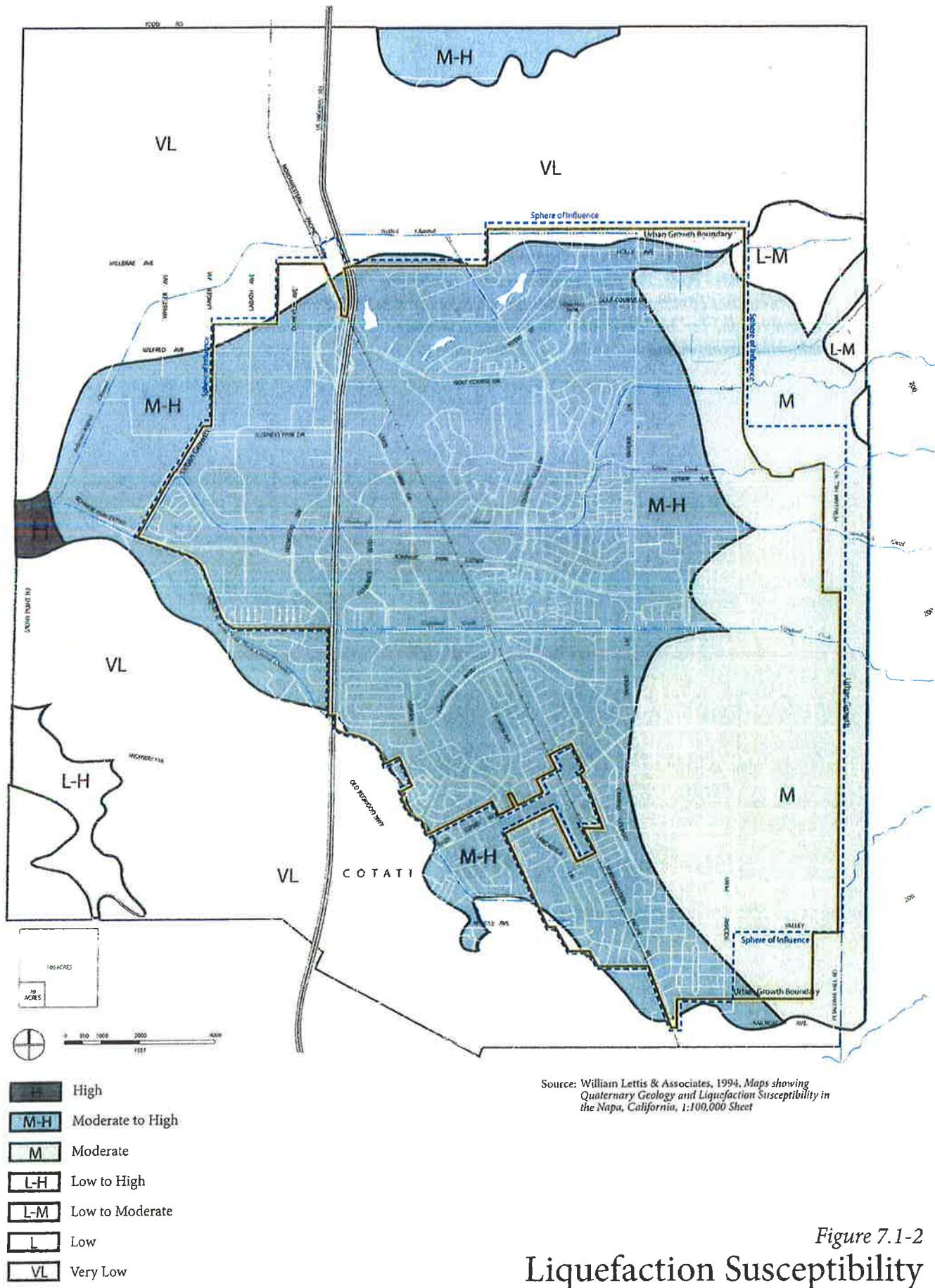


Figure 7.1-2  
Liquefaction Susceptibility

REVISED 12/13

## **7.2 DRAINAGE, EROSION, STORMWATER, AND FLOODING**

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### **DRAINAGE**

Creeks that drain the mountainsides flow into drainage channels that transverse Rohnert Park generally from east to west. Excluding a small area near East Railroad Avenue, the city drains westerly to the Laguna de Santa Rosa Creek. The area near East Railroad Avenue drains south to Lichau Creek, which flows into the Petaluma River.

Gravel and silt may wash from the slopes into these drainage channels. In recent years, gravel and silt were deposited in an enclosed stormwater drain underneath Goldridge Elementary School and Golis Park. The materials reduced the capacity of the stormwater drain resulting in localized street flooding. The problem has been addressed by annual clearing of the stormwater drain. The Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA) installed a siltation basin east of Petaluma Hill Road to intercept the gravel and silt. The city's drainage and 100- and 500-year flood zones are shown in Figure 7.2-1.

### **Mud and Debris Flows**

Mud and debris flows originate in hillside areas having deep topsoil with poor drainage characteristics. Sloped hillsides, which may be the source of mud and debris flows, are located approximately a mile east of Petaluma Hill Road. Given the topography, such mud and debris flows would be channeled into drainage ways that generally flow east to west within the Rohnert Park area. The SCWA regularly removes gravel and silt from these channels to maintain their ability to adequately handle stormwater flows.

### **EROSION**

As shown in Figure 7.2-1, erosion potential is low for almost all soils in the city, according to US Soil Conservation Service ratings. This low potential is primarily related to high soil stability since the slopes in the city are generally less than 2 percent. Erosion is presumably higher for soils in the vicinity of creeks, as well as for loam soils and ponded clay soils. Instances of significant erosion are most likely during construction. The formation of embankments or uneven topography, the effects of machinery, and the removal of vegetation, can contribute to increased rates of erosion.

### **STORMWATER**

Rohnert Park's storm drainage is under joint management of the City and the SCWA. The City maintains responsibility for the system of underground pipes that provides for minor and intermediate drainage, while SCWA maintains the system of open channels that diverts major drainage flows west towards the Laguna de Santa Rosa. Both the open channels and pipe systems are designed to meet SCWA standards and comply with the National Flood Hazard Insurance Program.

Amendments to the Clean Water Act established a two-phased approach to addressing storm water discharges. Phase I, which is currently being implemented, requires National Pollutant

Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits for separate storm water systems serving large- and medium-sized communities (those with over 50,000 inhabitants), and for storm water discharges associated with industrial and construction activity involving at least five acres. Buildout of this General Plan is expected to increase Rohnert Park's population to about 50,000.

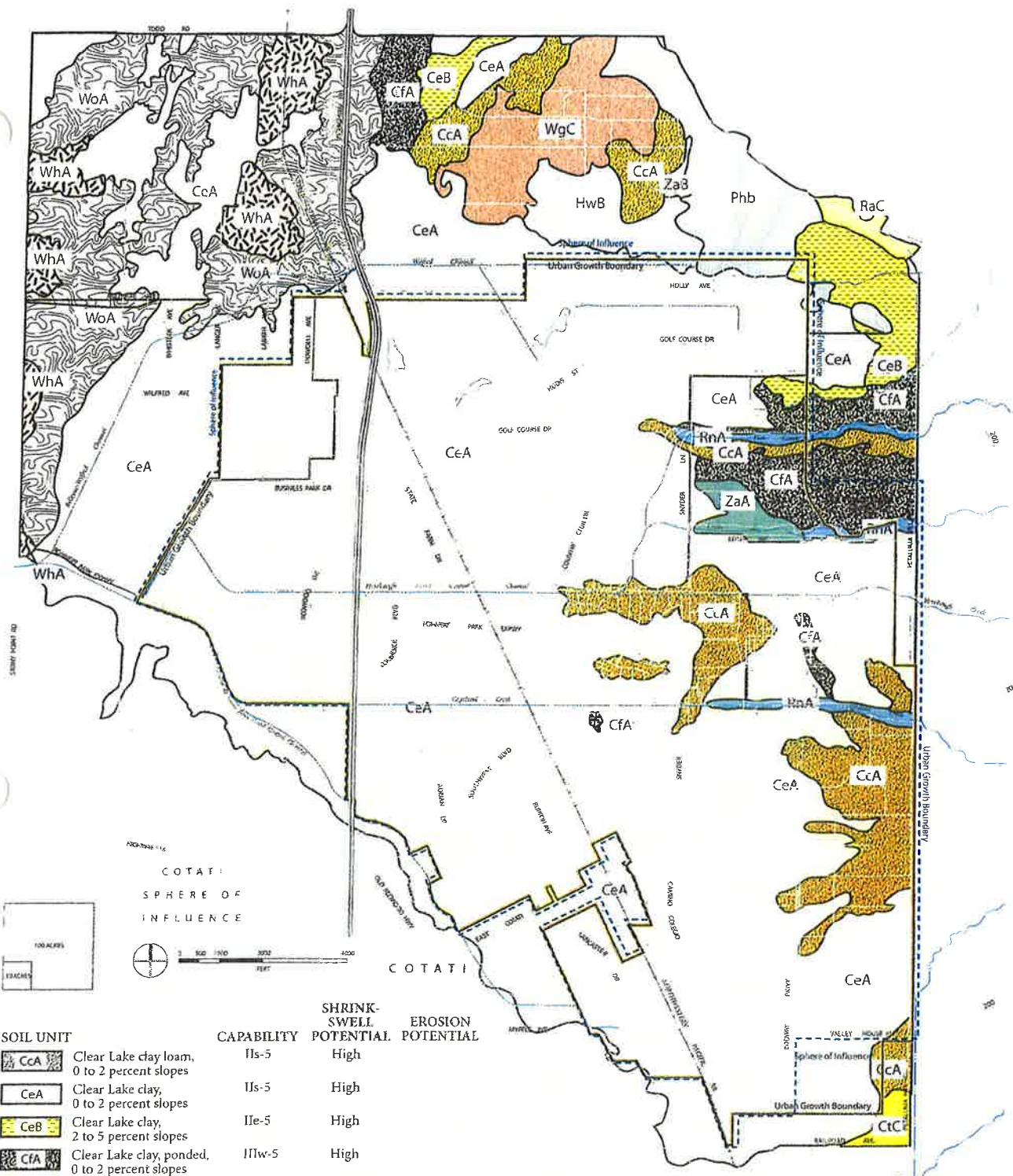
Phase II, which is currently under development by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), will address remaining storm water discharges, including urban areas with populations under 50,000, smaller construction sites, and retail, commercial, and residential activities. NPDES requirements and regulations are expected to be similar for all cities with populations greater than 10,000.

As shown in Figure 7.2-2, there are a few isolated areas within the 1999 City Limits that are located within the 100-year flood zone. Approximately 60 acres of land designated for future development in the eastside is located in the 100-year flood zone, primarily along Copeland Creek and the Hinebaugh Flood Control Channel. A small portion of land within the Wilfred-Dowdell Specific Plan Area in the westside is located in the 500-year flood zone.

The City enforces flood control standards within 100-year flood hazard areas in accord with the requirements of the National Flood Hazard Insurance Program. In addition to 100-year flood hazard areas, localized, relatively minor flooding has occurred within Rohnert Park in recent years.

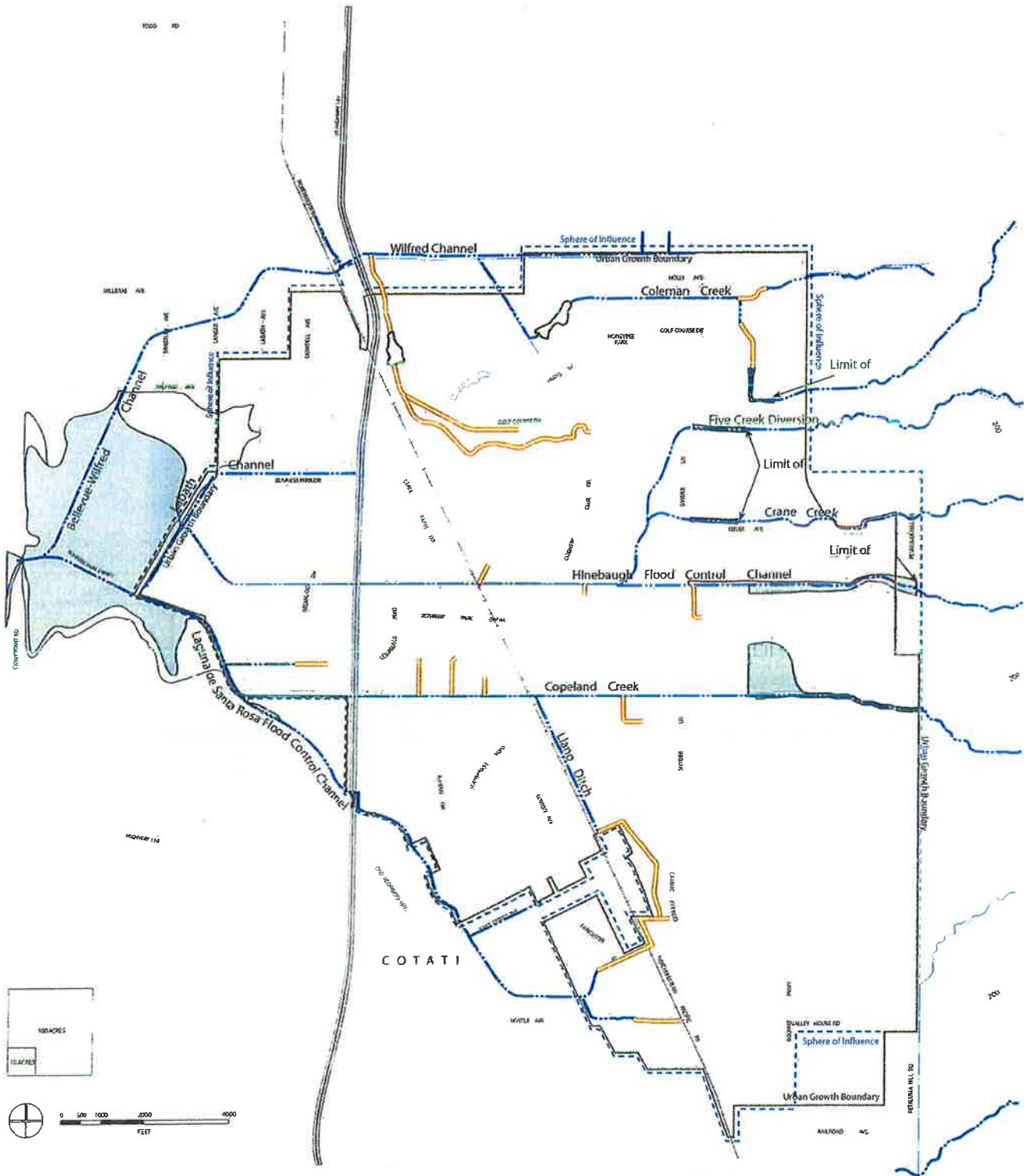
Natural flooding results from major rainstorms that cause overflows of stream courses, and may be aggravated by inadequacies in local storm drain facilities. Flooding may occur in two ways:

- Stormwater may overflow the banks of drainage ways because the water flow exceeds the channel capacity; or
- Stormwater may back up and collect in a low area because it cannot flow into a receiving drainage channel.



**Figure 7.2-1**  
**Soil Types, Capability,  
Expansiveness and  
Erosion Potential**

REVISED 12/13



Source: City of Rohnert Park General Plan, 1995, Figure 5.1;  
FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map, 1991, Community Panels  
060375 855 and 060375 860

- Open Channel
- Pipe System (48" and larger)
- 100-year Flood Zone
- 500-year Flood Zone

Figure 7.2-2  
**Drainage and Flood**  
Revised 12/13

One area that experienced street flooding prior to 1999 was in the "G" Section neighborhood. Gravel and silt partially filled and reduced the capacity of an underground storm water drain. During a subsequent storm, storm water backed up street drains. The storm drain has since been cleared of gravel and silt. The SCWA installed a siltation basin to intercept gravel and silt east of Petaluma Hill Road.

Localized flooding also occurred in the "F" Section. In this instance, storm water backed up into low lying streets, the North Rohnert Park Municipal Golf Course, and adjacent parcels because storm water was unable to flow into the Bellevue-Wilfred Channel and the Laguna de Santa Rosa.

Another area of local flooding in 1999 included portions of the Rancho Verde Mobile Home Park, parts of Martin Avenue, and adjacent commercial/industrial parcels. In this instance storm water backed up and was unable to flow into the Labath Channel. As the rain tapered off and the level of the Laguna de Santa Rosa fell, storm water drained from the flooded areas.

Silt deposited over the years in the Bellevue-Wilfred, Laguna de Santa Rosa, and Labath Flood Control Channels has reduced the capacity of these channels, which has contributed to the flooding problems. The SCWA widened both the Bellevue-Wilfred Flood Control Channel and the Laguna de Santa Rosa and plans to remove accumulated silt in the near future.

### **SCWA Capital Projects Plan**

Rohnert Park participates in the planning and development of drainage and flood control activities within the Laguna-Mark West Zone 1A, administered by SCWA. In March 1998, SCWA circulated a revised Capital Projects Plan for Fiscal Year 1999 to Fiscal Year 2003. Projects in the Capital Projects Plan include improvements for the County's seven designated flood control zones.

The Capital Projects Plan identifies 17 projects for funding in Zone 1A. Projects were identified by an Advisory Committee for the Flood Control Zone, appointed by the SCWA's Board of Directors. Information and criteria used for selecting projects include historical flooding problems, areas benefited, alternative funding available, special safety and health factors, coordination with other public projects, and environmental concerns. Several of the projects will directly help improve potential flooding problems in the Rohnert Park area. All projects are scheduled for completion by the end of Fiscal Year 2000.

### **GOALS: DRAINAGE, EROSION, STORMWATER, AND FLOODING**

HS-B Minimize the risk to life and property from flooding.

HS-C Control erosion and sedimentation to provide flood protection and protect water quality.

### **POLICIES: DRAINAGE, EROSION, STORMWATER, AND FLOODING**

HS-3 Prepare and implement a Storm Water Management Plan to ensure protection of the surface and groundwater resources.

*The Storm Water Management Plan should include requirements for periodic monitoring of storm water outfalls, public outreach and education, and the implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) for a variety of industrial, construction, and municipal activities. Until such time that a Storm Water Management Plan is prepared, the City should use existing regulations pertaining to subdivision design, zoning, building, and grading ordinances and policies to reduce discharge of non-point source pollutants into local streams.*

- HS-3A Work with the County to ensure that any new development east of Petaluma Hill Road does not interfere with groundwater recharge.
- HS-4 Ensure that the City's regulations pertaining to subdivision design, zoning, building, and grading ordinances and policies continue to include measures to minimize erosion and sedimentation.

*Policy EC-13 in Chapter 6: Conservation establishes creek protection zones and standards to protect the city's creeks.*

- HS-5 As part of the building permit process, require all development projects to comply with hydrology and drainage policies incorporated in the applicable Specific Plans. Require the project proponent to design and construct a storm drain system in accordance with the SCWA Flood Control Design Criteria (latest revision), specific to the project. Encourage the use of environmentally sensitive drainage improvements including flow reduction and flood bypass systems in order to ensure protection of surface water quality and stream integrity.

*Policy LU-10A stipulates that all specific plans shall address hydrology and drainage for their respective areas, as well as practices to be incorporated as part of individual development projects.*

*The storm drain system may include:*

- Street and underground storm drain improvements; and
- New underground storm drainage facilities.

*The City should recommend the use of high infiltration measures to reduce stormwater discharge into the regional storm drain system. Measures to divert surface runoff into open areas that have high infiltration capabilities could include ponds built into landscapes, unlined runoff channels, and dispersion points into landscaped areas. Where possible and technically feasible, roof tops and paved areas should drain into underground dispersal pipes or vegetated percolation beds. Landscaping in parking lots and around building perimeters should be maximized.*

*The City shall review and approve the proposed drainage system requirements prior to construction on the project site.*

- HS-6 As part of the building permit process, require new development greater than five acres in size to prepare and implement a site-specific storm water pollution prevention plan (SWPPP) that effectively reduces discharges of stormwater containing sediment and other pollutants resulting from site construction activities. In addition, require all projects, regardless of size, to comply with any other stormwater provisions of the specific plans for their respective areas.

*Policy LU-10A stipulates that all specific plans shall address storm-water pollution for their respective areas, as well as practices to be incorporated as part of individual development projects.*

*The proponent shall comply with all requirements set forth in the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) General Construction Activity Storm Water Permit. SWRCB requires site owners of development projects with construction activity resulting in soil disturbance of an area greater than five acres to comply with the California General Permit to Discharge Storm Water Associated with Construction Activity (NPDES General Permit CAS000002). The Permit requires development and implementation of a SWPPP emphasizing BMPs. The RWRCB maintains a list of suggested BMPs, which are schedules of activities, prohibitions of practices, maintenance procedures, and other management procedures to prevent or reduce pollution.*

*Policy EC-19 requires site preparation, grading, and foundation designs for erosion control to prevent sedimentation and contamination of creeks.*

*Policy EC-21 establishes development standards for new construction adjacent to riparian zones to reduce sedimentation and flooding.*

- HS-7 Prepare engineering studies when necessary to update drainage and flood zone maps and, during rainstorms, conduct surveys and document locations of flooding.
- HS-8 Systematically conduct maintenance, make repairs, or improve drainage facilities to minimize localized flooding during rainstorms. Provide treatment to first-flush runoff flows, street sweeping programs, and additional source controls to minimize non-point source pollution.

*Maintenance should occur more frequently during the winter.*

- HS-9 Use the City's development review process to ensure that proposed development located in 100-year flood zones undertakes measures to provide adequate protection from flood hazards.
- HS-10 Continue to use the National Flood Insurance Program standards and regulations as guidelines for implementation of flood damage control programs in Rohnert Park. Work with Federal Emergency Management Agency to update the 1991 Flood Insurance Rate Maps to reflect improvements to Copeland Creek.
- HS-11 In cooperation with the Sonoma County Water Agency, maintain flood plain areas, drainage channels, and other drainage structures and improve drainage channel capacity

in ways that will preserve the natural character of habitat areas, riparian corridors, and waterways to the maximum extent feasible.

(Rev. 10/02)

### **7.3 SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT AND RECYCLING**

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The City is responsible for waste collections and diversion within the incorporated limits. Solid waste disposal facilities are owned and operated by the Sonoma County Department of Transportation and Public Works, which also helps maintain the County Integrated Waste Management Plan (CoIWMP) jointly with the Sonoma County Waste Management Agency (SCWMA).

The California Waste Management Act, passed in 1989, required cities to prepare solid waste management planning documents that demonstrate how they would reduce the amount of waste sent to landfills by 25 percent by 1995 and 50 percent by the year 2000. These planning documents are known as the Source Reduction and Recycling Element (SRRE) and Household Hazardous Waste Element (HHWE). The SRRE includes four main components: source reduction, recycling, composting, and special waste. Each component identifies existing diversion programs and examines, evaluates, and selects future diversion programs. Hazardous waste is discussed in Section 7.4.

Rohnert Park's SRRE and HHWE, both adopted in 1992, were incorporated into the 1994 CoIWMP, which consolidates the SRREs and HHWEs prepared by each jurisdiction in Sonoma County. The CoIWMP, which includes a Facility Siting Element, is required to demonstrate the county's long-term ability to ensure the implementation of countywide diversion programs and to provide adequate disposal for local jurisdictions through the siting of disposal and transformation facilities.

#### **SOLID WASTE**

In 1995, Rohnert Park achieved a diversion or source reduction rate of 39 percent, which was 14 percent higher than the 1995 statewide diversion goal. However, in 1997, this rate fell to 38 percent, which is 6 percent higher than the estimated state diversion rate. Some of this success was due to the County's comprehensive approach to waste reduction. Diversion goals are met through a combination of local and countywide source reduction, recycling, and composting programs. In adopting this approach, Rohnert Park has agreed in concept to sponsor or develop jointly some programs and facilities with neighboring communities or with the County.

#### **COLLECTION AND RECYCLING**

Municipal solid waste is transported to the Central Disposal Site owned and operated by Sonoma County Public Works Department. The site is located approximately five miles southwest of the city in unincorporated Sonoma County. The City does not currently hold a disposal contract directly with the landfill, but contracts for collection and disposal services with private haulers. In 1997, Rohnert Park disposed of 50,528 tons of solid waste (see Table 7.3-1). Of the solid waste generated, 51 percent was used for fuel, 25 percent was recycled, 12 percent was landfilled, eight percent was incinerated, and four percent was treated. Over 4,000 tons of recyclables were collected through residential curbside and commercial collection. Furthermore, over 5,000 tons of yard debris and wood waste was composted.

**Table 7.3-1:**  
**Rohnert Park Solid Waste, 1997**

Total Waste Generated	50,528 tons
% Used for Fuel	51%
% Recycled	25%
% Landfilled	12%
% Incinerated	8%
% Treated	4%

*Source: Integrated Waste Management Report Card, 1997.*

The City contracts out to Empire Waste Management for refuse hauling and curbside recycling services for single-family residents. Although there are no buy-back centers in Rohnert Park, two are located north of the city. Commercial recycling includes cardboard, glass, newspaper, and office paper collection. Approximately 2,951 tons of materials were collected through residential curbside collection and 1,070 tons through commercial collection.

The SCWMA sponsors several other waste reduction efforts including the Eco-Desk hotline, the annual Sonoma County Recycling Guide, the SonoMax waste exchange, master gardener home composting workshops, the Recycling Market Development Zone, and Household Toxics Roundups. The regional approach of the SCWMA has helped Sonoma County reduce solid waste at the lowest possible cost.

### **Expansion of Solid Waste Disposal Facilities**

Given current capacity and projected diversion rates, the Central Landfill is expected to reach capacity in approximately 2005. The expansion of the Central Landfill was recently approved by the County, allowing for disposal of solid waste up to 2010.

### **GOALS: SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT AND RECYCLING**

HS-D Reduce the generation of solid waste and recycle those materials that are used, to slow the filling of local and regional landfills, in accord with the California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989.

### **POLICIES: SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT AND RECYCLING**

HS-12 Continue to work toward reducing solid waste and increasing recycling, in compliance with the Sonoma County Integrated Waste Management Plan.

*Rohnert Park has a responsibility to meet regional source reduction and recycling initiatives in order to achieve State-mandated waste reduction targets and extend the useful life of existing landfill facilities.*

- HS-13 As part of development review and environmental analysis, ensure that new multifamily residential and all non-residential development comply with the City's Source Reduction and Recycling Element (SRRE) and Household Hazardous Waste Element (HHWE), as well as the Sonoma County Integrated Waste Management Plan (CoIWMP).

*Multifamily residential development includes any residential structures with two or more dwelling units.*

- HS-14 As part of the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP), the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) Master Plan, and other programs, explore the feasibility of installing recycling receptacles for plastic and glass beverage containers and papers in parks and other public areas (for example, community recreational facilities, transit stops, and mixed-use districts).

*The City and SCWA should consider other recycling strategies, including expanding recycling collection at commercial and multifamily housing.*

- HS-15 Require new multifamily residential and all non-residential development to incorporate attractive and convenient interior and exterior storage areas for recyclables into new or remodeled buildings, to make recycling activities more convenient for those who use the buildings.

*Existing commercial businesses and business parks should be encouraged to install recycling receptacles on their premises. Multifamily residential development includes any residential structures with two or more dwelling units.*

## **7.4 HAZARDOUS MATERIALS**

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Hazardous materials include a large number of substances that may be dangerous to the public if improperly stored, handled, or disposed. These include toxic metals, chemicals, and gases; flammable and/or explosive liquids and solids; corrosive materials; infectious substances; and radioactive material. Hazardous materials, according to the State Health and Safety Code § 25501(o), "include, but are not limited to, hazardous substances, hazardous waste, and any material which a handler or the administering agency has a reasonable basis for believing that it would be injurious to the health and safety of persons or harmful to the environment if released into the workplace or the environment."

### **WASTE MANAGEMENT AGENCY**

In accordance with local Households Hazardous Waste Elements (HHWE) and the CoIWMP, the Sonoma County Waste Management Agency (SCWMA) conducts a range of hazardous waste programs. SCWMA conducts hazardous waste collection events at sites throughout Sonoma County. Over ten events are held each year, generally during dry weather months. At least one event is held in Rohnert Park. Rohnert Park businesses and residents may dispose of hazardous waste at any event in the County. Hazardous materials collected are packaged and taken to disposal sites outside Sonoma County.

The Agency plans to establish a permanent hazardous waste collection and temporary storage facility at the Central Landfill. The facility will be open to collect hazardous materials on a weekly basis. Hazardous materials will be transported to disposal sites outside Sonoma County.

SCWMA annually conducts hazardous waste education efforts. These education efforts include distribution of a recycling guide to nearly all households in Sonoma County. The guide lists how to avoid, store, and dispose of household hazardous materials. Ongoing public education campaigns are funded by the SCWMA and grant funds.

### **Industrial and Commercial Hazardous Materials**

State law requires that communities form a Consolidated Unified Protection Agency (CUPA). The CUPA manages the acquisition, maintenance, and control of hazardous waste by industrial and commercial businesses. Rohnert Park contracts with Sonoma County for this service.

### **HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE**

Hazardous waste is generated in homes and businesses alike, and includes products such as paint, batteries, fertilizers, and used motor oil. These wastes are of concern because they are often improperly managed, resulting in injuries to sanitation workers and damage to collection vehicles, as well as possible toxics leaching from sanitary landfills. Management of hazardous waste in Rohnert Park occurs under the 1992 HHWE, which was incorporated into the Sonoma County Hazardous Waste Management Plan.

The City's HHWE addresses the wastes that stem from a variety of common household products. Rohnert Park's household hazardous waste management program, outlined in the HHWE,

emphasizes public education, source reduction and recycling, mobile and permanent collection facilities, and hazardous waste load checking. Household hazardous waste is collected and disposed of by licensed haulers. Furthermore, SCWMA and the City created a network of private businesses that collect used oil in Rohnert Park. In 1990, it was estimated that Rohnert Park residents generated 20 tons of hazardous waste per year – of which 13 tons are estimated to be either illegally disposed of or stored in homes in Rohnert Park. Only four percent of Rohnert Park's households participated in the County Disposal Program in 1997.

The City currently participates in a SCWMA hazardous waste disposal program, allowing Rohnert Park residents to dispose of hazardous waste in nearby cities. SCWMA plans to establish a permanent collection facility at the Central landfill and reduce the periodic collection events in urban areas.

### **HAZARDOUS MATERIALS DISPOSAL SITES**

There are no hazardous material disposal sites in operation in the Rohnert Park area. All hazardous waste is placed in containers and shipped to sites outside the community.

The Rohnert Park area does not contain any known historical hazardous material disposal sites. Underground tanks containing petroleum products at scattered sites in the community may have contaminated subsurface earth. Regular, highly detailed, laboratory testing of water from the city's wells, scattered throughout the community, has not detected contaminants from underground tanks or other hazardous materials.

The City's Department of Public Safety investigates illegal hazardous waste dumping. Most illegal hazardous waste dumping in Rohnert Park consists of the disposal of oil and gasoline in storm drains. Signs discouraging hazardous waste dumping were installed in 1997 above all storm drain inlets in the city.

### **Hazardous Materials Transfer Station**

The Safety Kleen Corporation operates a hazardous materials transfer station in Rohnert Park. The total amount of hazardous materials stored at any given time is 2,000 gallons. Hazardous materials are shipped to the company's plant in Reedley, California, for treatment. The primary hazardous material is 1,450 gallons per day, on average, of the mineral spirit Stoddard Solvent. In addition, the transfer station stores approximately 40 gallons of Percloethylene (Perk), a cleaning solvent used by dry cleaning businesses, and 40 gallons of lacquer thinner per day. Toxic materials are obtained from an area extending from San Francisco to Eureka. The recycled materials are sold back to the same businesses. The company does not treat or dispose of any hazardous materials on the Safety Kleen site in Rohnert Park.

### **GOALS: HAZARDOUS MATERIALS**

- HS-E Minimize the risk to life and property from the generation, storage, and transportation of hazardous materials and waste in Rohnert Park and assure the proper disposal of all hazardous waste that may be generated in Rohnert Park.

HS-F Comply with all applicable regulations and provisions for the storage, use and handling of hazardous substances as established by federal (EPA), State (DTSC, RWQCB, Cal OSHA, Cal EPA), and local (County of Sonoma, City of Rohnert Park) regulations.

HS-G Protect groundwater and soil from contamination by hazardous materials.

#### **POLICIES: HAZARDOUS MATERIALS**

HS-16 Promote joint, countywide programs to address the generation and disposal of hazardous materials including the Sonoma County Hazardous Waste Management Plan.

HS-17 Develop and implement programs which provide convenient means for residents to properly dispose of household hazardous waste materials.

HS-18 Support efforts to establish a permanent hazardous waste collection and temporary storage facility at the Central Landfill.

*This policy would allow hazardous waste collection events in Rohnert Park and other nearby cities to be phased out. Given the risks of spills and accidents, it would be preferable to have residents and businesses take hazardous waste to a controlled environment away from built-up urban areas.*

HS-19 Maintain existing signs discouraging hazardous waste dumping above all storm drain in the city.

*The signs should also note locations of current disposal sites.*

HS-20 Support SCWMA in their hazardous waste education efforts.

## **7.5 EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

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### **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

The California Emergencies Services Act (State Government Code § 8550-8668) requires each city to prepare and maintain an Emergency Plan for natural, manmade, or war-caused emergencies which result in conditions of disaster or in extreme peril to life. Peacetime emergencies that should be addressed by the Plan include earthquakes, fires, and floods. In 1995, the City adopted a Standardized Emergency Management Plan, which describes the principles and methods to be applied in carrying out emergency operations or rendering mutual aid during emergencies. The Department of Public Safety (DPS) has developed the Standardized Emergency Management System with Annexes, which is consistent with the requirements of the California Emergencies Services Act. The System is updated and revised on an annual basis.

All City departments play a role in the plans and have specific assignments to perform in emergencies. The City coordinates its planning with the County Office of Emergency Services to keep the plans up to date. The City also participates in periodic city and countywide disaster drills that are held to evaluate and critique emergency service preparedness. The Public Safety Headquarters has been designed to function as an Emergency Operations Center for the community.

City emergency preparedness planning focuses on immediate threat to life and property. One generally accepted rule-of-thumb is that citizens and businesses should not expect assistance until 72 hours after a disaster, unless there is an immediate threat to life or property. After a disaster, municipal resources may be limited and must be dispatched to the most serious emergencies.

#### **Earthquake Response**

The City is prepared to meet the emergency service needs after a “worst case” earthquake. In 1995, the City revised the “Threat Summary, Earthquake” section of the Standardized Emergency Management Plan. This summary details the impacts of an earthquake of a magnitude of 8.3 on the northern San Andreas Fault.

#### **Response to Hazardous Materials Spills**

The City currently maintains a hazardous materials response plan. The Plan builds upon the Sonoma County Operational Area Hazardous Materials Incident Response Plan. The goals of the City’s hazardous materials planning are to contain and identify hazardous materials spills and to implement evacuation, clean up, and disposal.

The DPS maintains a hazardous materials team. Members of this team have completed extensive training and qualify as Hazardous Materials Technicians or Specialists. Should a hazardous materials event occur within the city, the hazardous materials team will take a leading role in protecting the public. The team will follow general response guidelines but must fit the response to the specific incident.

Numerous types of hazardous materials are transported on US 101. The California Highway Patrol is responsible for hazardous materials accidents on the Highway. The City maintains communication links with these agencies and participates, as necessary, in responses to hazardous materials accidents.

### **EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE**

Sonoma Life Support provides ambulance service in Rohnert Park. Sonoma Life Support is a private emergency medical provider that was granted the contract to provide emergency services for the central Sonoma County Franchise area in 1991. The purpose of the franchise is to provide emergency medical services to all sectors of the population regardless of ability to pay, support the system through fees and minimize cost through public regulation of the service provider. Sonoma County monitors the service provider, ensuring that Sonoma Life Support maintains the required service levels.

A single ambulance station serves the City of Rohnert Park. The station is housed in leased space generally located near the center of the city. Units located elsewhere in the county provide backup service as needed. A paramedic and other necessary staff at all times staff the station. Emergency services are provided 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The ambulance contains full communications including radio and phone linking the ambulance with the Santa Rosa and Petaluma hospitals.

### **POLICE, FIRE, AND RELATED SERVICES**

DPS provides police, fire, and related services in the community according to the public safety administrative concept. Cross-trained personnel under a single administrative umbrella furnish police and fire services.

Key procedures help implement the public safety concept in Rohnert Park. First, DPS personnel are issued personal pagers and home alert devices. This allows personnel to be contacted by dispatchers in cases when additional staff is needed during an emergency. Second, public safety officers must live within a reasonable proximity to the community. Third, the City issues vehicles to officers. The vehicles are parked at officers' homes during off-duty hours. Officers carry fire turnout gear, water and dry chemical fire extinguishers, emergency medical, and other items in their vehicle.

## GOALS: EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

- HS-H Use the Standardized Emergency Management Plan as the guide for emergency management in Rohnert Park.
- HS-I Cooperate with other public agencies to store, organize, distribute, and administer emergency medical equipment, supplies, services and communication systems.
- HS-J As part of the concurrency requirement for development on the westside, construct a public safety station west of US 101 in the general vicinity of the Wilfred Avenue/Labath Avenue intersection.

*A Westside station will be necessary if additional construction occurs west of US 101 in order to respond to emergency calls within an acceptable response time. If the station were located in the general vicinity of the Wilfred Avenue/Labath Avenue intersection, emergency vehicles could respond within four minutes to calls in the area west of US 101.*

## POLICIES: EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

- HS-21 Maintain and regularly update the Standardized Emergency Management Plan.

*The Department of Public safety shall administer the plan and revise it as needed. Evacuation routes should be adopted and updated as part of the plan. The routes should be flexible to respond appropriately to various emergencies (such as exposure to hazardous materials, flood, fire, or earthquake).*
- HS-22 Conduct periodic emergency management exercises to familiarize key City personnel and surrounding jurisdictions and agencies with their roles and responsibilities to ensure emergency facilities will function in the event of a disaster.
- HS-23 Prepare and disseminate information to help households prepare for emergency situations.

*This information should include pre-fire and earthquake plans, guidebooks, and instruction kits identifying how emergency response will be coordinated and how evacuation of residents will proceed. Households should be encouraged to take the necessary preparations to be self-sufficient for at least 72 hours after a disaster strikes the community.*
- HS-24 Require adequate access for emergency vehicles, including adequate street width and vertical clearance, on new streets.

*The DPS should establish street width, vertical clearance, and access standards in the Standardized Emergency Management Plan.*
- HS-25 Ensure that new traffic signals include a system which allows emergency vehicles to change the signal.

- IIS-26 Locate a new public safety station in the Stadium Lands Planned Development; require new development on the west side (west of Highway 101) to contribute funds to the Public Facilities Financing Plan for construction.

*The Wilfred-Dowdell Village Specific Plan establishes a Public Facilities Financing Plan to provide funding for a new station. The Wilfred-Dowdell Village development is providing a portion of the total funding required; other development benefiting from the station will also be required to contribute. The new station on the westside is expected to require seven additional public safety staff, whose salaries would be provided through the General Fund.*

## **8   Noise**

California Government Code § 65302(f) requires that each general plan have a noise element. The purpose of the element is to identify existing noise problems in the community and to provide guidance to planners and developers for avoiding future problems.



## 8.1 NOISE CHARACTERISTICS

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Noise can be defined as a sound or series of sounds that are intrusive, irritating, objectionable and/or disruptive to sleep, speech, and other activity. The known effects of noise on humans include hearing loss, communication interference, sleep interference, physiological responses, and annoyance. Generally, residential and public uses are more noise-sensitive than commercial and industrial uses.

### THRESHOLDS AND STANDARDS

Reported noise levels are expressed as a function of time (because noise varies over time) and time of day (because people are more sensitive to nighttime than daytime noise). Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) and Day-Night Noise Level (Ldn) both reflect noise exposure over an average day, with weighting to reflect nighttime sensitivity. Ldn is commonly used for measuring community noise levels, although CNEL is used to measure aircraft noise levels, in conjunction with State standards. The following are generally accepted thresholds of noise interference:

- *Speech Interference.* Thresholds for speech interference indoors are about 45 dB if the noise is steady and above 55 dB if the noise is fluctuating. Outdoors, the thresholds are about 15 dB higher.
- *Sleep Interference.* Steady noise above 35 dB and fluctuating noise levels above about 45 dB may affect sleep.

Interior residential standards for multi-family dwellings are set by the State of California at 45 dB Ldn. The standard is designed for sleep and speech protection and most jurisdictions apply the same criterion for all residential uses.

### STRUCTURAL ATTENUATION

With open windows, typical structural attenuation is 12-17 dB; with closed windows, attenuation is 20 dB for older structures and 25 dB for newer structures. Special glass or double-paned windows can provide additional attenuation.

## 8.2 NOISE IN ROHNERT PARK

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The major source of noise in Rohnert Park is traffic along major roadways. US 101, Rohnert Park Expressway, Snyder Lane, Southwest Boulevard, East Cotati Avenue, and Golf Course Drive have been identified as the major sources of roadway traffic noise. A secondary source of noise is the railroad which traverses the city.

### 1997 CONDITIONS

In 1997, traffic noise levels in Rohnert Park were calculated using the Federal Highway Administration's noise prediction model (FHWA-RD-77-108) and the California Vehicle Noise Emission Levels model, developed by Caltrans. The results are shown in Table 8.3-1. Only the roadways that would generate a 60 dB Ldn beyond a distance of 50 feet from the roadway centerline are listed. Because of minimal development in the city and few changes in traffic patterns or distribution, noise conditions did not go through any perceptible changes between 1997 and 1999.

Regular rail service along the Northwestern Pacific (NP) Railroad right-of-way was interrupted in 1998 due to stormwater damage. As of 1999, limited rail service was resumed. The NP Railroad operates about one train per day and one train every other night through Rohnert Park. Rail operations result in noise levels in excess of 69 dB Ldn up to 100 feet from the tracks and in excess of 60 dB Ldn up to 300 feet from the tracks.

The Sonoma Airport (12 miles northeast of Rohnert Park) and Petaluma Airport (8 miles southeast of Rohnert Park) impose no appreciable noise impacts on the city. Aircraft from the two airports reach an altitude of more than 1,000 feet when flying over Rohnert Park.

**Table 8.2-1:**  
**1997 Estimated Traffic Noise Levels in Rohnert Park**

	Peak-Hour Traffic Volume	Average Speed (mph)	Noise Level at 100 feet (Ldn)
<b>US 101</b>			
No Sound Wall	7,000	65	77
Behind Sound Wall or Structures (estimate)	7,000	65	72
<b>Petaluma Hill Rd</b>			
Keiser Rd – Crane Canyon Rd	1,500	50	68
Keiser Rd – Railroad Ave	2,000	50	70
Snyder Lane	1,100	35	60
Country Club Dr	1,000	25	57
State Farm Dr	900	35	59
<b>Commerce Dr</b>			
Rohnert Park Expwy – Golf Course Dr	1,000	30	58
Rohnert Park Expwy – Old Redwood Highway	1,300	30	59

**Table 8.2-1:**  
**1997 Estimated Traffic Noise Levels in Rohnert Park**

	<i>Peak-Hour Traffic Volume</i>	<i>Average Speed (mph)</i>	<i>Noise Level at 100 feet (Ldn)</i>
<b>Redwood Dr</b>			
Commerce Dr - Wilfred Ave	1,600	35	61
Wilfred Avenue -	1,000	35	60
Rohnert Park Expwy			
Rohnert Park Expwy - SR 116	900	35	59
<b>Stony Point Rd</b>			
Millbrae Ave - Rohnert Park Expwy	1,300	35	61
Rohnert Park Expwy - SR 116	1,100	35	60
<b>Golf Course Dr</b>			
Commerce Dr - Fairway Dr	1,500	35	61
Fairway Dr - Country Club Dr	1,200	35	60
Country Club Dr - Snyder Ln	900	35	58
<b>Rohnert Park Expwy</b>			
Stony Point Rd - Business Park Dr	900	35	59
Business Park Dr - US 101	1,700	35	62
at US 101	2,500	35	63
US 101 - Country Club Dr	2,200	35	62
Country Club Dr - Snyder Ln	1,300	35	60
Snyder Ln - Rohnert Park Expwy	700	35	58
Enterprise Dr	700	30	58
Southwest Blvd	1,000	35	60
East Cotati Avenue	1,100	35	60
East Cotati Avenue	1,100	35	60

*Source: Illingworth & Rodkin, Acoustical Engineers*

## PROJECTED CONDITIONS UNDER GENERAL PLAN BUILDOUT

Estimates of roadway noise levels under General Plan buildout were based on projected traffic volumes and speeds, as documented in Chapter 4: Transportation. The noise analysis also takes into account the new roadways planned for the eastside, westside, Canon Manor, and southeast areas, as shown in Figure 4.1-1. Perceptible noise increases (3 dB or more) resulting from traffic under General Plan buildout are listed in Table 8.2-2. Noise contours are shown in Figure 8.2-1.

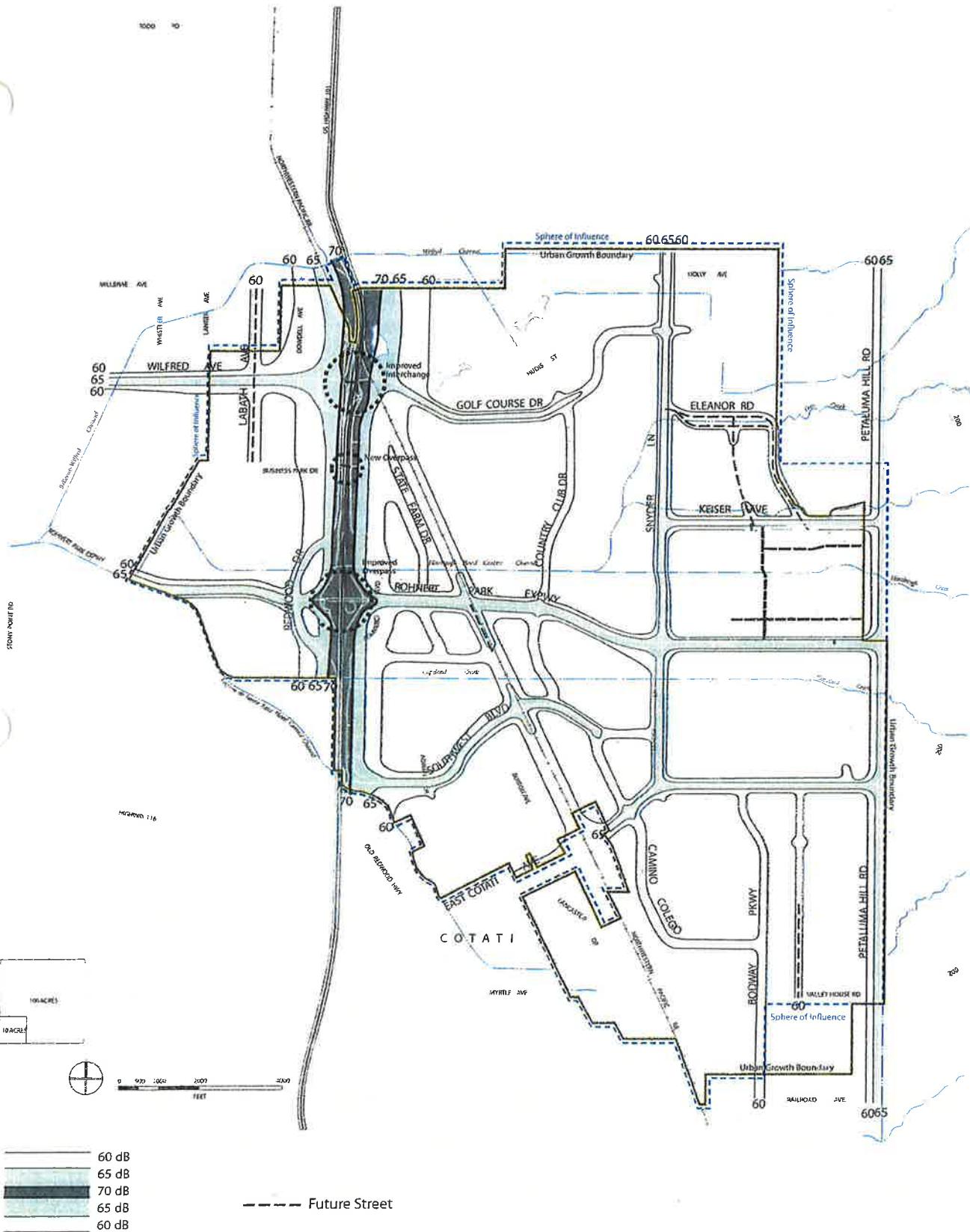


Figure 8.2-1  
Noise Contours Under General Plan Buildout

Revised 12/13

**Table 8.2-2:**  
**Projected Traffic Noise Level Increases<sup>1</sup>**

Affected Roadway Segments	Existing Noise Level at 100 ft. (Ldn)	Predicted Noise Level at 100 ft. (Ldn)
Snyder Ln	60 dB	63 dB
Redwood Dr: Rohnert Park Expwy – SR 116	59 dB	64 dB
Wilfrd Ave: Stony Point Rd – Labath Ave	56 dB	61 dB
Wilfred Ave: Labath Ave – Redwood Dr	57 dB	67 dB
Keiser Rd: Snyder Ln – Petaluma Hill Rd	55 dB	63 dB
Rohnert Park Expwy: Snyder Ln – Petaluma Hill Rd	58 dB	61 dB
Southwest Blvd: Commerce Dr – Snyder Ln	60 dB	63 dB
East Cotati Ave: Snyder Ln – Bodway Pkwy	60 dB	64 dB
East Cotati Ave: Bodway Pkwy – Petaluma Hill Rd	59 dB	63 dB

1. Only roadway segments that would have a noise level of more than 60 dB Ldn at 100 feet from the roadway centerline are shown. New roadways and extensions (Labath Avenue, Sturdevant Drive, New Linear Park Road, and Eleanor Avenue) would all have noise levels below 60 dB at 100 feet from the centerline.

Source: Illingworth & Rodkin, Acoustical Engineers

Most new roadway segments are predicted to have noise levels less than 60 dB Ldn at a distance of about 100 feet, with the exception of the two new US 101 crossings at Wilfred Avenue and State Farm Drive. Noise levels resulting from traffic along the two new highway crossings will be dominated by noise generated by US 101. Areas along new roadways on the eastside would have noise levels between 60 and 65 dB Ldn, as shown on Figure 8.2-1.

If train activity along the NP Railroad right-of-way is increased, noise-sensitive land uses in proximity to the line could be exposed to excessive noise levels. Noise levels along the route would depend on the type of train vehicle and track improvements, the frequency of trains, and the location of stations. North of the Rohnert Park Expressway, residential uses are set back from the rail line, but south of the Expressway, residential abut the right-of-way and would be subject to noise impacts.

## 8.3 NOISE GOALS AND POLICIES

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### GOALS: NOISE

- NS-A Protect public health and welfare by eliminating or minimizing excessive noise levels.
- NS-B Minimize the exposure of noise-sensitive uses—including residences, schools, churches, hospitals, and other public uses—to excessive noise levels.

### POLICIES: NOISE

#### Standards

- NS-1 During project review and approval, use Figure 8.3-1 to determine acceptable uses and analysis and insulation requirements in noise-impacted areas.

*Figure 8.3-1 is based on land use and noise exposure compatibility levels in Appendix A of the State of California General Plan Guidelines. The table is consistent with the provision of State law that requires special noise insulation for new multifamily housing units within 60 dB Ldn noise exposure contours.*

*The table's land use categories do not correspond to the use classifications on the General Plan Land Use Diagram, but to actual uses in development projects. The land use categories shall be consistent with use definitions in the City's Zoning Ordinance.*

*The General Plan Land Use Diagram was designed to locate noise-sensitive land uses, like residential, as far away from major noise generators as possible. The city's largest noise generator is US 101, where roadside noise levels exceed 70 dB Ldn.*

- NS-2 For all residential uses, establish 45 dB Ldn as the standard for interior noise levels and 60 dB Ldn as the standard for exterior noise levels. Require appropriate siting of residential uses and/or mitigation measures to meet the standards.

*Figure 8.3-1 requires special insulation for residential and other uses within 60 dB Ldn noise contours. Residential uses shall be required to meet the 45 dB Ldn interior noise level performance standard as well.*

*The policy for exterior noise level is intended to protect the enjoyment of open space in residential areas. Also, it helps protect interior noise levels when windows are open. Buildings with open windows attenuate about 12-17 dB CNEL. Within 60 dB Ldn contours, residences with open windows would experience 43-48 dB Ldn interior noise levels, near the threshold of speech interference (45 dB Ldn).*

## Noise Reduction

- NS-3 Update the Noise Ordinance and the Zoning Ordinance to require control of noise at the source through site design, building design, buffering, hours of operation, and other regulations, for any noise-emitting use.

*The City's Noise Ordinance establishes noise standards for various noise-emitting land uses and for zoning districts. In addition, the ordinance restricts noise emitted from temporary or intermittent uses.*

- NS-4 Continue to require control of noise or mitigation measures for any noise-emitting construction equipment or activity.

*The City's Noise Ordinance establishes controls on construction-related noise.*

- NS-5 Continue to work with County, State, and other agencies to reduce noise from sources outside the City's Sphere of Influence (SOI) and to minimize impacts on sites within the SOI.

## Mitigation of Noise Impacts

- NS-6 Require buffers or site planning techniques for all new development within 65 dB Ldn noise contours. However, avoid visible sound walls except along US 101 and along the Northwestern Pacific (NP) Railroad right-of-way.

*Chapter 3: Community Design includes policies to minimize use of sound walls.*

- NS-7 Require new development within existing or projected 65 dB Ldn noise contours to undergo a technical acoustical analysis, which shall serve as the basis for designing mitigation measures. Require the technical analysis to be conducted by a professional acoustical engineer.

*This policy applies to both residential and non-residential uses. The technical analysis should determine the relative effectiveness of alternative mitigation.*

- NS-8 Work with SCTA to identify potential noise impacts resulting from commuter rail service along the Northwestern Pacific (NP) right-of-way and develop adequate mitigation measures.

*Policy TR-33 in the Transportation Element encourages SCTA to continue in its efforts to develop commuter rail service along the NP right-of-way.*

Land Use Category	Exterior Day/Night Noise Levels DNL or Ldn, dB						INTERPRETATION
	55	60	65	70	75	80	
Residential—Single Family					75	80	Normally Acceptable:
Residential—Multiple Family				70	75	80	Specified land use is satisfactory, based upon the assumption that any buildings involved are of normal conventional construction, without any special noise insulation requirements
Transient Lodging—Motels, Hotels				70	75	80	Conditionally Acceptable:
Schools, Libraries, Churches, Hospitals*, Nursing Homes				70	75	80	New construction or development should be undertaken only after a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements is made and needed noise insulation features included in the design.
Auditoriums, Concert Halls, Amphitheaters			70	75	80		
Sports Arena, Outdoor Spectator Sports				70	75	80	Normally Unacceptable:
Playgrounds, Parks			70	75	80		New construction or development should generally be discouraged. If new construction or development does proceed, a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements must be made and needed noise insulation features included in the design.
Golf Courses, Riding Stables, Water Recreation, Cemeteries				70	75	80	
Office Buildings, Business Commercial and Professional					75	80	
Industrial, Manufacturing, Utilities, Agriculture					75	80	Clearly Unacceptable:

Source: Office of Planning and Research, State of California General Plan Guidelines, Appendix A: Guidelines for the Preparation and Content of the Noise Element of the General Plan, 1998.

\*Because hospitals are often designed and constructed with high noise insulation properties, it is possible for them to be satisfactorily located in noisier areas.

Figure 8.3-1  
Land Use Compatibility for Community Noise Environments

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## Section 9.1 Introduction

The City of Rohnert Park Housing Element identifies and analyzes housing needs of present and future residents through 2023, and provides the primary policy guidance for local decision-making as it relates to the preservation, conservation, improvement, and production of housing. The Housing Element has a shorter planning period than the other General Plan elements and is the only General Plan element that requires review and certification by the State of California.

The Housing Element provides a detailed analysis of the city's demographic, economic, and housing characteristics as required by State law. The Element also provides a comprehensive evaluation of the City's progress in implementing the past policies and programs related to housing production, preservation, and conservation. Based on the community's housing needs, available resources, constraints, and opportunities for housing production and preservation, and its past performance, the Housing Element identifies goals, policies, and programs that address the housing needs of present and future residents.

This element contains:

- An assessment of housing needs in the city;
- An inventory of resources available to the City to meet these needs;
- The identification of constraints upon the maintenance, improvement, and development of housing for all income levels;
- A statement of the community's goals, quantified objectives, and policies related to the maintenance, improvement, and development of housing; and
- An eight-year schedule of actions the City is undertaking or intends to undertake to implement the policies and achieve the goals and objectives of the Housing Element.

## State Law and Local Planning

### Consistency with State Law

The Housing Element is one of the required General Plan elements, as articulated in Government Code Sections 65580 to 65589.8 of the California Government Code. State law requires that each jurisdiction's housing element consist of "an identification and analysis of existing and projected housing needs and a statement of goals, policies, quantified objectives, and programs for the preservation, improvement, and development of housing." The housing element plans for the provision of housing for all economic segments of the population.

As required by State law (Government Code Section 65583 (a)), the assessment and inventory for this Element includes the following:

- An analysis of population and employment trends and projections, and a quantification of the city's existing and projected housing needs for all income levels. This analysis of existing and projected needs includes the City of Rohnert Park's share of the regional housing need.
- An analysis and documentation of household characteristics, including level of payment compared to ability to pay; housing characteristics, including overcrowding; and housing stock condition.

- An inventory of land suitable for residential development, including vacant sites and sites having potential for redevelopment and an analysis of the relationship of zoning, public facilities, and services to these sites.
- The identification of a zone or zones where emergency shelters are allowed as a permitted use without a conditional use or other discretionary permit.
- An analysis of potential and actual governmental constraints upon the maintenance, improvement, or development of housing for all income levels and for persons with disabilities, including land use controls, building codes and their enforcement, site improvements, fees and other exactions required of developers, and local processing and permit procedures.
- An analysis of local efforts to remove governmental constraints.
- An analysis of potential and actual non-governmental constraints upon the maintenance, improvement, or development of housing for all income levels, including the availability of financing, the price of land, and the cost of construction.
- An analysis of any special housing needs for the elderly; persons with disabilities, including developmental disabilities; large families; farmworkers; families with female heads of households; and families and persons in need of emergency shelter.
- An analysis of opportunities for residential energy conservation.
- An analysis of “at-risk” assisted housing developments that are eligible to change from low-income housing to market rate housing during the next 10 years.

### **General Plan Consistency**

State law requires internal consistency among the various elements of the General Plan. Government code section 65300.5 states that the General Plan’s various elements shall provide an integrated and internally consistent and compatible statement of policy. Upon adoption, this Housing Element will become part of the City’s General Plan. The City will maintain this consistency as future General Plan amendments are processed by evaluating proposed amendments for consistency with all elements of the General Plan.

### **Relationship to Other Plans and Programs**

The Housing Element identifies goals, objectives, policies, and programs for the next eight years that directly address the housing needs of the City of Rohnert Park. There are numerous City plans and programs that work to implement the goals and policies of the Housing Element. These include the City’s Municipal Code and Specific Plans.

### **Housing Element Time Frame**

Unlike the other elements of the General Plan, the Housing Element time frame is tied to an eight-year “housing needs process” schedule set by the State. The California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) determines each region’s share of the state housing need. In 2014 the State initiated a housing needs process for the San Francisco Bay Area communities; the Regional Housing Needs Allocation Plan addresses the fifth housing element cycle, which covers an 8.75 year RHNA projection period (January 1, 2014, to October 31, 2022) and an eight-year planning period (January 31, 2015, to January 31, 2023). Based on growth projections between the years of 2014 and 2022, the City must adopt the updated Housing Element before January 31, 2015, demonstrating its ability to accommodate its fair share of housing needs during the eight-year period.

## Data Sources

The most current housing data and information available was used during the preparation of the Housing Element. The most recent version of the United States Census, which is a primary source of housing information, is 2010. The Census Bureau also publishes the American Community Survey (ACS). The ACS is not a census, but a survey; about three million housing unit addresses are selected annually. In the past the Census Bureau only released an annual ACS for jurisdictions with populations of at least 65,000, but in 2008 the ACS released its first multi-year estimates based on ACS data collected from 2005-2007. These estimates are available for populations of 20,000 or more, including Rohnert Park. The most recent ACS period is 2010-2012. Department of Finance (DOF) and Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) data were also used along with various other sources of housing industry data. HCD will not comment on the 2014 ABAG preapproved data used in the Housing Element.

## Housing Element Organization

The City of Rohnert Park Housing Element is organized into the following sections:

- **Introduction.** Explains the purpose, process, and content of the Housing Element.
- **Population and Demographics:** Describes current and projected demographic and economic characteristics of Rohnert Park.
- **Housing Needs Analysis.** Describes the housing characteristics of Rohnert Park, as well as the current and projected housing needs.
- **Housing Resources.** Analyzes the various land, financial, and administrative resources available to the City for meeting its housing needs.
- **Housing Constraints.** Analyzes the actual and potential governmental and non-governmental constraints to the maintenance, preservation, conservation, and development of housing.

Given the detail and lengthy analysis in developing the Housing Element, supporting background material is included in the following appendices:

- **Appendix A.** Review of 2007-2014 Housing Element Policies and Actions
- **Appendix B.** Homeless Facilities in Rohnert Park
- **Appendix C.** Community Outreach

## Community Involvement

As part of the Housing Element update process, the City implemented the State's public participation requirements in Housing Element law, set forth in Government Code Section 65583(c)(7), that jurisdictions "...shall make a diligent effort to achieve participation of all economic segments of the community in the development of the housing element." The City of Rohnert Park values public input in the development of its community development goals and objectives, including the provision of decent and adequate housing. The following section summarizes public outreach conducted by the City of Rohnert Park. The input provided at the workshops helped shape the policies and programs included in the Housing Element.

## **Stakeholder Workshop (January 27, 2014)**

On January 27, 2014, the City of Rohnert Park held a Stakeholder Workshop on the Housing Element Update. To advertise the workshop, the City sent an email notice and conducted follow-up phone calls to nearly 50 local agencies, community organizations, and stakeholders, including non-profit and for-profit housing developers, affordable housing and homeless advocacy groups, senior advocates, farmworker advocates, realtors, and representatives from the school district, Sonoma State, fair housing counseling groups, and faith-based organizations. The City also advertised the workshop as a public meeting in the Community Voice. Sixteen people, in addition to project staff and consultants, attended.

At the workshop City staff and the Housing Element consulting firm, Mintier Harnish, presented a brief overview of the Housing Element Update and facilitated an interactive discussion to solicit ideas from participants about the most critical housing issues facing Rohnert Park residents and new ways the City and community might address these issues. Appendix C contains a summary of the issues and ideas discussed at the workshop. The input provided at the workshop was used to shape the Housing Element policies and programs and the names of the individuals who attended.

The City's team will continue to collect input from stakeholders and the public, and complete more research on relevant issues. This information will be used to help prepare a Housing Element draft document.

### **Summary of Comments**

Participants from the stakeholder workshop raised issues that can be grouped into a number of themes; affordability concerns, housing supply concerns, and financial difficulties. Many of these concerns are being addressed by the existing and new policies and programs in this Housing Element, as well as other City programs and policies. Below is a representative sample of some of the concerns that were addressed in each category:

#### **Concerns:**

Participants pointed out that both sales and rental prices are increasing in Rohnert Park. The growing student population and influx of new casino employees have saturated the housing market, increasing rental rates by approximately \$200. Participants are concerned about the prospects of the availability of affordable housing as well as new affordable housing development. The participants claim that the RHNA underestimates the actual need and that ABAG did not consider the impacts of the casino.

According to the participants, a number of apartments are no longer accepting Section 8, forcing tenants to move. Concerns were expressed about the lack of support for residents living on fixed incomes such as seniors and disabled persons. Some participants reported that the disabled community of Rohnert Park has experienced discrimination, as landlords are increasing rent on persons with disabilities. The residents would like to see development of affordable housing for those individuals on fixed incomes; however, affordable housing can be more expensive due to the additional labor costs associated with Federally-funded projects. The loss of redevelopment funds will also hinder the development of new affordable housing.

### **Solutions:**

Participants also shared ideas for improving the housing issues facing Rohnert Park. In regards to affordability, participants stressed that 15 percent of all new development should continue to be required as affordable and that there should be increased political support for inclusionary zoning. The participants also suggested increased partnerships between non-profit organizations and the City, as non-profit organizations are typically solutions-oriented and good stewards of the public. Residents would like to see an increase in Section 8 vouchers as well as apartments accepting Section 8.

The City currently requires that the equivalent of 15 percent of all new ownership units is affordable. The City is currently working with developers on different affordable housing solutions including, graded building pads complete with utilities ready-to-go for an affordable housing developer, as well as plans for affordable single family homes interspersed throughout project sites. Participants suggested land trusts be used to hold affordable housing projects in perpetuity. Lastly, participants suggest that the City should use the RDA “Boomerang” Fund, which would require a 20 percent set-aside of land for housing.

### **Community Workshop (May 29, 2014)**

On May 29, 2014, the City of Rohnert Park held a Community Workshop on the Housing Element Update. To advertise the workshop, the City sent an email notice to residents, noticed the workshop in Community Voice, and advertised the workshop on a digital freeway sign along Highway 101. At the workshop City staff and the Housing Element consulting firm, Mintier Harnish, presented a brief overview of the Housing Element Update. Attendees were then allowed to review key parts of the Housing Element at stations located throughout the meeting room. Staff and consultants were on hand to answer questions, discuss issues, and solicit ideas from participants. The input provided at the workshop was used to refine the Public Review Draft Housing Element policies and programs.

## **Section 9.2 Population and Demographics**

### **Population Growth Trends**

As shown in Table 9-1, after its incorporation in 1962, Rohnert Park’s population grew exponentially during the first several decades of its existence (121 percent from 1962 to 1970 and 274 percent from 1970 to 1980). In the 1990s the city’s population growth slowed to 16.8 percent, reaching a population of 42,436 in 2000. Between the years of 2000 and 2010, growth declined by 1,465 (3.5 percent) to 40,971. These population declines can be attributed to the boom-and-bust technology markets that impacted large employers and the 2008 housing crisis. Of the 101 cities in the nine-county Bay Area, Rohnert Park experienced the fourth largest population drop between 2000 and 2010. From 2010 to 2013 Rohnert Park experienced a slight population increase of 0.15 percent.

**TABLE 9-1  
POPULATION SINCE INCORPORATION**

**City of Rohnert Park  
1962-2013**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Change Per Decade</b>	<b>Percent Change</b>
1962	2,775	--	--
1970	6,133	3,358	121.0%
1980	22,965	16,832	274.4%
1990	36,326	13,361	58.2%
2000	42,436	6,110	16.8%
2010	40,971	-1,465	-3.5%
2013	41,034	63	0.15%

Sources: *Rohnert Park General Plan, July 2000; 2010 U.S. Census, Department of Finance E-5, 2013.*

Table 9-2 compares the average annual population growth in Rohnert Park and Sonoma County since 1980. Between 1980 and 1990 the city's population growth rate of 5.8 percent surpassed that of the county, as a whole (3.0 percent), due to the development of several planned neighborhoods. The rate of growth in both the city and county slowed during the 1990s to an average annual rate of 1.7 percent and 1.8 percent, respectively.

From 2000 to 2010 the city experienced an average annual decline in population of 0.3 percent, while the county's average annual growth rate slowed to 0.6 percent. According to the Department of Finance (DOF) estimates, both the populations of Rohnert Park and Sonoma County have experienced small increases in annual average growth rates since 2010. The city's population grew from 40,971 in 2010 to 41,034 in 2013, while the county's grew from 483,878 in 2010 to 490,423 in 2013.

**TABLE 9-2  
CITY AND COUNTY POPULATION TRENDS**

**City of Rohnert Park and Sonoma County  
1980-2013**

<b>Average Annual Growth Rate</b>	<b>Rohnert Park</b>		<b>Sonoma County</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1980	22,965	--	299,681	
1990	36,326	5.8%	388,222	3.0%
2000	42,436	1.7%	458,614	1.8%
2010	40,971	-0.3%	483,878	0.6%
2013	41,034	0.2%	490,423	0.1%

Sources: 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2010 U.S. Census; Department of Finance Table E-a, 2013.

## Housing Unit Growth Trends

Development in the city has been and continues to be largely based on a neighborhood concept that, in accordance with adopted master plans, promotes the development of a city center with a more compact urban core. Each neighborhood area includes both single family and multifamily housing types that are typically constructed in proximity to a school and/or park. Shopping centers have been designed and located to be within convenient walking distance from local neighborhoods.

In 1962 there were only 903 housing units in Rohnert Park. Throughout the early 1960s and 1970s, housing produced in the city primarily consisted of single family detached housing units and mobile home parks. At that time such housing was affordable to a majority of residents and families moving into the area. During the 1970s the city's housing inventory grew to include apartments, townhouses, condominiums, and additional mobile homes, in order to provide lower-cost alternatives to increasingly more expensive single family housing.

As shown in Table 9-3, the 1980s saw continued development of single family housing as well as multifamily projects. From 1980 to 1990 single family housing nearly doubled from 4,819 to 8,143 units, an average annual increase in development of 6.9 percent. Multifamily housing also saw a steady increase of about 5.2 percent per year between 1980 and 1990. During the 1990s the City saw its tallest residential building constructed—a four-story elderly housing project, Altamont Apartments—and the development of numerous other housing units for lower-income households. Development of large custom homes occurred at the north end of the city. From 2000 to 2010 the city's single family and multifamily housing stock increased 10 percent and 17 percent, respectively.

Between 1990 and 2000 the housing stock continued to grow, however, at a much slower annual rate compared to the previous decade, dropping to 1.0 percent and 1.7 percent for single family and multifamily housing, respectively. Between 2000 and 2010 single family development decreased by 0.9 percent, while multifamily units increased by 0.8 percent. Rohnert Park did not experience any new development between the years of 2010 and 2013, as the housing market continued to lag in response to the 2008 housing crisis.

Housing Type	Average Annual Development Rate							
	1980	1990	1980-1990	2000	1990-2000	2010	2000-2010	2013
	4,819	8,143	6.9%	8,960	1.0%	9,029	0.1%	9,029
Single family	4,819	8,143	6.9%	8,960	1.0%	9,029	0.1%	9,029
Multifamily	2,837	4,306	5.2%	5,020	1.7%	5,972	2.5%	5,972
Mobile homes/travel trailers	1,299	1,466	1.3%	1,467	0.0%	1,550	5.7%	1,550
<b>Total</b>	<b>8,955</b>	<b>13,915</b>	<b>5.5%</b>	<b>15,447</b>	<b>1.1%</b>	<b>16,551</b>	<b>0.9%</b>	<b>16,551</b>

Sources: 2000 U.S. Census; California Department of Finance, Table E-a, 2013 and Table E-8, 2010.

## Population by Age

As shown in Figure 9-1 and Table 9-4, the city's combined pre-school and elementary (0-9 years old) and middle and high school (10-19 years old) population percentage remained about the same between 1990 and 2000 (approximately 30 percent), but declined between 2000 and 2012 to about 22.8 percent. The young adult population (20-34 year olds) has been increasing slowly since 1990. As of 2012 the young adult population made up 27.3 percent (11,230) of the city's population. This can be attributed in large part to the presence of the University, which has seen an average growth of approximately 60 students per year between the years of 1990 and 2013, according to the Sonoma State University Academic Affairs. In 1990 the estimated student enrollment was 7,643; today, the University brings in a student population of more than 9,000 undergraduate and graduate students. In 2012 approximately 23 percent of Rohnert Park's population was 55 years and older (9,371), which accounts for the senior population. Based on the conventional count of elderly persons (65 years and older), there are 2,735 persons ages 65 and older. The number of elderly persons is expected to increase due to the aging of the "Baby Boom" generation.

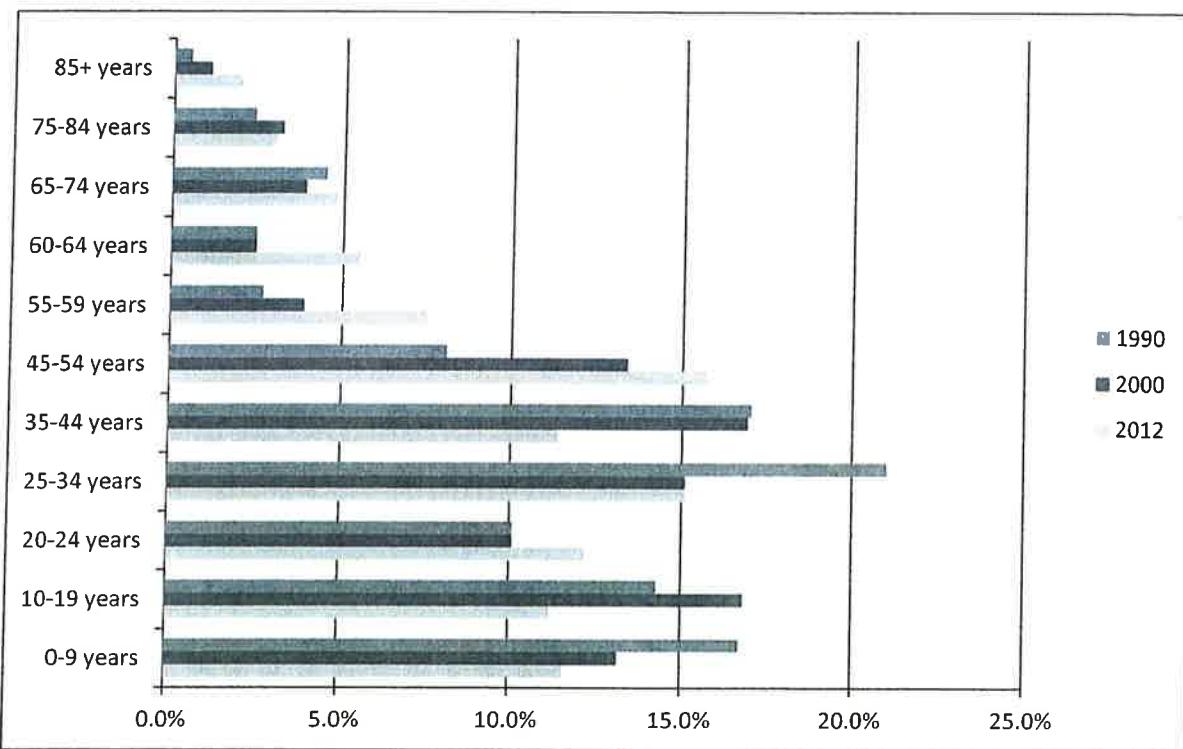
**TABLE 9-4  
POPULATION AGE CHARACTERISTICS**

**City of Rohnert Park  
1990-2012**

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>1990</b>		<b>2000</b>		<b>2010</b>		<b>2012</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
0-9	6,072	16.7%	5,587	13.2%	4,572	11.1%	4,784	11.6%
10-19	5,196	14.3%	7,075	16.8%	5,509	13.4%	4,566	11.2%
20-24	3,663	10.1%	4,274	10.1%	5,343	13.0%	5,015	12.2%
25-34	7,617	21.0%	6,369	15.1%	5,996	14.7%	6,215	15.1%
35-44	6,183	17.0%	7,152	16.9%	5,039	12.3%	4,679	11.4%
45-54	2,952	8.1%	5,672	13.4%	6,070	14.8%	6,455	15.7%
55-59	982	2.7%	1,629	3.9%	2,613	6.4%	3,095	7.5%
60-64	926	2.5%	1,062	2.5%	2,027	4.9%	2,252	5.5%
65-74	1,651	4.5%	1,632	3.9%	2,013	4.9%	1,989	4.8%
75-84	885	2.4%	1,337	3.2%	1,169	2.8%	1,228	3.0%
85+	199	0.5%	447	1.1%	620	1.5%	807	2.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>36,326</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>42,236</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>40,971</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>41,085</b>	<b>100%</b>
Median Age	30.6	-	31.5	-	33.0	-	34.9	-

Source: 1990, 2000, and 2010 U.S. Census; and 2010-2012 ACS Data.

FIGURE 9-1  
POPULATION BY AGE  
City of Rohnert Park  
1990-2012

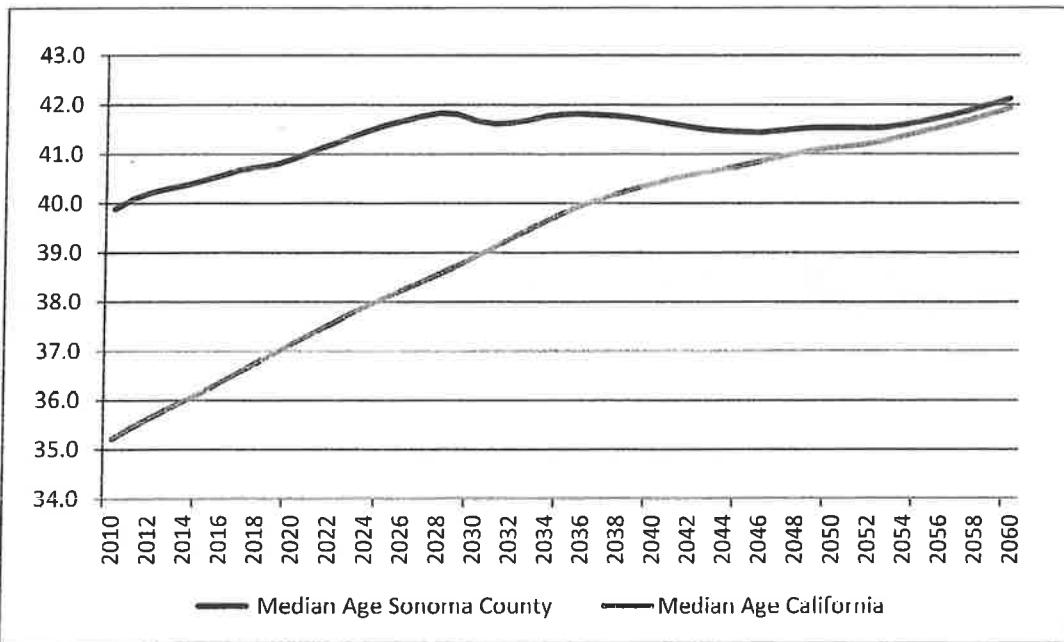


Source: 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census; and 2010-2012 ACS Data.

According to the American Community Survey, the median age of the city's population was 34.9 in 2012, an increase from 31.5 in 2000. To put this in perspective, the median age for Sonoma County in 2010 was 39.9 years. Rohnert Park's population is much younger than that of the region in large part because of the presence of Sonoma State University.

As shown in Figure 9-2, the Department of Finance projects the median age in California to increase from 35.2 in 2010 to 38.9 in 2030 and 41.9 in 2060. The median age in the County of Sonoma is projected to increase from 39.9 in 2010 to 41.7 in 2030 and 42.1 in 2060.

**FIGURE 9-2  
MEDIAN AGE PROJECTIONS  
Sonoma County and California  
2010-2060**



Source: Department of Finance Table P-3, 2013.

## Population by Race and Ethnicity

Table 9-5 summarizes the population by race and ethnicity in Rohnert Park and Sonoma County. In 2012 it was estimated that a majority of the city and county populations were White, 77.7 percent and 80.1 percent, respectively. In 2012 Rohnert Park had a higher percentage of Asian residents (6.5 percent) compared to Sonoma County (4.6 percent) as well as Black residents (2.4 percent compared to 1.6 percent). Since 2000 the population of White residents was the only group to decline in the city, whereas the population of White and “two or more races” were the only groups to decline in the county. It is important to note that Census data is self-reported; therefore, fewer persons may have identified as being White or “two or more races” in 2012 as they did in 2000. Rohnert Park’s Hispanic/Latino population increased from 5,731 (22.1 percent) in 2000 to 10,018 (24.4 percent) in 2012. In 2012 the city had a slightly lower percentage of Hispanic/Latino residents compared to the county as a whole (24.4 percent for Rohnert Park compared to 25.2 percent for Sonoma County). Rohnert Park’s American Indian/Alaskan Native population increased (from 202 to 337 between 2000 and 2012).

Racial/Ethnic Group	TABLE 9-5 RACE AND ETHNICITY City of Rohnert Park and Sonoma County 2000-2012							
	2000				2012			
	Rohnert Park Number	Rohnert Park Percent	Sonoma County Number	Sonoma County Percent	Rohnert Park Number	Rohnert Park Percent	Sonoma County Number	Sonoma County Percent
<b>Not Hispanic or Latino</b>								
White	31,266	74.0%	341,686	74.5%	26,130	63.6%	320,459	65.6%
Black	799	1.9%	6,116	1.3%	706	1.7%	6,901	1.4%
American Indian and Alaska Native	202	0.5%	3,477	0.8%	337	0.8%	3,743	0.8%
Asian or Pacific Islander	2,488	5.9%	14,614	3.4%	2,203	5.4%	21,258	4.4%
Some other race alone	119	0.3%	921	0.2%	129	0.3%	1,275	0.3%
Two or more races <sup>1</sup>	1,631	3.9%	12,289	2.8%	1,562	3.8%	11,361	2.3%
Sub-Total	36,505	86.4%	379,103	82.7%	31,067	75.6%	364,997	74.8%
<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>								
White	2,641	6.3%	32,523	7.1%	5,813	14.1%	71,183	14.5%
Black	34	0.1%	406	0.1%	280	2.8%	885	0.2%
American Indian and Alaska Native	127	0.3%	1,912	0.4%	59	0.7%	2,545	0.5%
Asian or Pacific Islander	45	0.1%	418	0.1%	451	1.1%	842	0.2%
Some other race alone	2,298	5.4%	37,796	8.2%	2,753	6.7%	41,714	8.5%
Two or more races	586	1.4%	6,456	1.4%	662	1.6%	6,071	1.2%
<i>Subtotal</i>	5,731	13.6%	79,511	17.3%	10,018	24.4%	123,240	25.2%
<i>Total<sup>1</sup></i>	<b>42,236</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>458,614</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>41,085</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>488,237</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: 2000 U.S. Census; and 2010-2012 ACS Data.

According to the 2010-2011 County of Sonoma Local Economic Report, the race-ethnicity distribution in the county as a whole is changing rapidly due to an aging White population and a younger Hispanic/Latino population. More than 70 percent of the Hispanic/Latino population in the county is under the age of 35, whereas more than 60 percent of the White population is over the age of 35. Through 2050 the White population is projected to decrease 8 percent per decade and the Hispanic/Latino population is projected to increase 7 percent per decade. In 2050 the Hispanic/Latino population is projected to make up over 50 percent of the county's population.

## **Employment by Industry**

### **Labor Force Size and Distribution**

The “labor force” is defined as the number of residents, age 16 or older, who are employed and/or unemployed, but actively seeking work. This includes residents who may be employed in Rohnert Park or elsewhere. The members of the labor force who are employed in non-military jobs are referred to as the “civilian labor force.”

Table 9-6 summarizes Rohnert Park and Sonoma County’s labor force characteristics. In 2000 the city had a larger labor force participation rate (72.1 percent) compared to the county as a whole (66.9 percent), while in 2012 the city had a slightly smaller labor force participation rate (70.2 percent) compared to the county as a whole (72.2 percent). Armed forces employment in Rohnert Park has made up a small fraction of the labor force at only 0.4 and 0.2 percent in 2000 and 2012, respectively. Females accounted for a similar portion of the labor force in 2012 in both Sonoma County and Rohnert Park (49.8 percent and 47.1 percent, respectively). In 2012 the unemployment rate was 8.3 percent in Rohnert Park and seven percent in Sonoma County. According to the 2010-2012 American Community Survey, in 2012 the unemployment rate in California was 7.2 percent, lower than both Rohnert Park and Sonoma County.

**TABLE 9-6**  
**LABOR FORCE CHARACTERISTICS**  
**City of Rohnert Park and Sonoma County**  
**2000-2012**

Labor Force	2000				2012			
	Rohnert Park		Sonoma County		Rohnert Park		Sonoma County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Population 16 and older	32,871	100.0%	359,736	100.0%	34,088	100.0%	395,091	100.0%
In the Labor Force	23,687	72.1%	240,198	66.8%	23,918	70.2%	259,181	72.2%
Civilian Labor Force	23,547	71.6%	239,445	66.6%	23,859	70.0%	258,426	72.0%
Employed	22,617	95.5%	229,227	95.4%	21,013	87.9%	230,881	89.1%
Unemployed	930	3.9%	10,218	4.3%	2,846	11.9%	27,545	10.6%
Armed Forces Employment	140	0.4%	753	0.2%	59	0.2%	755	0.2%
Not in the Labor Force	9,184	27.9%	119,538	33.2%	10,170	29.8%	135,910	37.8%
Females Age 16 and Older	17,289	52.6%	184,912	51.4%	18,008	52.8%	202,858	56.5%
Female in the Labor Force	11,394	48.1%	111,671	46.5%	11,900	49.8%	122,056	47.1%
Female Civilian Labor Force	11,371	48.0%	111,518	46.4%	11,900	49.8%	121,952	47.1%
Female Employed	10,820	45.7%	106,637	44.4%	10,717	44.8%	110,485	42.6%

Sources: 2000 U.S. Census and 2010-2012 ACS Survey Data.

## **Civilian Employment Profile**

Table 9-7 summarizes the occupational characteristics of the civilian labor force for Rohnert Park and Sonoma County. In 2012 about 60.5 percent of civilian workers in Rohnert Park worked in sales and office (31.3 percent) and management and business (28.3 percent). These occupations make up the top two occupations in Rohnert Park. Relatively higher paying jobs are in both categories, except for certain sales positions, translating into higher incomes for residents engaged in these activities. The top third job occupation in Rohnert Park was services (24.1 percent), which is generally not as high-paying. Like Rohnert Park, the top three occupations in the county include management and business (34.7 percent), sales and office (25.8 percent), and services (20.1 percent). Eighty-five percent of Rohnert Park's civilian labor force is employed in the private sector (private wage, salary workers, and self-employed workers), while 15 percent are government workers. Similarly, 86.2 percent of the county's civilian labor force is privately employed, while 11.7 percent are government workers. A very small percentage of both the city and county's civilian labor force consists of unpaid family workers. Rohnert Park's civilian labor force is heavily concentrated in educational, health, and social services (18.5 percent) as well as in the retail sector of the economy (18.0 percent); 13.4 percent of the city's civilian labor force is in the arts, entertainment, and recreation sector; and 10.9 percent is in the professional and scientific sector. The county's civilian labor force is concentrated in the education, health, and social services sector (20.8 percent); retail trade (12.9 percent); professional and scientific sector (11.9 percent); and arts, entertainment, and recreation sector (10.2 percent).

TABLE 9-7 CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS				
City of Rohnert Park and Sonoma County 2012				
Characteristics	Rohnert Park		Sonoma County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Total Civilian Labor Force</b>	<b>21,013</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>230,881</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Occupations</b>				
Management, Business, Science, and Arts	5,950	28.3%	80,034	34.7%
Services	5,068	24.1%	46,506	20.1%
Sales and Office	6,571	31.3%	59,458	25.8%
Natural Resources, Construction, and Maintenance Occupations	1,497	7.1%	23,148	10.0%
Production, Transportation, and Material Moving	1,927	9.2%	21,735	9.4%
<b>Class of Worker</b>				
Private Wage and Salary Workers	16,244	77.3%	172,085	74.5%
Government Workers	3,144	15.0%	31,533	13.7%
Self-employed Workers	1,613	7.7%	26,920	11.7%
Unpaid Family Workers	12	0.1%	343	0.1%
<b>Industry Sector</b>				
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, etc.	102	0.5%	7,176	3.1%
Construction	778	3.7%	15,627	6.8%
Manufacturing	1,458	6.9%	22,816	9.9%
Wholesale Trade	728	3.5%	6,627	2.9%
Retail Trade	3,776	18.0%	29,836	12.9%
Transportation and Warehousing	863	4.1%	7,602	3.3%
Information	566	2.7%	4,471	1.9%
Finance, Insurance, etc.	1,435	6.8%	15,058	6.5%
Professional, Scientific, etc.	2,263	10.8%	27,382	11.9%
Educational, Health, and Social Services	3,889	18.5%	48,060	20.8%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation	2,812	13.4%	23,633	10.2%
Other Services	1,027	4.9%	12,558	5.4%
Public Administration	1,316	6.3%	10,035	4.3%

Source: 2010-2012 ACS Survey Data.

As shown in Table 9-8, in 2012 about 24.8 percent of the city's residents worked within the city and 75.2 percent commuted to work locations outside Rohnert Park. Most of those working outside the city were employed elsewhere in the county (54.7 percent). Overall, about 80 percent of the city's residents worked in Sonoma County. About 20.2 percent worked in another part of California and the balance (0.3 percent) worked outside the state.

TABLE 9-8 WHERE ROHNERT PARK RESIDENTS WORK		
City of Rohnert Park 2012		
Place of Work	Rohnert Park	
	Number	Percent
Rohnert Park	5,038	24.8%
Other Sonoma County	11,118	54.7%
<i>Subtotal Sonoma County</i>	<i>16,156</i>	<i>79.5%</i>
Other California	4,107	20.2%
Outside California	51	0.3%
<b>Total Employed Residents</b>	<b>20,314</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: 2010-2012 ACS Survey Data.

## Household and Job Growth Trends

ABAG's *Jobs-Housing Connections Strategy* report (2012) estimates and projects the distribution of population, households, employment, income, and labor force for 2010 through 2040. The *Jobs-Housing Connections Strategy* forecasts are based on regional and county growth models, the local availability of land, local development policies, density assumptions, and travel demand.

The *Jobs-Housing Connections Strategy* provides estimates for the area within Rohnert Park's current city limits, as well as a larger subregional study area that encompasses large areas outside of the city. The Housing Element focuses on the former in order to provide consistency with ABAG's projected housing needs discussed in the next section.

Table 9-9 compares household and job growth from 2010 to 2040 between Rohnert Park and the neighboring cities of Cotati, Petaluma, and Santa Rosa. Within the 30-year period Rohnert Park's household growth (24 percent) is projected to be slightly lower than Santa Rosa's (27 percent), but higher than Cotati's (18 percent) and Petaluma's (13 percent). This translates into an average annual growth rate of 0.8 percent in Rohnert Park, 0.9 percent in Santa Rosa, 0.6 percent in Cotati, and 0.4 percent in Petaluma. Rohnert Park is forecasted to have the highest job growth of the four cities (39 percent) compared to Santa Rosa (38 percent), Cotati (32 percent), and Petaluma (34 percent). Rohnert Park's higher job growth is likely due to the construction of the Graton Rancheria Casino located just off of Highway 101. Since its completion in 2013, the casino has added about 2,000 jobs. The Casino is not within the city limits of Rohnert Park, but it is immediately adjacent to the city boundary on lands controlled by the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria. More employment is expected as new businesses are established or expanded to serve casino patrons. The average annual growth rate for employment for both Rohnert Park and Santa Rosa over the 30-year period is 1.3 percent, while the average annual growth rate for both Cotati and Petaluma is 1.1 percent.

TABLE 9-9 HOUSEHOLD AND JOB GROWTH City of Rohnert Park and Neighboring Cities 2010-2040					
	2010	2040	Difference	Percent Change	Average Annual Growth Rate
<b>Households</b>					
Rohnert Park	15,810	19,590	3,780	24%	0.8%
Cotati	2,980	3,530	550	18%	0.6%
Petaluma	21,740	24,610	2,880	13%	0.4%
Santa Rosa	63,590	80,560	16,970	27%	0.9%
<b>Jobs</b>					
Rohnert Park	11,730	16,320	4,590	39%	1.3%
Cotati	2,920	3,860	940	32%	1.1%
Petaluma	28,830	38,690	9,860	34%	1.1%
Santa Rosa	75,460	103,930	28,470	38%	1.3%

Source: ABAG Jobs-Housing Connections Strategy, 2012.

According to employment projections provided in the ABAG Final Forecast of Jobs, Population and Housing (July 2013), the number of residents employed in Rohnert Park is anticipated to increase. As shown in Table 9-10, between 2010 and 2040 the city's employment is projected to increase by 39 percent from 11,730 to 16,320, respectively. It is estimated that the opening of the Graton Resort and Casino added about 2,000 jobs in the vicinity of Rohnert Park. As a result of the new economic activity from the Casino, additional jobs are expected in nearby Rohnert Park commercial areas.

From 2010-2040 the number of employed residents in Sonoma County as a whole is projected to increase from 192,010 to 257,460, or a 34 percent. While the percentage of jobs in the county is projected to increase by 1.1 percent annually, the number of jobs located in Rohnert Park is forecast to increase 1.3 percent each year.

TABLE 9-10 PROJECTED EMPLOYMENT GROWTH City of Rohnert Park and Sonoma County 2010-2040				
	2010	Projected 2040	Percent Growth 2010-2040	Average Annual Growth Rate
Rohnert Park	11,730	16,320	39%	1.3%
Sonoma County	192,010	257,470	34%	1.1%

Source: ABAG Final Forecast of Jobs, Population and Housing 2013.

## Graton Rancheria Casino

On November 5, 2013, Graton Resort and Casino opened. The Casino is located off Highway 101 just outside the city limits to the west. The Casino has created more than 750 construction jobs and more than 2,000 permanent jobs. The explosion in employment opportunities is expected to continue to bring more people to Rohnert Park creating greater demand for housing. Based on conversations with stakeholders at the Stakeholder Workshop, it seems that rents have been increasing significantly in the short time that the casino has been open. As demand for housing increases, cost of housing will likely continue to increase accordingly. This may pose a constraint on housing availability, especially affordable housing.

## Household Characteristics

Although the characteristics of individual residents are important to understanding the growth and evolution of a city, the more useful unit for analysis concerning housing needs is the household. The U.S. Census Bureau considers all people living in the same dwelling unit to be a household. This includes individuals living alone, roommates sharing an apartment, a family of four in a single-family house, or a single-parent living in a multifamily apartment complex. A dwelling unit is defined as “a house, an apartment, a group of rooms, or a single room, occupied as separate living quarters, or if vacant, intended for occupancy.”

## Household Growth Trends

According to the 2010-2012 American Community Survey, in 2012 there were 15,875 households in Rohnert Park, representing a 24 percent increase in the number of households since 2000 (15,503). The number of households in Rohnert Park peaked in 2008 at 16,248 and then began to decline likely in response to the 2008 housing market crisis. The number of total households saw a brief increase in 2011 to 16,041, only to decline again in 2012. The DOF reflects a similar peak in occupied households in 2008, however, between 2010 and 2013 the number of households remained constant; no new housing units were built in this time period and vacancy rates were held constant. Although the ACS reports distinct changes in household occupancy, the data should be interpreted with caution as the margin of error averages +/- 534 households for the years 2008, 2012, and 2013.

TABLE 9-11 HOUSEHOLD GROWTH TRENDS		
Rohnert Park 2000-2012		
	Number of Households per U.S. Census	Number of Households per Department of Finance
2000	15,503	15,503
2008	16,248	15,902
2010	15,808	15,808
2011	16,041	15,808
2012	15,875	15,808
2013	--	15,808

Source: 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census Data; 2006-2008, 2008-2010, 2009-2011, and 2010-2012 ACS Data; Department of Finance Table E-8, 2000-2010 and Table E-5, 2010-2013.

## **Household Types**

As reported by the 2010-2012 ACS, families made up more than half (56.8 percent) of Rohnert Park's households. Families, as defined by the U.S. Census, "consist of two or more people (one of whom is the householder) related by birth, marriage, or adoption residing in the same housing unit," and includes married couples (71 percent of total family households) and other family types, such as single parents (13.8 percent of total family households). The number of family households has declined since 2000, while the number of non-family households has increased. This could be partially attributed to increased enrollment at Sonoma State University as well as an increase in the city's senior population living alone. According to the Sonoma State University Academic Affairs, since 1999 the student population has increased by a little over 1,900 students (a 30 percent increase). Non-family households made up about 43.2 percent of the households in the city in 2012. Most of the non-family households were single person households (73.9 percent of non-family households or about 31.9 percent of the total households). Similar to Rohnert Park, family households in the county decreased in numbers from 2000 to 2012.

About 26.0 percent of Rohnert Park's total households included children age 18 or younger, which is a decrease from the 2000 estimate of 38.0 percent. The percentage of Rohnert Park's senior households (age 65 or older) has increased from 2,663 in 2000 (17.2 percent of total households) to 3,982 (25.1 percent of total households) in 2012 (a 49.5 percent increase). In the county 27.8 percent of households had children under 18 years old and 37.4 percent of households were senior households. While the percentage of senior households in the city was smaller than that of the county, the city's senior population is expected to increase as more baby boomers continue to reach retirement age.

## Household and Family Size

Table 9-12 also shows that the average family size in Rohnert Park remained steady at 3.25 from 2007 to 2012. This was similar to the average family size for Sonoma County of 3.20. The average household size in Rohnert Park increased slightly from 2.54 in 2007 to 2.57 in 2012, while Sonoma County had an average household size of 2.60 for both years.

Household Type	TABLE 9-12 HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION City of Rohnert Park and Sonoma County 2000-2012							
	2000				2012			
	Rohnert Park Number	Rohnert Park Percent	Sonoma County Number	Sonoma County Percent	Rohnert Park Number	Rohnert Park Percent	Sonoma County Number	Sonoma County Percent
Total Households	15,503	100.0%	172,403	100.0%	15,875	100.0%	183,773	100.0%
Family Households	9,799	63.2%	112,397	65.2%	9,021	56.8%	116,255	63.3%
Married Couple	7,239	73.8%	86,712	77.1%	6,402	71.0%	87,406	75.2%
Other Family Households	2,560	26.1%	25,685	22.9%	2,619	29.0%	28,849	15.7%
Non-Family Households	5,704	36.8%	60,006	34.8%	6,854	43.2%	67,518	36.7%
Living Alone	3,727	65.3%	44,340	73.9%	5,063	73.9%	51,383	76.1%
Other Non-Family Households	1,977	34.7%	15,666	26.1%	1,791	26.1%	16,135	23.9%
Households with Children < 18	5,891	38.0%	59,796	34.7%	4,135	26.0%	51,015	27.8%
Households with Individuals 65 and over	2,663	17.2%	41,314	24.0%	3,982	25.1%	68,740	37.4%
Average Household Size	2.54	NA%	2.55	NA	2.57	NA	2.60	NA
Average Family Size	3.25	NA%	NA	NA	3.25	NA	3.20	NA

Sources: 2000 U.S. Census Data and 2010-2012 ACS Data.

## Housing by Tenure

Table 9-13 describes the tenure and the type of occupied housing units in Rohnert Park, according to the 2000 U.S. Census Data and the 2010-2012 ACS. In 2000, of the 15,553 occupied units in the city, 58.1 percent were owner-occupied and 41.9 percent renter-occupied. In 2012 the overall tenure pattern in the city shifted slightly to include a greater number of renter-occupied units (48.1 percent) compared to owner-occupied units (51.9 percent).

Of the total occupied housing units in the city in 2012 (15,875), 45.2 percent were single family detached homes, 10.1 percent were single family attached homes and duplexes, 8 percent were in 3 to 4 unit buildings, and 28.7 percent were in buildings with five or more units. Approximately 7 percent of the city's total occupied housing units were mobile homes. There has been an increase in the percentage of multifamily units and a decrease in the percentages of single family detached units and mobile homes; however, single family detached homes continue to be the most prevalent type of housing in Rohnert Park.

**TABLE 9-13  
CHARACTERISTICS OF OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS**

**City of Rohnert Park  
2000-2012**

<b>Type and Tenure</b>	<b>2000</b>		<b>2012</b>	
	<b>Number of Units</b>	<b>Percent of Total Occupied Units</b>	<b>Number of Units</b>	<b>Percent of Total Occupied Units</b>
Single Family Detached	7,559	48.6%	7,181	45.2%
Owner-Occupied	6,331	40.7%	5,688	35.8%
Renter-Occupied	1,228	7.9%	1,493	9.4%
Single Family Attached	1,682	10.8%	1,602	10.1%
Owner-Occupied	1,156	7.4%	969	6.1%
Renter-Occupied	526	3.4%	633	4.0%
Duplex	106	0.7%	113	0.7%
Owner-Occupied	22	0.1%	33	0.2%
Renter-Occupied	84	0.5%	80	0.5%
3 to 4 Units	812	5.2%	1,266	8.0%
Owner-Occupied	127	0.7%	172	1.1%
Renter-Occupied	685	4.4%	1,094	6.9%
5+ Units	3,966	25.5%	4,562	28.7%
Owner-Occupied	272	1.7%	374	2.4%
Renter-Occupied	3,694	23.8%	4,180	26.3%
Mobile Homes	1,316	8.5%	1,151	7.3%
Owner-Occupied	1,108	7.1%	1,010	6.4%
Renter-Occupied	208	1.3%	141	0.9%
Other	52	0.3%	0	0.0%
Owner-Occupied	24	0.2%	0	0.0%
Renter-Occupied	28	0.2%	0	0.0%
<b>Total Occupied Units</b>	<b>15,553</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>15,875</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Total Owner-Occupied</b>	<b>9,040</b>	<b>58.1%</b>	<b>8,246</b>	<b>51.9%</b>
<b>Total Renter-Occupied</b>	<b>6,513</b>	<b>41.9%</b>	<b>7,629</b>	<b>48.1%</b>

Sources: 2000 U.S. Census Data and 2010-2012 ACS Data.

Table 9-14 summarizes household tenure by age in the city and the county for 2000 and 2012. Units occupied by persons between the ages of 35 and 54, as well as 55 and over, made up the highest percentage of owner-occupied units in Rohnert Park (45.2 and 61.1 percent, respectively). The highest percentage of units rented was by persons between the ages of 15 and 34. The percentage of homeowners between the ages of 35 and 54 decreased 9.6 percent from 54.8 percent to 45.2 percent. The percentage of renters between the age of 15 and 34 also decreased from 47.4 percent in 2000 to 40.4 percent in 2012. In 2012 people age 55 and over owned approximately two-thirds as many units as they rented; however, the percentage of renters 55 and older has increased significantly since 2000 (from 17 percent to 30.7 percent). This can be attributed to a growing senior population as the more baby boomers reach retirement. The city and county exhibited similar ownership and rental trends, although young people renting in Rohnert Park made up a higher percentage of total renters, whereas those between the ages of 35 and 54 made up a higher percentage of total renters in the county. This is likely attributed to the presence of Sonoma State University. Also, of total senior households (age 55 and older), a higher percentage in the county owned (58.8 percent) than in Rohnert Park (45.4 percent). The demand for senior rental units in Rohnert Park as a whole is likely to be higher than the county.

**TABLE 9-14**  
**TENURE BY AGE OF HOUSEHOLDER**  
**City of Rohnert Park and Sonoma County**  
**2000-2012**

	2000				2012			
	Rohnert Park		Sonoma County		Rohnert Park		Sonoma County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Owner-Occupied Units</b>								
15 to 34	1,233	13.6%	9,360	8.5%	774	9.4%	6,707	6.1%
35 to 54	4,964	54.8%	52,913	47.9%	3,730	45.2%	38,557	35.1%
55 and over <sup>1</sup>	2,857	31.6%	48,202	43.6%	3,742	45.4%	64,544	58.8%
65 and over	1,596	17.6%	29,427	26.7%	1,388	15.7%	28,687	25.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,054</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>110,475</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>8,246</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>109,808</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Renter-Occupied Unit</b>								
15 to 34	3,058	47.4%	21,240	34.3%	2,901	40.4%	22,342	30.2%
35 to 54	2,296	35.6%	27,815	44.9%	2,523	35.1%	31,399	42.5%
55 and over <sup>1</sup>	1,095	17.0%	12,873	20.8%	2,205	30.7%	20,224	27.3%
65 and over	701	10.9%	7,836	12.7%	701	10.3%	8,614	13.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,449</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>61,928</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>7,179</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>73,965</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

<sup>1</sup>Rohnert Park seniors identified as 55 years and older.

Sources: 2000 U.S. Census Data and 2010-2012 ACS Data.

## Section 9.3 Housing Needs Analysis

### Housing Characteristics

A community's housing stock includes all residential dwelling units located within the jurisdiction. The characteristics of the housing stock, including density, type, age and condition, tenure, vacancy, costs, and affordability are important in determining the housing needs for a community. This section details the characteristics of Rohnert Park housing in order to identify how well the current housing stock meets the needs of city residents.

### Housing Unit Types

Table 9-15 summarizes California Department of Finance (DOF) housing unit types and total units in Rohnert Park and Sonoma County. According to DOF, in 2013 there were 16,551 housing units in the city. The distribution of unit types in Rohnert Park and Sonoma County varied. Sonoma County had approximately 20.9 percent more single family homes (75.5 percent compared to 54.6 percent in Rohnert Park), and Rohnert Park had a larger proportion of multifamily units (36.1 percent compared to 19.0 percent in Sonoma County), especially structures with five or more units (28.3 percent in Rohnert Park compared to 12.4 percent in the county). Mobile homes also constituted a larger portion of the city's housing stock compared to the county (9.4 percent in Rohnert Park and 5.5 percent in Sonoma County).

TABLE 9-15 HOUSING UNIT TYPES				
Unit Type	Rohnert Park		Sonoma County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Single Family Detached	7,562	45.7%	141,095	68.5%
Single Family Attached	1,467	8.9%	14,386	7.0%
2-4 Units	1,289	7.8%	13,494	6.6%
5+ Units	4,683	28.3%	25,489	12.4%
Mobile Homes	1,550	9.4%	11,401	5.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,551</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>205,865</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: Department of Finance E-5, 2013.

Table 9-16 displays residential development trends within the city over the past 20 years. The Department of Finance estimates are shown for 1990, 2000, and 2012. The city's housing stock has remained predominately single family during the past 20 years. However, single family housing decreased as a percentage of total units by about 3.5 percent from 2000 to 2012, while multifamily housing increased by 18.5 percent. The percentage of mobile homes also increased by 4.7 percent between 2000 and 2012 from 15.1 percent to 17.2 percent.

Unit Type	TABLE 9-16 HOUSING UNIT CHANGES							
	1990		2000		2012		Changes 2000-2012	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Single Family	8,143	58.5%	9,354	59.1%	9,029	54.6%	-325	-3.5%
Multifamily	4,306	30.9%	5,041	31.9%	5,972	36.1%	931	18.5%
Mobile Homes	1,466	10.5%	1,413	15.1%	1,550	17.2%	137	9.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,915</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>15,808</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>16,551</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>743</b>	<b>4.7%</b>

Source: Department of Finance E-8, 1990 and 2000; E-5, 2012.

## Vacant Units

Vacancy rate can be a good indicator of how effectively for-sale and rental units are meeting the current demand for housing in a community. Vacancy rates of 6 or 7 percent for rental housing and 1 to 2 percent for ownership housing are generally considered optimum when there is a balance between the demand and supply for housing.<sup>1</sup> A higher vacancy rate may indicate an excess supply of units and, therefore, price depreciation, while a low vacancy rate may indicate a shortage of units and escalation of housing prices.

<sup>1</sup>Giang Hoang-Burdette, Nobody's Home: California Residential Vacancy Rates, May 9, 2012; Joan C. Fahrenhold, Associated Press, America's Sickest Housing Markets, 2012; Emett Pierce, San Diego Union Tribune, Uptick in County Rental Vacancy Rates, Tenants Together, June 6, 2008; William Poe, Area Landlords High on Healthy Rental Market, July 27, 2012; Housing New York City, 2008; Mary Ellen Podmolik, Chicago's a Renter's Market, but Vacancies, Delinquencies on Rise, Census Paints a Bleak Picture of Arizona Housing, 2011; Rolf Boone, The Olympian, Thurston Apartment Vacancy Rates Up a Bit, 2012; Bill Conerly, Housing Recovery Progressing Very Slowly, Businomics, 2011.

As shown in Table 9-17, according to the ACS five-year estimates in 2012, Rohnert Park had a total of 16,801 housing units; 849 (or 5.1 percent) of which were vacant. In contrast to the city, Sonoma County's housing stock was 9.6 percent vacant; however, this higher vacancy rate in the county is due largely to the higher percentage of houses for seasonal and recreational use. In Rohnert Park approximately 2.5 percent (420 units) of vacant units were for rent, while less than 1 percent (109 units) was for sale. The 2012 vacancy rates are far below what is considered optimum indicating a shortage of both rental and for-sale units; the shortage may negatively impact housing affordability for all income levels. Sonoma County, on the other hand, experienced a 1.9 percent vacancy rate of rental units and a 1.0 percent vacancy rate of for-sale units in 2012. Both the city and county vacancy rates are much lower than the optimum vacancy rates of 6 or 7 percent for rental housing and 1 to 2 percent for ownership housing.

<b>TABLE 9-17 VACANT UNITS</b>				
<b>City of Rohnert Park 2012</b>				
	<b>Rohnert Park</b>		<b>Sonoma County</b>	
	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent Vacant</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent Vacant</b>
For rent	420	2.5%	3,876	1.9%
For sale only	109	0.6%	2,052	1.0%
Rented or sold, not occupied	16	0.1%	1,162	0.6%
For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use	182	1.1%	8,699	4.3%
For migrant workers	0	0.0%	39	0.0%
Other vacant	122	0.7%	3,917	1.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>849</b>	<b>5.1%</b>	<b>19,745</b>	<b>9.6%</b>
<b>Total Units</b>	<b>16,801</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>204,652</b>	<b>100%</b>

Sources: 2008-2012 ACS Data.

### Housing Unit Conditions and Rehabilitation Need

Generally, housing older than 30 years of age will require minor repairs and modernization improvements. Housing units over 50 years of age are more likely to require major rehabilitation such as roofing, plumbing, and electrical system repairs.

The City performed its last housing conditions survey in November 1999. This survey consisted of the visual inspection of the older neighborhoods in Rohnert Park, including Sections A, B, C, E, and L, as well as all five of the mobile home parks. A total of 2,898 conventionally-constructed residences and 1,466 mobile home units were visually surveyed. The overwhelming majority of units surveyed were found to be in "sound" condition, with the appearance of regular maintenance of the home and landscaping. The City's mobile homes were also found to be well-maintained.

Table 9-18 depicts the statistics on the age of the housing units in Rohnert Park based on the 2010-2012 American Community Survey. An estimated 51.4 percent of the housing units in the city are over 30 years of age and only 3.8 percent are over 50 years of age. In comparison, the ACS reports that 57.4 percent of Sonoma County's housing stock is 30 years or older and 24.1 percent is 50 years or older. Rohnert Park has a significantly smaller percent of housing units over 50 years of age compared to the county because of its relatively recent development and incorporation in 1962.

TABLE 9-18 HOUSING UNIT AGE		
City of Rohnert Park 2012		
Year Structure Built	Number	Percent of Total
2010 or later	0	0%
2000-2009	1,142	6.8%
1990 to 1999	1,766	10.5%
1980 to 1989	5,265	31.3%
1970 to 1979	6,416	38.2%
1960 to 1969	1,567	9.3%
1950 to 1959	427	2.5%
1940 to 1949	46	0.3%
1939 or earlier	172	1.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,801</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<i>30 years or older (built before 1980)</i>	<i>8,628</i>	<i>51.4%</i>
<i>50 years or older (built before 1960)</i>	<i>645</i>	<i>3.8%</i>

Source: 2010-2012 ACS Data.

While the majority of the housing units within the city are in relatively good condition, as the existing stock ages, the number of housing units needing rehabilitation could increase without proper maintenance.

## Housing Costs and Affordability

Housing affordability is a major consideration in providing suitable housing. The cost of housing itself is not a problem, unless households in the area cannot find adequately sized units at an affordable price. Affordability is defined as paying 30 percent or less of gross monthly household income on housing costs, based on both State and Federal standards for households of lower income. The following section discusses current income levels and ability to pay for housing compared with housing costs. Since above moderate-income households do not generally have problems locating affordable units, affordable units are frequently defined as those reasonably priced for households that are very low- to moderate-income.

### Housing Costs and Wages

Housing cost is generally the single, greatest expense item for households. For owner-occupied households housing expenses consist of mortgage and interest payments, insurance, maintenance, and property taxes. For renter-occupied households housing expenses consist of rent and utilities. Higher-income households may choose to spend greater portions of their income on housing expenses and still have sufficient money left over for other expenses. However, many lower-income households must involuntarily spend a large share of their income on housing leaving them with less money for other expenses.

Table 9-19 summarizes 2013 information about the relationship between wages and housing costs according to National Low Income Housing Coalition (NLIHC). In general, the Fair Market Rent (FMR) for an area is the amount that would be needed to pay the gross rent (shelter rent plus utilities) of privately owned, decent, safe, and sanitary rental housing of a modest (non-luxury) nature with suitable amenities. In 2013 the FMR for a two-bedroom apartment was \$1,332. In order to afford this level of rent and utilities, without paying more than 30 percent of income on housing, a household must earn \$4,440 monthly or \$53,280 annually. Assuming a 40-hour work week, approximately 49 weeks per year (based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average paid holidays, vacation, and sick leave combined is 24.2 days or 48.5 weeks), this level of income translates to an average housing wage of \$27.18 per hour.

In California a minimum wage worker earns \$8.00 per hour (it is important to note that the minimum wage will rise to \$9.00 per hour in July 2014 and \$10.00 by January 2016, well above the current Federal minimum wage of \$7.25 an hour). In order to afford the FMR for a two-bedroom apartment, a minimum wage earner must work 129 hours per week, 52 weeks per year. Or a household must include 3.2 minimum wage earners working 40 hours per week year round to make the two-bedroom FMR affordable.

In Sonoma County the estimated average wage for a renter is \$14.91. In order to afford the FMR for a two-bedroom apartment at this wage, a household must include 1.7 workers working 40 hours a week year-round and earning the mean renter wage.

<b>TABLE 9-19</b> <b>FAIR MARKET RENT (FMR) AND HOURLY WAGES</b>	
<b>Sonoma County</b> <b>2013</b>	
<b>Housing Costs</b>	
Two Bedroom FMR	\$1,332
Hourly Wage Necessary to Afford 2-Bedroom FMR	\$25.62
Annual Income Needed to Afford 2-Bedroom FMR	\$53,280
Full Time Jobs at Minimum Wage Needed to Afford 2-Bedroom FMR	3.2
<b>Area Median Income</b>	
Annual Area Median Income (AMI)	\$74,900
Rent Affordable at AMI	\$1,873
<b>Renter Households</b>	
Number of Renter Households 2007-2011	70,867
Percent of Total Households 2007-2011	38%
Estimated Mean Renter Hourly Wage (2013)	\$14.91
Rent Affordable at Mean Wage	\$775
Full Time Jobs at Mean Renter Wage Needed to Afford 2 BR FMR	1.7

*Source: National Low Income Housing Coalition, 2013.*

## Housing Affordability

Table 9-20 shows the affordable housing cost guidelines established in Section 50052.5 and 50053 of the California Health and Safety Code. The guidelines are based on the median income calculated by the HCD income limits. As described earlier, the generally accepted definition of housing affordability is for a household to pay no more than 30 percent of its gross annual income on housing. It should be noted that moderate-income households and above typically spend greater than 30 percent on household expenses; therefore, the threshold for overpayment is higher at approximately 35 percent of their income.

TABLE 9-20 HOUSING COST LIMITS BY AREA MEDIAN INCOME LEVEL			
Income Level	Income Limit	For Sale	Rental
Extremely Low	0-30% AMI	30% of 30% of AMI	30% of 30% of AMI
Very Low	31-50% AMI	30% of 50% of AMI	30% of 50% of AMI
Low	51-80% AMI	30% of 70% of AMI	30% of 60% of AMI
Moderate	81-120% AMI	35% of 110% of AMI	35% of 110% of AMI

Note: Affordability levels should be adjusted for household size.

Source: HCD Income Limits, 2014.

HCD establishes household income limits to define households as extremely low-, very low-, low-, or moderate-income level. These income levels vary throughout the state and are based on the area median income of the region and adjusted based on the number of persons per household. The income limits for Sonoma County are shown on Table 9-21. As shown in the table, a family of three with an annual income of \$58,500 or less would be considered a low-income household.

TABLE 9-21 HCD INCOME LIMITS						
Income Level	Sonoma County 2013					
	Persons Per Household					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Extremely Low	\$17,400	\$19,850	\$22,350	\$24,800	\$26,800	\$28,800
Very Low	\$28,950	\$33,050	\$37,200	\$41,300	\$44,650	\$47,950
Low	\$45,500	\$52,000	\$58,500	\$65,000	\$70,200	\$75,400
Median	\$57,800	\$66,100	\$74,350	\$82,600	\$89,200	\$95,800
Moderate	\$69,350	\$79,300	\$89,200	\$99,100	\$107,050	\$114,950

Source: California Department of Housing and Community Development, 2013.

Table 9-22 summarizes 2013 HCD-defined household income limits for very low-, low-, and moderate-income households in Sonoma County (including Rohnert Park) by the number of persons in the household, and shows maximum affordable monthly rents and maximum affordable purchase prices for homes. Households earning the 2013 median income for a family of four in Rohnert Park (\$82,600) could afford to spend up to \$24,780 a year, or \$2,065 per month, on housing without being considered “overpaying.” For renters this is a straightforward calculation, but home ownership costs are less transparent.

A household can typically qualify to purchase a home that is 2.5 to 3.0 times the annual income of that household, depending on the down payment, the level of other long-term obligations (such as a car loan), and interest rates. In practice, the interaction of these factors allows some households to qualify for homes priced at more than three times their annual income, while other households may be limited to purchasing homes no more than two times their annual incomes. These factors - interest rates, insurance, and taxes - are held constant in the table below in order to determine maximum affordable rent and purchase price for households of each income category. The information provided in Table 9-22 realistically reflects the difficulty in affording rent and purchase prices in the city of Rohnert Park.

<b>TABLE 9-22</b> <b>ABILITY TO PAY FOR HOUSING BASED ON HUD INCOME LIMITS</b>						
<b>City of Rohnert Park 2013</b>						
<b>Extremely Low-Income Households at 30% of 2013 Median Family Income</b>						
Number of Persons	1	2	3	4	5	6
Income Level	\$17,400	\$19,850	\$22,350	\$24,800	\$26,800	\$28,800
Max. Monthly Gross Rent (1)	\$435	\$496	\$559	\$620	\$670	\$720
Max. Purchase Price (2)	\$71,393	\$81,445	\$91,703	\$101,755	\$109,961	\$118,167
<b>Very Low-Income Households at 50% of 2013 Median Family Income</b>						
Number of Persons	1	2	3	4	5	6
Income Level	\$28,950	\$33,050	\$37,200	\$41,300	\$44,650	\$47,950
Max. Monthly Gross Rent (1)	\$724	\$826	\$930	\$1,033	\$1,116	\$1,199
Max. Purchase Price (2)	\$118,783	\$135,605	\$152,633	\$169,455	\$183,200	\$196,741
<b>Low-Income Households at 70% of MFI for Sale and 60% of MFI for Rental</b>						
Number of Persons	1	2	3	4	5	6
Income Level for Sale (70% MFI)	\$40,450	\$46,250	\$52,050	\$57,800	\$62,450	\$67,050
Income Level for Rental (60% MFI)	\$34,700	\$39,650	\$44,600	\$49,550	\$53,500	\$57,500
Max. Monthly Gross Rent (1)	\$868	\$991	\$1,115	\$1,239	\$1,338	\$1,438
Max. Purchase Price (2)	\$165,968	\$189,765	\$213,563	\$237,155	\$256,235	\$275,108
<b>Median-Income Households at 100% of 2013 Median Family Income</b>						
Number of Persons	1	2	3	4	5	6
Income Level	\$57,800	\$66,100	\$74,350	\$82,600	\$89,200	\$95,800
Max. Monthly Gross Rent (1)	\$1,445	\$1,653	\$1,859	\$2,065	\$2,230	\$2,395
Max. Purchase Price (2)	\$237,155	\$271,211	\$305,061	\$338,911	\$365,991	\$393,071
<b>Moderate-Income Households at 110% of 2013 Median Family Income</b>						
Number of Persons	1	2	3	4	5	6
Income Level	\$63,600	\$72,700	\$81,750	\$90,850	\$98,150	\$105,400
Max. Monthly Gross Rent (1)	\$1,855	\$2,120	\$2,384	\$2,650	\$2,863	\$3,074
Max. Purchase Price (2)	\$304,445	\$348,006	\$391,327	\$434,887	\$469,832	\$504,536

<sup>1</sup> Assumes that 30 percent of income (or 35 percent for moderate-income) is available for either: monthly rent, including utilities; or mortgage payment, taxes, mortgage insurance, and homeowners insurance.

<sup>2</sup> Assumes 95 percent loan at 5 percent annual interest rate and 30-year term; assumes taxes, mortgage insurance, and homeowners insurance account for 21 percent of total monthly payments.

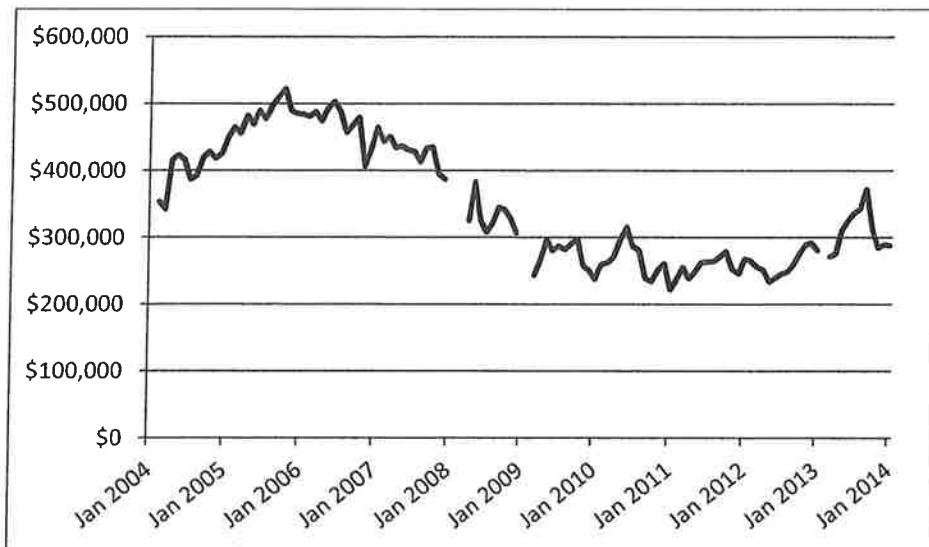
Source: City of Rohnert Park, <<http://www.ci.rohnert-park.ca.us/Modules>ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=797>>, accessed on December 27, 2013.

## For-Sale Housing

Figure 9-3 shows the median sales prices for homes in Rohnert Park between February 2004 and January 2014. The median sales price significantly increased between early 2004 and late 2005. Similar to cities throughout California, after 2005 the housing market slowdown and high foreclosure rates affected sales prices in Rohnert Park. Between late 2005 and early 2011, the median sales price decreased by almost 60 percent, making housing more affordable for new buyers, but trapping many homeowners with “underwater” mortgages. In 2012 prices began to increase only to decrease again in late 2013/early 2014. The median sales price of \$312,200 in October 2013 and \$288,200 in January 2014 was out of reach for lower-income families, but within reach for most moderate-income families in Sonoma County. Despite the sudden drop in prices, it is expected that housing prices will increase during the Housing Element planning period.

**FIGURE 9-3  
MEDIAN SALES PRICE**

**City of Rohnert Park  
2014**



Note: Gaps in the graph are due to missing data.

Source: [zillow.com](http://zillow.com), February 26, 2014.

Table 9-23 shows the median housing price by number of bedrooms and price per square foot for homes in the city of Rohnert Park for 2008, 2012, and 2013. While the median sales price for homes of all sizes is affordable to moderate-income households, lower-income households are not able to afford any size home. A two-person moderate-income household can afford a two-bedroom home at \$165,500 and a three-bedroom home at \$277,500. A three- to four-person moderate-income household with a maximum purchasing price ranging from \$365,991 to \$439,230 can afford all for-sale homes with sales price ranging from \$165,500 for a two-bedroom unit to \$328,000 for a four-bedroom unit. A low-income household of four with a maximum purchasing price of \$266,697, which would generally need a three-bedroom home, could only afford the median sales price of a two-bedroom home (\$165,500).

<b>TABLE 9-23 MEDIAN SALES PRICE AND PRICE PER SQUARE FOOT</b>						
<b>Number of Bedrooms</b>	<b>2008</b>		<b>2012</b>		<b>2013</b>	
	<b>Median Price</b>	<b>Average Price Per sq. ft.</b>	<b>Median Price</b>	<b>Average Price Per sq. ft.</b>	<b>Median Price</b>	<b>Average Price Per sq. ft.</b>
1 Bedroom	--	--	--	--	--	--
2 Bedroom	\$220,000	\$208	\$152,250	\$133	\$165,500	\$158
3 Bedroom	\$349,500	\$225	\$291,000	\$195	\$277,500	\$203
4+ Bedroom	\$402,500	\$210	\$369,000	\$187	\$328,000	\$190
All Properties	\$331,000	\$216	\$285,000	\$176	\$271,500	\$187

Note: Data for 2013 is from November to February.

Source: [www.trulia.com](http://www.trulia.com), Rohnert Park Trends, February 26, 2014.

Table 9-24 compares home sale prices in Rohnert Park to neighboring communities within Sonoma County. Every community (except The Sea Ranch) in Sonoma County experienced an increase in median prices from December 2012 to December 2013. As shown, Rohnert Park generally had a lower median sales price (\$317,750) compared to other incorporated cities in Sonoma County. The city of Petaluma had the highest median sales price in December 2013 of \$500,000 while Cotati had the largest increase in sales price from \$242,750 in December 2012 to \$420,500 in December 2013 (73.2 percent). However, Rohnert Park experienced a significant increase in median sales price between December 2012 and December 2013, with an increase of 15.6 percent. Only one incorporated and three unincorporated communities had lower median sales prices in December 2013: Cloverdale (\$315,000), Forestville (\$266,500), Guerneville (\$251,250), and Monte Rio (\$282,500).

<b>TABLE 9-24 MEDIAN SALES PRICE COMPARISONS</b>				
<b>Sonoma County and Cities and Unincorporated Communities in Sonoma County 2012 and 2013</b>				
<b>Location</b>	<b>Number of Homes Sold in December 2013</b>	<b>December 2012 Median Sales Price</b>	<b>December 2013 Median Sales Price</b>	<b>Percent Change from December 2012 to December 2013</b>
<b>Incorporated</b>				
Cloverdale	18	\$206,000	\$315,000	52.9%
Cotati	8	\$242,750	\$420,500	73.2%
Healdsburg	13	\$369,500	\$480,000	29.9%
Petaluma	48	\$393,773	\$500,000	27.0%
Rohnert Park	32	\$275,000	\$317,750	15.6%
Santa Rosa	206	\$310,500	\$395,000	27.2%
Sebastopol	22	\$475,000	\$567,000	19.4%
Sonoma	28	\$347,000	\$477,000	37.5%
Windsor	23	\$345,000	\$440,000	27.5%
<b>Unincorporated</b>				
Bodega Bay	5	\$455,000	\$665,000	46.2%
Forestville	2	\$235,000	\$266,500	13.4%
Glen Ellen	3	\$628,000	\$644,250	2.6%
Guerneville	15	\$160,000	\$251,250	57.0%
Monte Rio	5	\$282,500	\$310,000	9.7%
Occidental	3	\$638,000	\$650,000	1.9%
Penngrove	3	\$632,000	\$675,000	6.8%
The Sea Ranch	6	\$585,000	\$560,000	-4.3%

Source: DQNews, California Home Sales Price Medians by County and City, Home Sales Recorded in December 2013.

## Rental Housing

Table 9-25 compares 2013 Fair Market Rents for Sonoma County with the average monthly rents by unit size in Rohnert Park according to the RealFacts Annual Report (2013). The average rental for a studio was \$775; a one-bedroom, one bath unit was \$1,109; a two-bedroom, one-bath unit was \$1,334; a two-bedroom, two-bath unit was \$1,558; and a three-bedroom, two-bath unit was \$1,757. Three -bedroom, two-bath and efficiency units are the only unit sizes with an average monthly rent below the Fair Market Rent (FMR), all of the other monthly rents exceed the FMR rates.

Based on the information displayed in Table 9-22, a family of four earning 80 percent of the county median (\$65,000) can afford a \$1,625 monthly rent, which is not enough to afford an average three-bedroom apartment (\$1,757) in Rohnert Park without overpaying. A family of four earning the median income (\$82,600) can afford a monthly rent of \$2,065, enough to rent a three-bedroom unit at \$1,757. While lower-income households would be hard-pressed to find affordable housing in Rohnert Park, moderate-income households (those earning 120 percent of the median) and above would have a reasonable time finding affordable housing.

TABLE 9-25 FAIR MARKET RENT AND AVERAGE MONTHLY RENT BY UNIT SIZE		
City of Rohnert Park and Sonoma County 2013		
Unit Size	Final 2013 Fair Market Rent	Average Monthly Rent
Efficiency	\$873	\$775
1 bedroom, 1 bath	\$1,018	\$1,109
2 bedrooms, 1 bath	\$1,332	\$1,334
2 bedrooms, 2 bath		\$1,558
3 bedrooms, 2 bath	\$1,963	\$1,757
4 bedrooms	\$2,301	N/A

Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development; and RealFacts, Annual Trend, obtained December 13, 2013.

## Foreclosures

With low interest rates, “creative” financing (e.g., zero down, interest only, adjustable loans), and predatory lending practices (e.g., aggressive marketing, hidden fees, negative amortization), many households nationwide purchased homes that were beyond their financial means during the peak of the real estate market (2005 to 2006). Under the assumptions that refinancing to lower interest rates would always be an option and home prices would continue to rise at double-digit rates, many households were unprepared for the hikes in interest rates, expiration of short-term fixed rates, and decline in prices that set off in 2006. Suddenly faced with significantly inflated mortgage payments, and mortgage loans that are larger than the worth of the homes, foreclosure was the only option available to many households.

The housing foreclosure crisis hit California particularly hard. In Rohnert Park the median home price in September 2008 was \$295,000 (an over 40 percent drop from the 2007 median and about a 32 percent drop from September 2007).<sup>2</sup> In February 2009 the median price had fallen still further to \$252,750 (an over 30 percent drop from February 2008). In November 2013 42 houses were sold with a median price of \$347,600 (an over 30 percent increase from November 2012)<sup>3</sup>.

In 2008 the number of foreclosures (2,820 houses and condominiums) peaked in Sonoma County. In 2013 Sonoma County foreclosures dropped to their lowest level in seven years; county homeowners lost 499 properties at foreclosure auctions last year. In January 2014 RealtyTrac reported that there were 63 properties in some stage of foreclosure in Rohnert Park: default (45 or 71.4 percent), auction (9 or 14.3 percent), or bank owned (9 or 14.3 percent).<sup>4</sup> This is equivalent to one home in every 2,413. The number of homes listed for sale on RealtyTrac was 10. The median sales price of a distressed home was \$284,898, 23 percent lower than a non-distressed home price (\$370,000). A geographical comparison of foreclosures by area shows that Rohnert Park currently (2014) has a 0.04 percent foreclosure rate, while Sonoma County had a slightly lower foreclosure rate of 0.02 percent. Both are lower than the California and national average foreclosure rates of 0.09 percent.

### **Housing Needs of Extremely Low-Income Households**

Extremely low-income-households – those earning less than 30 percent of area median income – face the most significant housing needs. In Rohnert Park a four-person household with an income of \$24,800 in 2013 would be considered an extremely low-income household. According to 2007-2011 CHAS data, there were 1,940 extremely low-income households in Rohnert Park, 75.7 percent of which were renters. Extremely-low income households made up 12.1 percent of all households.

Extremely low-income households are more likely to live in overcrowded and substandard housing conditions. 1,675 extremely low-income households (86.3 percent) had at least one of the following housing problems: incomplete kitchen facilities, incomplete plumbing facilities, more than 1 person per room, or cost burden greater than 30 percent. As shown in Table 9-26, 84.6 percent of all extremely low-income households overpaid for housing and all extremely low-income large family renters (100 percent) faced a housing cost burden. 13.6 percent of elderly households were extremely low-income.

Extremely low-income households typically consist of minimum wage workers, seniors on fixed incomes, persons with disabilities, and farmworkers. Housing types that could provide adequate housing for these households include single-room occupancy units, supportive housing, transitional housing, and other affordable or non-traditional housing types.

Based on Rohnert Park's RHNA, there is a projected need for 90 extremely-low income housing units (which assumes 50 percent of the very low-income allocation) within the city.

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<sup>2</sup>DQNews: <http://www.dqnews.com/Charts/Monthly-Charts/CA-City-Charts/ZIPCAR.aspx>

<sup>3</sup>DQNews: <http://www.dqnews.com/Charts/Monthly-Charts/CA-City-Charts/ZIPCAR.aspx>

<sup>4</sup>Realtytrac.com, search on 1/3/2014 Note: Foreclosure status distribution for November 2013.

## **Housing Problems**

### **Overpayment**

Overpayment, also known as cost burden, is defined as households spending more than 30 percent of their gross household income on housing costs. Severe overpayment is defined as households spending more than 50 percent of their gross income on housing costs. HUD's Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS) data provides information on housing overpayment by income group.

As shown in Table 9-26, 50.1 percent of all households in the city experienced housing overpayment in 2010. Housing overpayment impacted certain groups more severely than others. Particularly, overpayment was prevalent among the following groups:

- Approximately 78 percent of lower-income households overpaid for housing;
- 84.6 percent of all extremely low-income households overpaid for housing, and all extremely low-income large family renters (100 percent) faced a housing cost burden;
- Among very low-income households, 90.9 percent of renters overpaid for housing and 100 percent of large family owners overpaid for housing; and
- About 81.4 percent of all elderly lower-income renters overpaid for housing.

TABLE 9-26 HOUSING OVERPAYMENT							
City of Rohnert Park 2010							
Household by Type, Income, and Housing Problem	Renters			Owners			Total
	Elderly	Large Families	Total Renters	Elderly	Large Families	Total Owners	
<b>Extremely Low-Income</b>							
Total	260	20	1,400	165	10	545	1,945
With cost burden >30% <sup>1</sup>	220	20	1,205	115	10	440	1,645
	84.6%	100.0%	86.1%	69.7%	100.0%	80.7%	84.6%
With cost burden >50%	220	20	1,160	85	10	350	1,510
	84.6%	100.0%	82.9%	51.5%	100.0%	64.2%	77.6%
<b>Very Low-Income</b>							
Total	315	105	1,205	490	15	955	2,160
With cost burden >30% <sup>1</sup>	255	90	1,095	255	15	665	1,760
	81.0%	85.7%	90.9%	52.0%	100.0%	69.6%	81.5%
With cost burden >50%	65	0	590	140	15	460	1,050
	20.6%	0.0%	49.0%	28.6%	100.0%	48.1%	48.6%
<b>Low-Income</b>							
Total	230	155	1,495	420	115	1,560	3,055
With cost burden >30% <sup>1</sup>	180	120	1,150	155	110	1,030	2,180
	78.3%	77.4%	76.9%	36.9%	95.7%	66.0%	71.4%
With cost burden >50%	20	0	145	40	50	520	665
	8.7%	0.0%	9.7%	9.5%	43.5%	33.3%	21.8%
<b>All Lower Incomes</b>							
Total	805	280	4,100	1,075	140	3,060	7,160
With cost burden >30% <sup>1</sup>	655	230	3,450	525	135	2,135	5,585
	81.4%	82.1%	84.1%	48.8%	96.4%	69.8%	78.0%
With cost burden >50%	305	20	1,895	265	75	1,330	3,225
	37.9%	7.1%	46.2%	24.7%	53.6%	43.5%	45.0%
<b>Total (All Households)</b>							
Total	1,115	365	6,955	2,000	565	9,105	16,060
With cost burden >30% <sup>1</sup>	700	230	3,770	695	345	4,275	8,045
	62.8%	63.0%	54.2%	17.4%	61.1%	47.0%	50.1%
With cost burden >50%	320	20	1,920	300	145	1,735	3,655
	28.7%	8.7%	50.9%	15.0%	25.7%	19.1%	22.8%

Note: The number of households with a cost burden greater than 30 percent also includes the number of households paying over 50 percent of their income.

Source: 2006-2010 HUD Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS).

### **Overcrowding**

Overcrowding is typically defined as a housing unit containing more than one person per room (including living and dining rooms, but excluding bathrooms and kitchens), and units with more than 1.5 persons per room are considered severely overcrowded. While these definitions do not take cultural and other considerations into account, they do provide a basic standard of analysis. High housing costs force lower-income households to share living accommodations with extended family and friends or rent out rooms in their homes, leading to crowded living conditions. Large household sizes, multi-generational households, high numbers of children per household, low incomes, and the limited availability of large rental units all are related to overcrowding.

As shown in Table 9-27, in 2012 4.1 percent of occupied units in the city were classified as overcrowded and 1.1 percent were severely overcrowded, as compared with 3.8 percent and 0.4 percent in 2007. Between 2007 and 2012 the number of severely overcrowded units increased from 61 to 179. Overcrowding in Sonoma County was slightly lower compared to Rohnert Park. In 2012 3.2 percent of households in the county were considered overcrowded. The county had a slightly higher percentage (1.4 percent) of severely overcrowded households, compared to Rohnert Park (1.1 percent).

Occupants per Room	TABLE 9-27 HOUSEHOLD OVERCROWDING City of Rohnert Park and Sonoma County 2007-2012							
	2007				2012			
	Rohnert Park		Sonoma County		Rohnert Park		Sonoma County	
Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number
Less than 1.0	15,010	95.8%	170,730	96.3%	15,053	94.8%	175,348	95.4%
1.01 to 1.50	594	3.8%	5,132	2.9%	643	4.1%	5,931	3.2%
1.51 to 2.0	61	0.4%	1,307	0.7%	169	1.1%	2,018	1.1%
2.01 or more	0	0.0%	162	0.1%	10	0.0%	476	0.3%
<b>Total Households</b>	<b>15,665</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>177,331</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>15,875</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>183,773</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Source: 2005-2007 and 2010-2012 ACS Data

All new housing is required to be constructed in compliance with the structural requirements of the most recently adopted version of the California Building Code.

## Fair Housing

According to the Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, there were a total of three filed cases of fair housing disputes in Rohnert Park in 2013. One was specifically related to being of Hispanic origin while the other two were related to disabilities.<sup>5</sup> Currently (2014), the Petaluma People Services Center is assisting two clients with Fair Housing complaints: one involves race (African American) and the other involves income discrimination. Fair Housing of Marin (FHOM) helped launch Fair Housing of Sonoma County; however, that organization has suffered from insufficient funds. Therefore, FHOM continues to monitor fair housing issues in Sonoma County and, when necessary, report issues to HUD. Between 2007 and 2014 there were five complaints.

<sup>5</sup>Email correspondence with Vicki A Gums, HUD, Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, 2/21/2014.

1. In 2008 FHOM sent four notification letters to housing providers in the city who placed advertisements on Craigslist that were flagged for discriminating against families with children.
2. In 2009 FHOM sent three notification letters to housing providers in the city who placed advertisements on Craigslist that were flagged for discriminating against families with children. In addition, FHOM received a disability complaint from a resident in Rohnert Park. FHOM wrote a reasonable accommodation letter on her behalf, which was granted.
3. In 2010 FHOM received one combined national origin/disability complaint from a resident in Rohnert Park. A potential housing provider told a client that an apartment was no longer available after the client revealed her mental disability. In addition, after meeting the client's husband, the housing provider mentioned that the client's husband "crossed the border," when she met him. FHOM counseled client.
4. In 2012 Fair Housing of Marin (FHOM) received a disability complaint from a resident applying for housing in Rohnert Park. FHOM responded by conducting testing and filing a complaint with The United States Department Housing and Urban Development (HUD), which was referred to the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH). DFEH closed the case July 31, 2013.
5. In 2013 FHOM received a complaint about a 60-day notice, which FHOM referred for mediation. Additionally, in 2013 FHOM received a disability complaint from a senior resident who was on Section 8 and received a 90-day eviction notice. FHOM counseled client and made referrals to other housing providers.

## **City Fair Housing Practices**

Existing fair housing practices of the City of Rohnert Park include:

- Adopting the Uniform Housing Code standards for maximum occupancy of dwelling units, which has no limit on the number of residents in a dwelling unit, as long as minimum floor area requirements are met.
- Providing equitable public services throughout the city, including public transportation, crime prevention, police protection, street lighting, street cleaning, trash collection, recreational facilities and programs, and schools; and providing for the development of commercial centers in all neighborhoods.
- Publicizing openings on City boards and commissions through several newspapers.
- Ensuring that an over-concentration of lower-income housing does not occur in neighborhoods.
- Encouraging the provision of a full array of banking services in convenient locations throughout the city.
- Promoting the provision of housing affordable to lower-income households, which affirmatively furthers fair housing because minority families and persons with disabilities are disproportionately represented among those that would benefit from low-cost housing.

## Potential Loss of Assisted Units At-Risk of Conversion

An affordable rental housing development is a development where all or a portion of the housing units must be rented at affordable levels to extremely low-, very low-, and low-income households. The units are made affordable for an extended period of time by subsidy contracts, deed restrictions, and/or development agreements. When the contracts, deed restrictions, and development agreements expire, the units can be rented at market rates to any household. State housing element law requires an analysis of the affordable housing developments that have been subsidized by public funds to determine if there are any affordable units that are at risk of being converted to market rate units. The “at-risk” analysis must cover a period of 10 years. Table 9-29 shows the number of housing units that have been subsidized by public funds as well as affordability contract expiration date. Once the affordability period has expired, the owner has the option of opting out of the contract and converting units to market rate. HCD provides a list of entities that may be interested in participating in California’s First Right of Refusal Program.

California Government Code Section 65863.10 requires that owners of Federally-assisted properties provide notices of intent to convert their properties to market rate 12 months prior and again at 6 months prior to the expiration of their contract, opt-outs, or prepayment. Owners must provide notices of intent to public agencies, including HCD and the local public housing authority, as well as to all impacted tenant households. The six-month notice must include specific information on the owner’s plans, timetables, and reasons for termination. Under Government Code Section 65863.11, owners of Federally-assisted projects must provide a Notice of Opportunity to Submit an Offer to Purchase to Qualified Entities, non-profit or for-profit organizations that agree to preserve the long-term affordability if they should acquire at-risk projects, at least one year before the sale or expiration of use restrictions. Qualified Entities have first right of refusal for acquiring at-risk units. The California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) keeps a current list of all of the qualified entities across the state. The qualified entities that HCD lists for Sonoma County are found in Table 9-28.

**TABLE 9-28  
QUALIFIED ENTITIES**

**Sonoma County  
2013**

Organization	City	Phone Number
Affordable Housing Foundation	San Francisco	(415) 387-7834
Burbank Housing Development Corporation	Santa Rosa	(707) 526-9782
Christian Church Homes of Northern California, Inc.	Oakland	(510) 632-6714
Community Home Builders and Associates	San Jose	(408) 977-1726
Divine Senior Apartments	Occidental	(707) 874-3538
Eden Housing, Inc.	Hayward	(510) 582-1460
Nehemiah Progressive Housing Development Corp.	Sacramento	(916) 231-1999
Pacific Community Services, Inc.	Pittsburg	(925) 439-1056
Petaluma Ecumenical Properties, Inc.	Petaluma	(707) 762-2336
Sonoma County Community Development Commission	Santa Rosa	(707) 565-7505

*Source: California Department of Housing and Community Development,  
<www.hcd.ca.gov/hpd/hrc/tech/presrv/hpd00-01.xls>, accessed December 30, 2013.*

### **“At-Risk” Housing Units**

There are an estimated 1,701 assisted housing units in Rohnert Park, 1,059 of which are reserved for lower-income households. As shown in Table 9-29, of the total assisted housing units, 140 are “at risk” of losing their affordability within the next 10 years from the Housing Element due date (i.e., 2025).

Of the 1,701 assisted housing units, 29 are in HUD-financed properties and 718 units are subsidized by the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC). The funding for the remaining 950 units is unknown. LIHTC properties were funded with tax credits in the 1990s and were required by Federal law to remain affordable for 30 years. However, California law generally requires a 55-year extended use period for 9 percent tax credit projects. Also, 4 percent tax credit recipients frequently access significant boosts to their basis limits by agreeing to 55-year extended use restrictions. There are two LIHTC properties, one HUD-financed property, and one property with deed restrictions subject to a City agreement in Rohnert Park that are at risk of being converted to market rate. The risk of conversion for Aaron House Rehab (6 units) is minimal because the properties are owned by non-profit organizations, while the Altamont Apartments (93 lower-income units) and Oakview Senior Living (41 lower-income units) are at high-risk of conversion as their owner is profit-motivated.

The Crossbrook Apartments, a 226-unit development provided 45 affordable units using Multifamily Revenue Bonds that were issued by the City to the owners in 1995. While the bonds are scheduled to mature in 2025 (with the affordability restrictions to expire at the same time), the owner had the option of retiring the bonds as early as 2010. The City started a dialogue with the owners of the development with the hope that it could persuade them to continue the affordability restrictions; however, in 2010 the owner retired the bonds.

**TABLE 9-29**  
**ASSISTED HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS AND RESTRICTIONS**  
**City of Rohnert Park**  
**2012**

Development Name	Household Type	Total Units	Very Low-Income Units	Low-Income Units	Funding Source	Affordability Start	Expiration Date of Affordability Restrictions	Ownership	Assessment of Risk
Aaron House Rehab	Senior/Disabled	6	6	0	HUD	1991	2014	Non-Profit	Low-risk (Owned by Non-Profit)
Altamont Apartments	Senior	230	23	70	LIHTC	1991	2021	For-Profit	High-risk (Owned by Profit-Motivated)
The Arbors	Family	56	33	22	LIHTC	2007	2062	Non-Profit	Not at-risk
Centerville	Family	4	0	4	--	2007	2037	--	Not at-risk
Copeland Creek Apartments	Senior	170	17	153	LIHTC	2007	2062	Non-Profit	Not at-risk
Country Club Village	Senior/Disabled	63	0	63	--	--	--	--	--
Edgewood Apartments	Family	168	0	67	LIHTC	1996	2026	For-Profit	Not at-risk
Las Casitas	Mobile Home Park	63	25	38	--	2001	2031	Non-Profit	Not at-risk
Marchesiello	Family	20	0	7	--	2006	2061	--	Not at-risk
Maurice Avenue	Family	7	0	7	--	2001	--	--	--
Muirfield Apartments	Family/Disabled	23	0	23	HUD	1998	2039	Non-Profit	Not at-risk
Oakview Senior Living	Senior/Disabled	207	4	37	--	2005	2025	For-Profit	High-risk (Owned by Profit-Motivated)
Park Garden	Family	26	0	26	--	1991	2033	--	Not at-risk

**TABLE 9-29  
ASSISTED HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS AND RESTRICTIONS**

City of Rohnert Park  
2012

<b>Development Name</b>	<b>Household Type</b>	<b>Total Units</b>	<b>Very Low-Income Units</b>	<b>Low-Income Units</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>Affordability Start</b>	<b>Expiration Date of Affordability Restrictions</b>	<b>Ownership</b>	<b>Assessment of Risk</b>
<b>Apartments</b>									
Park Gardens II	Family	20	1	19	--	2006	2035	--	Not at-risk
Rancho Feliz	Mobile Home Park	178	60	118	--	2002	2034	Non-Profit	Not at-risk
Redwood Creek	Family	232	0	35	--	2005	2035	--	Not at-risk
Santa Alicia Gardens	Family	20	8	12	--	1996	2026	--	Not at-risk
The Gardens	Large Family	20	8	12	LIHTC	1996	2026	Non-Profit	Not at-risk
Tower Apartments	Family	50	0	20	LIHTC	2013	2068	Non-Profit	Not at-risk
Valley Village	Mobile Home Park	114	57	57	--	2005	2060	Non-Profit	Not at-risk
Vida Nueva	Supportive Housing	24	23	0	LIHTC	2007	2062	Non-Profit	Not at-risk
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,701</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>790</b>					

*Source: James Pappas, Housing Policy and Preservation Associate, California Housing Partnership, obtained March 19, 2014, and the City of Rohnert Park <http://www.rpcity.org/Modules>ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=7671>, 2012.*

## Cost of Preservation vs. Acquisition vs. Replacement

### Preservation Strategies

There are many options for preserving units, including providing financial incentives to project owners to extend low-income use restrictions, purchasing affordable housing units by a non-profit or public agency, or providing local subsidies to offset the difference between the affordable and market rate. Scenarios for preservation will depend on the type of project at risk.

#### Local Rent Subsidy

Tenant-based subsidies could be used to preserve the affordability of housing. Similar to Housing Choice Vouchers (formerly Section 8), the City, through a variety of potential funding sources, could provide a voucher to lower-income households. The level of subsidy required to preserve at-risk affordable housing through rent subsidies is estimated to equal the Fair Market Rent for a unit minus the housing cost affordable by a lower-income household. As indicated in Table 9-30, approximately \$16,704 monthly or \$200,448 annually would be required to preserve the current at-risk inventory of 140 units. The subsidy for 10 years would be about \$2.0 million, while a subsidy for 30 years would be about \$6.0 million.

**TABLE 9-30  
RENTAL SUBSIDIES REQUIRED**

**City of Rohnert Park  
2014**

<b>Unit Size</b>	<b>Total Units</b>	<b>Fair Market Rent<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Household Size</b>	<b>Very Low-Income Affordable Housing Cost<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Monthly per Unit Subsidy</b>	<b>Total Monthly Subsidy</b>
Studio	44	\$820	1	\$724	\$96	\$4,224
1-br	96	\$956	2	\$826	\$130	\$12,480
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>					<b>\$16,704</b>

<sup>1</sup>Fair Market Rent (FMR) is determined by HUD.

<sup>2</sup>Section 8 rental assistance is available to very low-income families, the elderly, and the disabled. Sonoma County 2013 Area Median Household Income (AMI) limits set by the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD). The family's income may not exceed 50 percent of the median income for the county.

Source: *HUD Fair Market Rents, 2014; HUD Income Limits, 2013; and City of Rohnert Park*  
<http://www.rpcity.org/Modules>ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=7671, 2012>.

### Acquisition

According to a listing of multifamily rental apartments for sale on loopnet.com, the average cost to purchase an apartment rental unit is approximately \$187,250 per unit for similar projects to Aaron House Rehab with at least four units. Based on this estimate, the cost to purchase the six-unit Aaron House Rehab building would be \$1.1 million. Because the 93 affordable units available at the Altamont Apartments are a part of a larger senior housing project with 137 market rate units, acquisition of the Altamont Apartments is not feasible. Because the 41 affordable units available at Oakview are also part of a larger senior housing project with 166 market rate units, acquisition of Oakview is not feasible.

## **Replacement**

Burbank Housing Development Corporation is an affordable housing non-profit developer in Sonoma County. Recently, Burbank has found that development costs (including land acquisition, improvements, construction, and soft costs) for a typical studio, one-, two-, and three-bedroom unit is between \$325,000 and \$400,000, depending on a number of factors including local development impact fees and other local ordinances. In this case, replacement for the 140 total units would be between \$45.5 million and \$56 million.

## **Cost Comparison**

The most costly option is new construction of affordable units. With increased requirements in local, State, and Federal government requirements, the time and costs involved in new construction are far more extensive than purchasing existing units and converting them into affordable housing, or than providing rent subsidies. Providing rental assistance generally requires the least upfront costs. However, a sustainable funding source must be identified for this option to be feasible.

## **Resources for Preservation**

### **Federal Programs to Preserve At-Risk Units**

For below-market properties Section 8 preservation tools include the Mark-Up-to-Market program, which provides incentives for for-profit property owners to remain in the Section 8 program after their contracts expire. The Mark-Up-to-Market program allows non-profit owners to increase below-market rents to acquire new property or make capital repairs while preserving existing Section 8 units. For above-market properties Mark-to-Market provides owners with debt restructuring in exchange for renewal of Section 8 contracts for 30 years.

For Section 236 properties Interest Reduction Payment (IRP) Retention/Decoupling enables properties to retain IRP subsidy when new or additional financing is secured.

Section 515 enables USDA to provide deeply subsidized loans directly to developers of rural rental housing. Loans have 30-year terms and are amortized over 50 years. The program gives first priority to individuals living in substandard housing.

A range of resources are available for preservation of Section 515 resources. Non-profit organizations can acquire Section 515 properties and assume the current mortgage or receive a new mortgage to finance acquisition and rehabilitation of the structures. Section 538 Rental Housing Loan Guarantees are available for the Section 514 and 516 loans and grants are also available for purchase and rehabilitation of Section 515 properties that are occupied by farmworkers. Section 533 provides a Housing Preservation Grant Program, which funds rehabilitation, but not acquisition.

### **State Programs to Preserve At-Risk Units**

At the State level the California Housing Finance Agency offers low-interest loans to preserve long-term affordability for multifamily rental properties through its Preservation Acquisition Finance Program.

The Division of Financial Assistance also offers Multifamily Housing Program (MHP), which provides deferred payment loans for preservation of permanent and transitional rental housing, as well as new construction and rehabilitation.

The HOME Investment Partnerships Program provides grants to cities and counties and low-interest loans to State-certified community housing development organizations to create and preserve affordable housing for single- and multifamily projects benefitting lower-income renters or owners.

## Special Needs Housing

Certain groups have greater difficulty finding decent, affordable housing due to their special circumstances. Special circumstances may be related to one's employment and income, age, family characteristics, or disabilities. As a result, certain segments of Rohnert Park's population may experience a higher prevalence of overpayment, overcrowding, housing cost burden, or other housing problems. Housing Element law requires the consideration of the housing needs of "special needs" persons and households.

State Housing Element law identifies the following "special needs" groups: elderly households, disabled persons including those with developmental disabilities, large households, female-headed households, families and persons in need of emergency shelter, and agricultural workers. Table 9-31 summarizes the special needs populations in Rohnert Park. The sections following this table provide a detailed discussion of the housing needs of each particular group as well as the major programs and services available to address their housing and supportive service needs.

**TABLE 9-31  
SPECIAL NEEDS GROUPS**

**City of Rohnert Park  
2012**

<b>Special Needs Groups</b>	<b>Persons</b>	<b>Households</b>	<b>Percent<sup>1</sup></b>
Elderly (65 and older)	4,024	--	9.8%
With a disability	1,743	--	(43.3%)
Elderly Households	--	2,716	17.1%
Renter	--	1,025	(37.7%)
Owner	--	1,691	(62.3%)
Elderly living alone	--	1,718	10.8%
Persons with Disability	4,445	--	10.8%
With a developmental disability <sup>2</sup>	375	--	0.9%
Female-headed households	--	1,941	12.2%
With own children	--	1,121	(57.8%)
Large households	--	1,326	8.4%
Renter	--	609	(45.9%)
Owner	--	717	(54.1%)
Agricultural Workers <sup>3</sup>	102	--	--
Homeless <sup>4</sup>	44	--	--
<b>Total</b>	<b>41,085</b>	<b>15,875</b>	<b>--</b>

<sup>1</sup>Numbers in (parenthesis) reflect the percentage of the special needs group, and not the percentage of the city population/households. For example, of the city's elderly households, 37.7 percent are renters and 62.3 percent are owners.

<sup>2</sup>Developmental disability counts were provided by the California Department of Developmental Services in 2014.

<sup>3</sup>Persons employed in the agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining industries.

<sup>4</sup>2014 Sonoma County Homeless Point-in-Time Census Survey accessed December 30, 2012.

Source: 2010-2012 ACS data (unless otherwise noted).

## The Elderly

Elderly households, sometimes referred to as senior households, typically have special housing needs due to three primary concerns—income, housing and health care costs, and physical disabilities. Elders are defined by HCD as persons who are 65 years of age or older; however, it should be noted that some housing programs define seniors as age 55 and over. This section will include data on both elderly groups and seniors age 55 and older. According to the 2010-2012 American Community Survey, 9,271 city residents were 55 years and older (about 22.8 percent of the total population), while 4,024 city residents were age 65 and older (about 9.8 percent of the total population).

The majority of elderly households in Rohnert Park own their own home. In 2012 there were 2,716 households headed by persons 65 years and older, with 1,691 being owner-occupied units (62.3 percent of all elderly-occupied households) and 1,025 being renter-occupied households (37.7 percent of all elderly-occupied households). Elderly homeowners, particularly elderly women, may require assistance in performing regular home maintenance or repair activities due to physical limitations. Some of the special needs of seniors (65 years and older) are as follows:

- **Disabilities:** About 43.3 percent of Rohnert Park's elderly have a disability.
- **Limited Income:** According to the 2006-2010 Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy (CHAS), 28.0 percent of elderly renter households and 9.7 percent of elderly homeowners in Rohnert Park earn extremely low incomes (less than 30 percent of AMI).
- **Overpayment:** 48.2 percent of Rohnert Park's elderly households spend greater than 30 percent of their income on housing costs, considered "housing overpayment." Overpayment is about the same for both elderly homeowners (46.3 percent) and renters (48.0 percent).

Elderly homeowners often cannot afford maintenance and repairs because of their lower, fixed incomes. They also may not be able to afford modifications to their homes to ensure their safety and improve their mobility, such as grab bars and ramps.

## Existing Housing for the Elderly

Of the total 4,024 elderly population in Rohnert Park, 1,952 lived in non-family households in 2012; of those living in non-family households, a total of 1,718 lived alone. A majority of elderly residents in Rohnert Park are householders (1,811); 42 live in group quarters, 545 elderly householders own and occupy a mobile home, boat, RV, van, or other, while 48 elderly householders rent. A total of 796 elderly householders rent a unit in a multifamily complex, with 626 elderly householders (78.6 percent) renting a unit in a complex with 50 or more units.

In 2012 approximately 20 percent of elderly households in Rohnert Park lived in housing specifically designed for elderly—elderly multifamily complexes or mobile home parks.<sup>6</sup> Multifamily complexes in Rohnert Park that have been designed to meet the needs of the elderly include 162 market-rate units and 45 affordable units located in Oak View Senior Apartments, 170 subsidized units in the Copeland Creek Apartments, and 137 market-rate units and 93 affordable units in the Altamont Apartments. There are approximately 10 facilities providing residential care for the elderly in Rohnert Park, with room for 137 individuals.<sup>7</sup>

Of the three mobile home parks in the city, one was designed and is operated to help meet the needs of seniors and has a total of 235 spaces. The other two parks allow families, but the majority of residents are also elderly. Mobile homes meet the needs of many seniors because they provide an independent living environment with smaller yards and homes requiring lower levels of maintenance.

### **Elderly Housing Needs**

As citizens get older, their housing needs change. Special housing needs of the elderly include smaller and more efficient housing to minimize maintenance and barrier-free designs to accommodate restricted functions.

Many older persons own their homes and most prefer to remain there as they grow older.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, efforts are needed to help the elderly maintain independent life styles. In 2007 1,337 elderly Rohnert Park residents were identified as having a mobility limitation. By 2012 this number decreased to 1,227 according to the 2008-2012 ACS. Housing locations near public transit are also needed for the elderly because they may not drive. The elderly need additional auxiliary services such as housecleaning, health care, and grocery delivery when illness and disability limit their capacity to provide for themselves.

House sharing can provide older homeowners with revenue, as well as added security and companionship, and provides renters with affordable housing. Second unit apartments, which are separate units within a home, offer the same advantages plus privacy. Since May 2003 Rohnert Park has permitted second units administratively.

As it becomes increasingly difficult for the elderly to live independently, there is a need for congregate or group housing that provides small individual units without kitchens or with minimal provision for cooking, and some common facilities and services, including shared arrangements for meals and housekeeping services. Congregate care housing is particularly attractive to older persons, as building design and services can be tailored to their specific needs.

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<sup>6</sup><http://www.rpcity.org/Modules>ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=7671>

<sup>7</sup>Find Licensed Care. California Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division. 1/10/2014. [http://www.ccld.ca.gov/docs/ccld\\_search/ccld\\_search.aspx](http://www.ccld.ca.gov/docs/ccld_search/ccld_search.aspx)

<sup>8</sup>Housing Options for Older Americans Fact Sheet, Administration on Aging.

Life care facilities can also provide all levels of care on the same site to meet the progressively greater needs of the elderly. These facilities often have apartments, congregate housing, an infirmary, and nursing home in the same or adjacent buildings. Elderly persons buy into a life care project with an initial fee, and then pay a monthly fee thereafter. The fee usually guarantees occupancy in a particular size of apartment and one meal a day. Tenants may also move into a “personal care” unit or nursing facility if health support needs change.

The special needs of the elderly can be met through a range of services, including congregate care, rent subsidies, shared housing, and housing rehabilitation assistance. For the frail or disabled, housing with architectural design features that accommodate disabilities helps ensure continued independent living. Elderly persons with disabilities also benefit from transportation alternatives and shared housing options. Senior housing with supportive services can be provided to assist with independent living. Table 9-32 summarizes the social and supportive services that are provided to assist with independent living.

**TABLE 9-32  
SELECT ELDERLY SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS**

Sonoma County  
2014

Organization	Service(s) Provided	Phone Number
AARP Driver Safety Program	Class information on educational driving programs for mature drivers	888-227-7669
Council on Aging/Meals on Wheels of Sonoma County	Provides in-home meal delivery to seniors in all areas except coast and Petaluma	707-525-0383
Council on Aging of Sonoma County	Housing information and assistance	707-525-0143
Elder Abuse Prevention Project	A project of the Sonoma County Area Agency on Aging. Provides community education	707-565-5950
Sonoma County Job Link: Experience Works	Training, placement and service program for limited income seniors (55+)	707-565-5500
Family Service Agency/Senior Peer Counseling Programs	Senior peer counseling, individual and group counseling, and widow support	707-545-4551 x 209
Redwood Empire Food Bank	Information on emergency food resources and food distribution	707-523-7900
Rebuilding Together	Provides low-income homeowners with critical home repairs, accessibility modifications, and energy-efficient upgrades.	800-473-4229
Rohnert Park Senior Center	Activities, programming, and meals (noon, M-F)	707-585-6780
Rohnert Park, Sunshine Bus	Van rides by appointment, limited hours and days	707-585-6780

Source: "Senior Resource Guide." Sonoma County Area Agency on Aging, January 2014.

## Persons with Disabilities

Physical, mental, and/or developmental disabilities may prevent a person from working, may restrict one's mobility, or make it difficult to care for oneself. Disabled persons often have special housing needs related to their potentially limited income-earning capacity, a lack of accessible and affordable housing, and the higher health costs associated with their disability. Some residents suffer from disabilities that require living in a supportive or institutional setting. Disabilities are defined by the American Community Survey as mental, physical, or health conditions that last over six months. The Census tracks the following disabilities:

- **Sensory Disability:** Conditions that include blindness, deafness, or a severe vision or hearing impairment.
- **Physical Disability:** Conditions that substantially limit one or more basic physical activities such as walking, climbing stairs, reaching, lifting, or carrying.
- **Mental Disability:** Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition, a person has difficulty learning, remembering, or concentrating.
- **Self-care Disability:** Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition, a person has difficulty dressing, bathing, or getting around inside the home.
- **Go-outside-home Disability:** Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition, a person has difficulty going outside the home alone to shop or visit a doctor's office.
- **Employment Disability:** Because of a physical, mental, or emotional condition, a person has difficulty working at a job or business.

About 4,445 residents in Rohnert Park have some form of disability, representing about 10.8 percent of the city's population (2012). A large number of disabled persons either do not work, or are only marginally employed, resulting in a significant segment of the disabled population relying primarily on public assistance, equivalent to an extremely low-income level. The 2010-2012 ACS estimates that there are 770 persons, or 17 percent of all disabled persons, with a disability living below the poverty line in Rohnert Park. Such households are particularly vulnerable to increasing housing costs and can easily become homeless without the necessary support services in place.

The living arrangement of disabled persons depends on the severity of the disability. Many persons live at home in an independent fashion or with other family members. To maintain independent living, disabled persons may need special assistance. This can include special housing design features, income support for those who are unable to work, and in-home supportive services, among others.

Community care facilities are one housing option for persons with developmental, mental, and/or physical disabilities. As shown in Table 9-33, 17 licensed community care facilities are located in Rohnert Park, including six adult residential facilities, nine elderly residential facilities, and two adult day care facilities. Most of these care facilities are for the elderly, reflecting the special needs of senior residents, especially those with disabilities.

TABLE 9-33 LICENSED COMMUNITY CARE FACILITIES		
City of Rohnert Park 2014		
Type of Facility	Facilities	Capacity (beds)
Adult Residential <sup>1</sup>	6	36
Elderly Residential <sup>2</sup>	9	92
Adult Day Care	2	105
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>233</b>

<sup>1</sup>Adult residential facilities provide care for adults with various disabilities and disorders.

<sup>2</sup>Elderly residential facilities provide care for persons age 60 and above.

Source: State of California Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division, March 2014.

Additional housing for the disabled, other than licensed community care facilities, is provided at The Gardens apartment project, constructed in 1996 with the assistance of the City's former Redevelopment Agency, the Community Development Commission of the City of Rohnert Park (CDCRP). The Gardens provides eight units that are fully handicap-accessible. Sixteen units in Vida Nueva, a supportive housing development that opened in December 2008, are also specifically set aside for residents with mental health disabilities; mental health services are provided on-site.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup>Phone conversation with Gary Pierce, Mental Health Division, Sonoma County Health Service Department, 12/22/08. Vida Nueva was financed partly through Mental Health Service Act funding.

As shown in Table 9-34, the 2012 ACS reported 8,904 total disabilities in Rohnert Park; this number is different from the number of disabled residents (4,445) as one person could have more than one disability. The total disabilities tallied for persons 5 to 64 years old and 65 years and older was 4,445 and 3,653, respectively. Of the total disabilities tallied, 24.1 percent were ambulatory, which is characterized by a serious difficulty walking or climbing stairs. Although not all disabled persons require special housing, those with severe mobility constraints need specially designed housing located near transportation and other services. A total of 1,149 seniors are immobile without the assistance of a wheelchair requiring special housing needs that include ramps, elevators, modified bathrooms, wider doorways, and lower shelves. The American Disabilities Act (ADA) requires all new multifamily residential projects containing four or more units to be accessible to persons with disabilities. According to the 2012 ACS, 1,359 individuals (16.2 percent) between the ages of 5 and 64 experienced a cognitive disability. For disabled people requiring a degree of supervision, group homes are ideal. Converted single family houses are often used for this purpose.

**TABLE 9-34  
DISABILITY BY TYPE**

**City of Rohnert Park  
2012**

	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Sensory disability	946	11.2%
Ambulatory disability	873	10.4%
Cognitive disability	1,359	16.2%
Self-care disability	616	7.3%
Independent living disability	962	11.4%
<i>Disabilities tallied for people 5 to 64 years</i>	<i>4,445</i>	<i>52.9%</i>
Sensory disability	877	10.4%
Ambulatory disability	1,149	13.7%
Cognitive disability	529	6.3%
Self-care disability	416	4.9%
Independent living disability	682	8.1%
<i>Disabilities tallied for people 65 years and over</i>	<i>3,653</i>	<i>43.4%</i>
<b>Total disabilities tallied</b>	<b>8,409</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Note: Developmental disability counts were provided by Department of Developmental Services in 2014 and only count residents currently receiving services in Rohnert Park. The actual count of persons with developmental disabilities may be higher.

Source: 2010-2012 ACS Data.

### State and Federal Requirements

In response to the serious lack of accessible housing in the United States, the Fair Housing Act requires that all ground floor dwelling units in buildings of four or more units without elevators and all dwelling units in elevator buildings of four or more units include the following basic features of accessible and adaptive design:

- Public and common areas must be accessible to persons with disabilities; and
- Doors and hallways must be wide enough for wheelchairs.

All units must have:

- An accessible route into and through the unit;
- Accessible light switches, electrical outlets, thermostats, and other environmental controls;
- Reinforced bathroom walls to allow later installation of grab bars; and
- Kitchens and bathrooms that can be used by people in wheelchairs.

The Fair Housing requirements are included in California's Title 24 regulations, which are enforced by the City through its building codes, building plan review, and site inspections.

In the case of persons with a physical or mental disability (including hearing, mobility and visual impairments, chronic alcoholism, chronic mental illness, AIDS, AIDS Related Complex, and mental retardation) that substantially limits one or more major life activities, landlords may not:

- Refuse to let tenants make reasonable modifications to their dwelling or common use areas, at their expense, if necessary for the disabled person to use the housing; or
- Refuse to make reasonable accommodations in rules, policies, practices, or services, if necessary, for the disabled person to use the housing.

### **Disabled Housing Needs**

There continues to be a significant demand for disabled accessible housing, especially at the lower income levels, as evidenced by the high proportion of disabled persons on the waiting list for the Section 8 housing assistance program; 3,406 out of 9,290 households on the waiting list in Sonoma County have a member with a disability.

Besides the construction of new accessible housing, the needs of individuals with limitations can sometimes be met by simply retrofitting existing housing to transform conventional units into suitable housing. This is perhaps the least costly way in which to provide housing specifically for individuals with special limitations.

There is also a need to improve the "visitability" of housing to allow mobility-impaired residents to visit families and friends.<sup>10</sup> A visitable home provides less accessibility than an accessible home, and is meant to be those units not required to be accessible. Visitability means that:

- At least one entrance is at grade (no step) and can be approached by an accessible route, such as a sidewalk; and
- The entrance door and all interior doors on the first floor are at least 34 inches wide, offering 32 inches of clear passage space.

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<sup>10</sup>Fair Housing Planning Guide, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

A visitable home also serves persons without disabilities, such as a person pushing a stroller, a person delivering large appliances, or a person using a walker.

## Developmental Disabilities

SB 812, which took effect January 2011, amended State housing element law to require an evaluation of the special housing needs of persons with developmental disabilities. A "developmental disability" is defined as a disability that originates before an individual becomes 18 years old, continues or can be expected to continue indefinitely, and constitutes a substantial disability for that individual. This includes Mental Retardation, Cerebral Palsy, Epilepsy, and Autism.

According to the California Department of Developmental Services (CDDS), during Fiscal Year 2012/13 the Regional Center of the North Bay served 375 residents with developmental disabilities in Rohnert Park. Of the total 30.9 percent of developmentally disabled persons are ages 0-14, 16 percent are ages 15-22, 37.9 percent are ages 23-54, 11.2 percent are ages 55-64, and 4 percent are ages 65 and over.

As summarized in Table 9-35, most developmentally-disabled residents in Rohnert Park have an intellectual disability (222 or 66.9 percent) and many are autistic (75 or 22.6 percent).

**TABLE 9-35  
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY BY TYPE**

City of Rohnert Park <sup>1</sup> FY 2012/13		
Disability Type	Number	Percent
Autism	75	22.6%
Epilepsy	50	15.1%
Cerebral Palsy	41	12.3%
Intellectual Disability	222	66.9%
Other Diagnosis	49	14.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>437<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>100.0%</b>

<sup>1</sup>Includes the following zip codes: 94926, 94927, and 94928

<sup>2</sup>Numbers do not add up to the total because some clients have more than one disability.

Source: California Department of Developmental Service, March 11, 2014.

Few developmentally disabled individuals receiving services from the Regional Center of the North Bay live in a group home facility (11.7 percent of adults), according to the CDDS. Most developmentally-disabled individuals lived at home (57.3 percent). Many developmentally-disabled persons are able to live and work independently. However, more severely disabled individuals require a group living environment with supervision, or an institutional environment with medical attention and physical therapy. Because developmental disabilities exist before adulthood, the first housing issue for the developmentally-disabled is the transition from living with a parent/guardian as a child to an appropriate level of independence as an adult.

Muirfield Apartments, a 23-unit project completed in 1999, provides housing for people with developmental disabilities who are capable of living independently. The tenants will likely have jobs in the community and are mostly able to provide for themselves. Rent is subsidized through a project rental assistance contract with HUD, protecting tenants from overpayment. The Aaron House Rehab, constructed in 1991, provides six units to developmentally disabled adults. The California Department of Social Services reports that there are six adult residential facilities in Rohnert Park for developmentally disabled adults that can accommodate up to 42 individuals.<sup>11</sup>

### **Large Households**

Large households are defined by the Census as households with five or more members. These households constitute a special needs group because there is often a limited supply of adequately-sized, affordable housing units in a community to meet their needs.

In 2012 Rohnert Park had a total of 1,326 large households (8.4 percent of all households) of which 717 were owner-occupied (54.1 percent) and 609 were renter-occupied (45.9 percent). Based on 2006-2010 CHAS data prepared by HUD, 25 percent of Rohnert Park's large households suffer from one or more housing problems, including housing overpayment, overcrowding, and/or substandard housing conditions; 70 percent of large households earn lower incomes.

Lower-income, large households generally have difficulty locating appropriately-sized housing. According to the 2010-2012 ACS, in 2012 Rohnert Park had 5,991 three-bedroom units and 2,470 four-bedroom units. Only 460 units had five or more bedrooms, which suggests overcrowding. The Gardens apartment project (1995) included four three-bedroom units and four four-bedroom units to help address the housing needs of large households. The Arbors, Vida Nueva, Tower, and Redwood Creek Apartments also provide larger units. However, the rents associated with most of the large rental units are well beyond the reach of many lower-income large renter households.

### **Female-Headed Households**

Single-parent households are usually one-income households and are, therefore, more likely to have difficulty finding affordable, decent, and safe housing. These households often require special consideration and assistance because of their greater need for affordable housing, accessible day care/childcare, health care, and other supportive services. Female-headed families with children are an especially vulnerable group since they must balance the needs of their children with work responsibilities, often with only one source of income. The 2012 ACS estimated 1,941 female-headed households, or 12.2 percent of the city's households; 1,121 or 57.8 percent of female-headed households had children under 18 years old. According to the 2010-2012 ACS, 329 or 55 percent of all households in the city living below the poverty line, were female-headed—of those, 274 had children (83.3 percent).

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<sup>11</sup>California Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division. 1/10/2014.  
[http://www.ccls.ca.gov/docs/ccls\\_search/ccls\\_search.aspx](http://www.ccls.ca.gov/docs/ccls_search/ccls_search.aspx)

Given the financial difficulties facing many single-parent (and especially single-mother) households, it is not uncommon for these families to move in with relatives to save money. Moreover, since incomes of female-headed households are proportionately lower, their primary housing need is housing affordable to lower income households. The City helped fund The Gardens, a 1995 project that targets lower-income families and specifically accommodates single-parent households through a number of architectural features. The City also supported the Arbors, which provides larger units that can accommodate this type of arrangement. The three-bedroom units are designed to facilitate shared rentals so that a single parent could arrange for live-in assistance with childcare from a relative, friend, student, or senior.<sup>12</sup>

## **Farmworkers**

Farmworkers are traditionally defined as persons whose primary incomes are earned through seasonal agricultural labor. They have special housing needs because of their relatively low income and the unstable nature of their job (e.g., having to move throughout the year from one harvest to the next).

The 2010-2012 ACS indicated that 102 people, approximately 0.5 percent of Rohnert Park's civilian labor force, were employed in agriculture, forestry, and fishing occupations. This could reflect the fact that agricultural operations in the immediate vicinity of the city are generally limited to family-owned and operated farms centered on cattle grazing and hay growing that does not customarily require hired and temporary farm labor. Given that there are so few persons employed in agriculture-related industries, farmworker housing is not a significant issue.

While no agricultural jobs exist in Rohnert Park, as an agricultural county, Sonoma County as a whole has a great need for farmworker housing. The County is a significant producer of wine grapes, which is an over \$13 billion annual industry in the County.<sup>13</sup> Farmworkers are often motivated to seek out the lowest cost housing so that they can send a large percentage of their earnings home to their families. The County tracks two USDA-financed farmworker apartment projects with 44 and 16 units, respectively as well as three individual agricultural employee units. Given that there are an estimated 1,500 migrant farmworkers countywide, a shortage of farmworker housing exists, resulting in overcrowded homes, apartments, and motel rooms. In addition, many migrant farmworkers are homeless.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, a growing number of migrant farmworkers do not leave California during the non-farm season, but instead stay in the area and perform non-farm work such as construction and odd jobs. Since the agricultural community does not take responsibility for housing farmworkers during the off-season, the farmworkers that remain in the county year-round place an additional strain on County housing resources.

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<sup>12</sup>1994 Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Application for The Gardens, Burbank Housing Development Corp.

<sup>13</sup><http://www.pressdemocrat.com/article/20140109/business/140109597>

<sup>14</sup>2009 Sonoma County Housing Element, Section 4.

## The Homeless

A person or family is considered homeless if they lack a fixed and regular night-time residence, or have a primary night-time residence that is a supervised, publicly-operated shelter designated for providing temporary living accommodations. Homelessness is also characterized by a person residing in a public or private place not designated for, or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings.<sup>15</sup>

The Sonoma County Community Development Commission (SCCDC), the staff of various homeless services programs, and a total of 76 homeless persons and 97 community volunteers conducted a point-in-time count of homeless in Sonoma County. The *2013 Sonoma County Homeless Census and Survey* included both unsheltered homeless (those living on the streets and in open spaces in the county) and sheltered homeless (those receiving temporary shelter or services). Key findings of the homeless count include:

- There were 3,309 individuals identified as unsheltered homeless; a 1.7 percent decrease from the 2011 count.
- There were 971 persons staying in shelters, transitional housing, or receiving services; a significant 17.2 percent decrease since 2011.
- There were 152 families homeless with children, 277 unaccompanied homeless children, and 851 unaccompanied homeless.
- Survey respondents most frequently cited loss of job or unemployment (34 percent) as the primary event or condition that led to their current episode of homelessness. Other common causes of homelessness were alcohol or drug use (16 percent), an argument with family or friends who asked them to leave (8 percent), and domestic violence (7 percent).
- Whites/Caucasians comprised 66 percent of Survey respondents. In comparison with the overall population of Sonoma County, there were a disproportionate number of Black/African American and multi-ethnic persons experiencing homelessness. No Asian or Pacific Islander or Other Races were identified. The mean age was 39 years old.

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<sup>15</sup>Federal definition of a homeless person per the McKinney Act (1987)

Within the city of Rohnert Park, the 2013 Homeless Count identified 44 homeless people, 31 of which were unsheltered (79.5 percent). These 44 homeless in Rohnert Park represent 1 percent of the total 4,280 homeless counted countywide. The 2013 count is a significant drop from the 444 homeless people counted in Rohnert Park in 2011. According to conversations with service providers, the homeless population along the Highway 101 Corridor is very transient, moving from one part of the county to another. The Sonoma County Continuum of Care has determined that the mobility factor makes the trend line in smaller localities volatile, and it is, therefore, best to rely upon regional or countywide trends. Countywide, the south Sonoma County region (up to Rohnert Park) saw an increase of 49 persons since the 2011 survey. The county as a whole saw a decrease of 259 persons. The largest drop occurred in the west county area. Furthermore, as the count report was being developed, several encampments in Rohnert Park went uncounted. The Continuum of Care would not cite as large a drop in Rohnert Park's homeless population as is cited in the 2013 count.

Furthermore, service providers have reported that the shelter waitlists in the county are saturated with those waiting to get into shelter indicating that there is not enough bed space to accommodate the homeless individuals and families in Rohnert Park. The Community Action Partnership of Sonoma County runs a shelter that has a waitlist that currently (2014) consists of eight single women and two families (single mothers). The Program Manager receives on average 10 to 15 calls per day from women seeking shelter. Transitional housing is also lacking in the county, as there are only a few agencies that currently offer transitional housing: Interfaith Shelter Network, COTS, and Catholic Charities.

Three major types of facilities provide shelter for homeless individuals and families: emergency shelters, transitional housing, and permanent housing.

- **Emergency Shelter:** A facility that provides overnight shelter and fulfills a client's basic needs (i.e., food, clothing, and medical care) either on-site or through off-site services. The permitted length of stay can vary from one day at a time to six months.
- **Transitional Housing:** A residence that provides housing for up to two years. Residents of transitional housing are usually connected to supportive services designed to assist the homeless in achieving greater economic independence and a permanent, stable living situation. Services may include substance abuse treatment, mental and physical health care interventions, job training and employment services, individual and group counseling, and life skills training.
- **Permanent Housing:** Affordable permanent housing or service-enriched permanent housing that is linked with supportive services (on-site or off-site) and designed to allow formerly homeless clients to live at the facility on an indefinite basis.

### **Emergency Shelters**

Although there are no emergency shelters in Rohnert Park, emergency shelters are available nearby in Santa Rosa and Petaluma. In Santa Rosa Catholic Charities operates the Family Support Center, which provides emergency, overnight shelter for families with children. The Homeless Services Center, a day-service center for homeless individuals serves 75 to 100 persons during the spring and summer, and 100 to 150 individuals during the winter months.

Other homeless facilities in the vicinity include the National Guard Armory in Santa Rosa that is operated during the winter months by Catholic Charities. The Armory shelter has a typical population of 120 men and women, and a capacity of approximately 170. It is open about 12 hours per day, opening each evening around 7:00 pm. Users of the shelter are allowed a shower, dinner, and breakfast. In 2004 the Committee on the Shelterless (COTS) completed construction of the Mary Isaak Center, which offers 100 emergency shelter beds and 30 transitional housing beds for adults. COTS also runs the Center for Homeless Children and their Families, which provides 35 beds for adults and children. The Redwood Gospel Mission in Santa Rosa houses between 70 and 80 men each night; the Redwood Gospel Mission also operates "The Rose," a women's shelter which houses about 12 women each night. The Manna Home, also run by Redwood Gospel Mission, provides emergency shelter for women and children. The women's emergency shelter (operated by the YWCA) provides emergency shelter for women and children fleeing domestic violence. See Appendix B for a full listing of emergency shelter services in Sonoma County.

According to the 2013 Homeless Census and Survey, in Sonoma County 76 percent of homeless individuals reported receiving government assistance in 2013. Use of other services and assistance also increased slightly, from 89 percent to 91 percent. The top services used in 2013 include free meals (91 percent), shelter day services (63 percent), bus passes (36 percent), and health services (35 percent). Many local churches and charities provide funds for emergency shelter at local motels when families are displaced from their homes by fires or other circumstances.

While no emergency shelter exists in the city currently (2014), the City allows emergency shelters serving six or fewer persons as a permitted use in conjunction with a place of worship and as stand-alone shelters in all commercial and residential zones. The City also allows emergency shelters serving seven or more persons as a permitted use in conjunction with a place of worship and as stand-alone shelters in all Commercial and in the High Density Residential district (i.e., the R-H, C-O, C-N, and C-R districts). Within these four zoning districts, there are currently (2014) 16.83 acres of vacant and underutilized land that have been identified as potential sites for the construction of emergency shelters. There are currently 26 churches in Rohnert Park. Because of the 2003 zoning update, each of these churches could provide emergency shelter for up to six people per night. This means that the churches alone can shelter 156 people at any given time. This identified capacity, combined with the potential sites more than covers the Rohnert Park emergency shelter need of 31 beds (based on the number of unsheltered homeless individuals in 2013).

### **City Assistance for the Homeless**

The City participated in the development of the Vida Nueva housing project which provides housing for persons and families that were recently homeless. Vida Nueva opened its doors in December 2008, and provides 24 units of permanent supportive housing. Permanent supportive housing is affordable housing with support services on-site that are designed to help the persistently homeless achieve long-term stability. It is unlike many low-income housing projects in that it is not *transitional*, and the support services are voluntary and not required to live at Vida Nueva.

Populations at risk of becoming homeless also include those living in subsidized housing units if their subsidies are discontinued, and those who have fixed or low incomes facing rent increases.

It is very difficult to reliably estimate the number of homeless. However, the Sonoma County Continuum of Care performs a homeless census every year. The homeless count at the city-level varies substantially from year to year. In 2009, 97 homeless individuals were counted in Rohnert Park. The number increased to 446 in 2011 and then decreased to only 44 individuals in 2013 (31 unsheltered). The variance can be explained by the inherently mobile nature of homeless encampments combined with the inconsistencies of counting only once every two years. Anecdotal reports also indicate a known large encampment in Rohnert Park may have gone unreported, and may be responsible for the sizeable decrease in the count.

Housing experts have determined that, on average, about 1 percent of a community's population may be homeless at some time during the year. Based on a population of about 40,000, approximately 400 people in Rohnert Park may become homeless during a year. These individuals and families may find temporary housing with friends and relatives, stay in a garage, camp out in their automobile, or stay in a shelter.

The 2011 Sonoma County Homeless Census and Survey, organized and published by the Sonoma County Continuum of Care, counted 3,247 homeless people in the county through a thorough street-by-street canvassing methodology. The methodology change accounts for this significant increase; in the past, volunteers were sent out to interview the homeless only at certain target sites.<sup>16</sup> In 2013 the homeless count in Sonoma County was 4,280. The methodology was similar to methodology used in 2011; it included a point-in-time count of the sheltered homeless population, a point-in-time count of the unsheltered homeless population through a street-by-street canvass of all 99 County census tracts, and a qualitative survey of a representative sample of the homeless population.

## **University Students**

Sonoma State University (SSU) is located adjacent to the Rohnert Park city limits and receives sewer service from the City. The university creates a need for student housing in the community. According to Sonoma State University Academic Affairs Historical Enrollments, in 2013 the campus had about 9,120 undergraduate and graduate students.

The University's goal is to provide campus housing to those students who have lived on campus the least amount of time with the majority of residents being first time freshman. Space is also available for continuing residents. Currently, campus housing provides accommodations for approximately 3,100 matriculated students. The University's housing service/staff is beginning to research and study the demand for campus housing for the next five years.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Email with Nicole Hendry, Associate Director of Housing Services, Sonoma State University, 1/21/2014

Allegro Student Apartments (formerly Jung Haus) on Beverly Drive rents its 35 four-bedroom apartments exclusively to Sonoma State University and Junior College students. Several students have claimed at City Council meetings that they have faced discriminatory rental practices in Rohnert Park. The SSU Associated Students also operates a transitional housing program that provides housing assistance for up to two weeks, depending on available funds.<sup>18</sup>

## **Section 9.4 Housing Resources**

This section analyzes the resources available for the development, rehabilitation, and preservation of housing in Rohnert Park. This analysis includes an evaluation of the availability of land resources for future housing development, the City's ability to satisfy its share of the region's future housing needs, the financial resources available to support housing activities, and the administrative resources available to assist in implementing the City's housing programs and policies.

### **Regional Housing Needs Allocation**

State Housing Element law requires that a local jurisdiction accommodate a share of the region's projected housing needs for the planning period. This share is called the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA). HCD determines the supply and affordability of housing that would, if met, make housing more accessible to current and future residents. This determination is based on a number of factors, including the level of overcrowding, potential loss of housing due to demolition, and projected regional growth rates (e.g., projected population, jobs, and households). The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), as the regional planning agency, is responsible for allocating the RHNA to individual jurisdictions within the region. Compliance with this requirement is measured by the jurisdiction's ability to provide adequate land to accommodate the RHNA. The allocation takes into account factors such as market demand for housing, employment opportunities, the availability of suitable sites and public facilities, commuting patterns, type and tenure of housing need, and other factors. In determining a jurisdiction's share of new housing needs by income category, the allocation is adjusted to avoid an over-concentration of lower-income households in any one jurisdiction. The allocation of projected housing demand is divided into four income categories:

- Very Low-Income – up to 50 percent of the median income;
- Low-Income – 51 to 80 percent of the median income;
- Moderate-Income – 81 to 120 percent of the median income; and
- Above Moderate-Income – more than 120 percent of the median income.

Based on the requirements of AB 2634 (Statutes of 2006), each jurisdiction must also address the projected need of extremely low-income (ELI) households, defined as households earning less than 30 percent of the median income.

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<sup>18</sup>Email correspondence with Nicole Hendry, Associate Director of Housing Services, Sonoma State University, 1/21/2014

The RHNA is distributed by income category and covers an eight-year planning period from January 1, 2014, to October 31, 2022. Table 9-36 summarizes the housing needs allocation as divided into four income categories. For the 2015-2023 Housing Element, the City of Rohnert Park was allocated a total RHNA of 899 units. The allocation is broken up into four income categories: very low, low, moderate, and above-moderate. Of the 181 very low-income units in the RHNA, HCD guidance states that it is fair to assume that half (or about 90) are for extremely low-income households (those earning less than 30 percent of AMI, or under \$24,800). This equals approximately 10 percent of the total RHNA. The allocation for very low- and low-income housing is 288 combined, or 32 percent of the total RHNA. The RHNA for moderate-income and above moderate-income housing is 127 (14.1 percent) and 484 (53.8 percent), respectively.

**TABLE 9-36  
REGIONAL HOUSING NEEDS ALLOCATION (RHNA)**

**City of Rohnert Park  
2014-2022**

<b>Income Category</b>	<b>RHNA</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Very Low (<50% of AMI, <\$41,300)	181	20.1%
Low (50-80% of AMI, \$41,300-\$65,000)	107	11.9%
Moderate (81-120% of AMI, 65,000-\$99,100)	127	14.1%
Above Moderate (>120% of AMI, >\$99,100)	484	53.8%
<b>Total<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>899</b>	<b>100%</b>

<sup>1</sup>Total may not add up to 100 percent because of rounding.

Sources: ABAG Final Regional Housing Needs Allocation, 2013 and Official State Income Limits for 2013 HCD.

## Housing Production under the Previous RHNA

The previous Housing Element identified adequate sites to accommodate the 2007-2014 RHNA of 1,654. However, as shown in Table 9-37, total housing production in Rohnert Park (31 units) met only about 2 percent of the RHNA during the previous planning period. There was a total capacity of 6,861 units on available sites, 1,313 of which were appropriate for very low- and low-income development and 5,548 were appropriate for moderate- and above moderate-income development. The City's efforts were largely directed at very low-income housing; however, only 6.4 percent of the very low-income housing goal was met. There were no low-income housing units created between 2007 and 2014. Overall, about 4 percent of the RHNA was met for lower-income housing units. Additionally, less than 1 percent of the above moderate-income housing goal was met. The limited number of houses constructed during this period can be attributed to the economic repercussions of the 2008 housing crisis.

TABLE 9-37 RHNA MET IN ROHNERT PARK				
City of Rohnert Park 2007-2014				
	RHNA for 2007-2014	Available Sites 2007-2014	Units Built 2007-2014	Percent
Very Low	371	1,313	24	6.4%
Low	231		0	0%
Moderate	373	5,548	1	0.3%
Above Moderate	679		6	0.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,654</b>	<b>6,861</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>1.9%</b>

Source: City of Rohnert Park, 2014.

Because of the declining housing market, the Creekwood, Sonoma Mountain Village, Stadium Area, and University District Specific Plan developments were approved but not constructed, as shown in Table 9-38. Since these units were not constructed and the sites are still available, they can be counted towards the 2014-2022 RHNA.

## Residential Sites Inventory

State law requires each jurisdiction in California to demonstrate the availability of adequate sites through appropriate zoning and development standards and the availability of public services and facilities. These available sites must provide the necessary policy and regulatory guidance to accommodate a variety of housing types at a variety of income levels. The City must demonstrate that the estimated capacity of adequate sites will be able to accommodate the projected housing need for the 2014-2022 RHNA.

To enable the City of Rohnert Park to meet RHNA goals, the City must evaluate its capacity to provide available sites to meet projected future housing needs. The City must demonstrate it has or will make available adequate sites with appropriate zoning and development standards and with services and facilities to accommodate the RHNA. The following section shows how the City will meet this requirement through approved and potential projects within the current city limits. The City has also identified projects outside the current city limits and within the current Sphere of Influence that could provide potential long-term housing capacity, upon annexation. These projects are not counted towards the 2014-2022 RHNA as they are currently under Sonoma County jurisdiction.

### **Development Potential within the Current City Limits**

As shown in Table 9-38, there are opportunities for approximately 4,656 new units within the current city limits, including 643 lower-income units, 1,601 moderate-income units, and 2,412 above moderate-income units. These projects are shown in Figure 9-4.

Since the Housing Element planning period begins January 1, 2014, Rohnert Park's RHNA can be reduced by the number of new units approved or planned as of January 1, 2014. City staff compiled an inventory of all approved and potential (anticipated to be approved and built by the end of the current Housing Element planning period) residential projects with a housing component as of January 1, 2014.

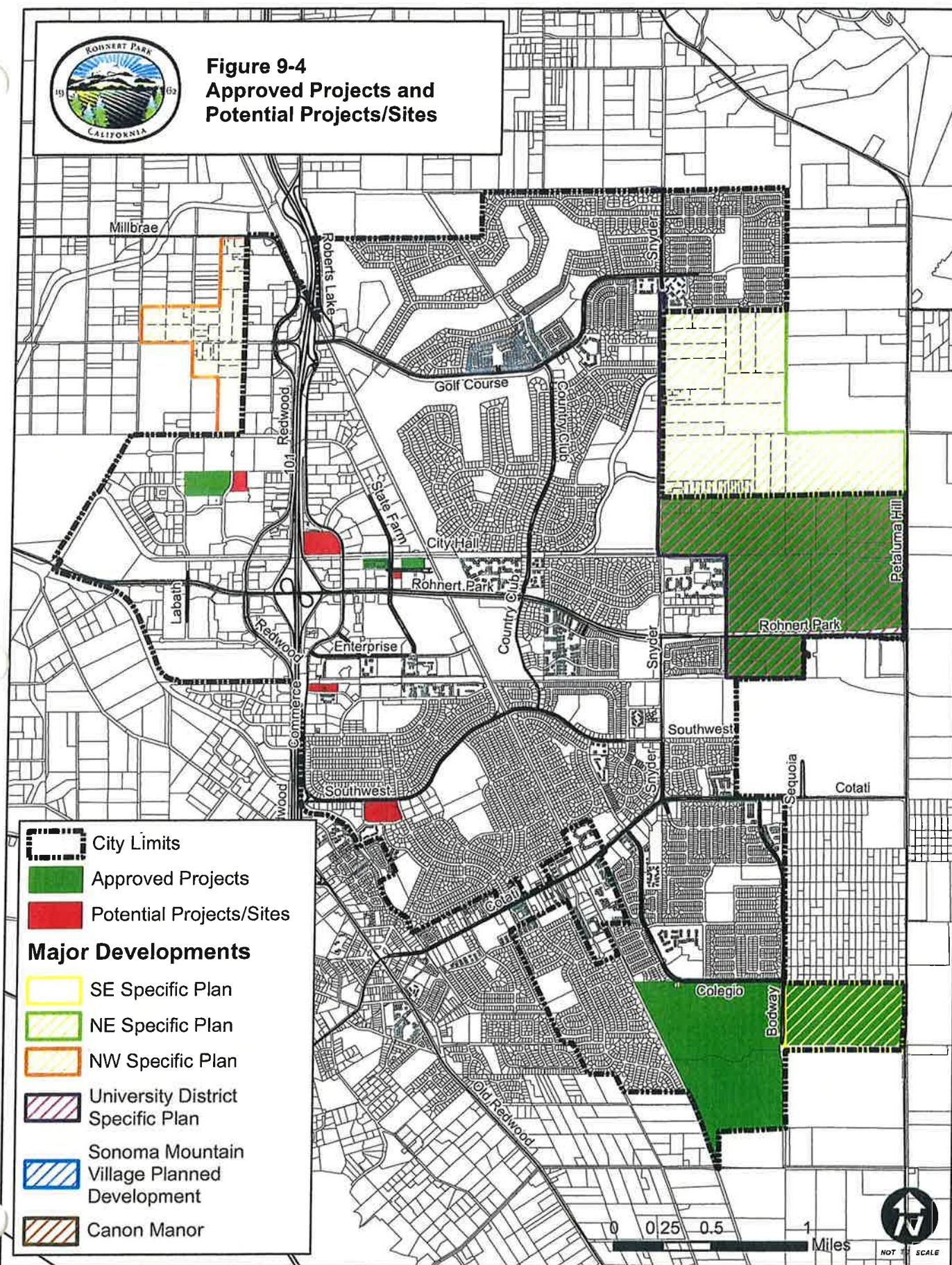
The sites inventory is made up of two types of approved projects and potential projects. Approved projects have already received approval from the City in the form of a tentative map, development agreement, development area plan, or other entitlements. For approved projects deed-restricted affordable units were inventoried as lower-income. Sites that are designated Mixed-Use and High-Density Residential allow up to 24 dwelling units per net acre, and were inventoried as available to moderate-income residential development based on expected rents. Sites that are designated Medium-Density Residential allow up to 12 dwelling units per net acre, and were inventoried as available for moderate-income residential development based on expected rents. All other sites were inventoried as above moderate-income.

Potential projects have not yet received entitlements from the City, but are expected to within the RHNA planning period. Potential projects were identified in accordance with the "default density standard" set forth in Government Code Section 65583.2(c) (3). The default density standard is the density "deemed appropriate" in State law to accommodate housing for lower-income households given the type of the jurisdiction. Rohnert Park is considered a "suburban jurisdiction" with a default density standard of 20 units per acre. HCD is required to accept sites that allow for zoning at this density as appropriate for accommodating Rohnert Park's share of the regional housing need for lower-income households. For potential projects, deed-restricted affordable units were inventoried as lower-income. All other units were inventoried as above moderate-income units.

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**Figure 9-4**  
**Approved Projects and Potential Projects/Sites**



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**TABLE 9-38  
APPROVED AND POTENTIAL PROJECTS WITHIN CITY LIMITS**

**City of Rohnert Park  
2014**

Project/Site	APN/Address	Zoning	Allowable Density (units/acre) <sup>1</sup>	General Plan Designation	Acres	Realistic Unit Capacity	Income Category	Existing Use	Infrastructure Capacity (Y/N)	On-Site Constraints (Y/N)
<b>Approved Projects</b>										
Creekwood	143-021-036	M-U	24	Mixed Use	8.36	96	82 Moderate 14 Lower-Income	Mini-storage on about 40% of site, rest is vacant	Y	N
Fiori Estates (Stadium Area)	143-040-125	PD	N/A	Residential High Density	11.1	244	244 Above Moderate	Under construction (apartments)	Y	N
Sonoma Mountain Village <sup>1</sup>	046-051-040	PD	N/A	Mixed Use	175	1,892	1,638 Above Moderate	Vacant	Y	N
	046-051-045	PD	N/A				127 Moderate 127 Lower-Income	Parking lots and existing buildings	Y	N
Southeast Specific Plan	047-111-030	SP	N/A	Rural/Estate, Low Density, Medium Residential and Mixed-Use	79.7	475	157 Above Moderate	Undeveloped	Y	N
	047-111-051	SP	N/A		0.1		246 Moderate 72 Lower-Income		Y	N
University District Specific Plan	045-253-007	SP	N/A	Rural Estate, Low Density, Medium Density, High Density Residential, and Mixed Use	3.06	1,645	408 Above Moderate 1,019 Moderate 218 Lower-Income	Undeveloped	Y	N
	045-253-009	SP	N/A		1.74				Y	N
	045-253-010	SP	N/A		1.73				Y	N
	045-253-011	SP	N/A		1.73				Y	N
	045-253-012	SP	N/A		1.74				Y	N
	045-253-018	SP	N/A		66.79				Y	N

**TABLE 9-38**  
**APPROVED AND POTENTIAL PROJECTS WITHIN CITY LIMITS**

**City of Rohnert Park  
2014**

Project/Site	APN/Address	Zoning	Allowable Density (units/acre) <sup>1</sup>	General Plan Designation	Acres	Realistic Unit Capacity	Income Category	Existing Use	Infrastructure Capacity (Y/N)	On-Site Constraints (Y/N)
	045-262-001	SP	N/A		20					
	045-262-002	SP	N/A		20					
	045-262-003	SP	N/A		31.5					
	045-262-004	SP	N/A		10					
	045-131-019	SP	N/A		46.25					
	047-131-024	SP	N/A		29.06					
	047-131-025	SP	N/A		70.47					
	047-131-026	SP	N/A		27.64					
	047-131-027	SP	N/A		7					
<b>Potential</b>										
City Hall	143-061-052	R-H	24	HDR	0.83	51	61 Lower-Income	Old City Hall and adjacent properties	Y	N
	143-380-015	R-H	24		0.93				Y	N
	143-380-023 to 029	R-H	24		0.80				Y	N
City Center Area	143-051-065	M-U	24	Mixed-Use	0.35	16	14 Above Moderate 2 Lower-Income	Old vet office and adjacent parcel	Y	N
	143-051-066	M-U	24		0.32					
Southwest Shopping Center	143-150-058	M-U	24	Mixed-Use	3.24	143	121 Above Moderate 22 Lower-Income	Retail	Y	N
	143-150-009	M-U	24		1.27				Y	N
	143-150-010	M-U	24		1.7				Y	N
	143-150-028	M-U	24		0.09				Y	N
	143-150-012	M-U	24		0.35				Y	N
	143-150-023	M-U	24		0.09				Y	N

TABLE 9-38 APPROVED AND POTENTIAL PROJECTS WITHIN CITY LIMITS										
City of Rohnert Park 2014										
Project/Site	APN/Address	Zoning	Allowable Density (units/acre) <sup>1</sup>	General Plan Designation	Acres	Realistic Unit Capacity	Income Category	Existing Use	Infrastructure Capacity (Y/N)	On-Site Constraints (Y/N)
	143-150-024	M-U	24		0.29				Y	N
Dowdell Reserve (Stadium Area)	143-040-126	PD	N/A	Residential High-Density	2.44	84	84 Above Moderate	Vacant	Y	N
<b>Total</b>						4,656	<b>2,666 above moderate-income units</b> <b>1,474 moderate-income units</b> <b>516 lower-income units</b>			

Source: City of Rohnert Park, 2014.

<sup>1</sup>The Sonoma Mountain Village Affordable Housing Agreement states the project will meet the City's Inclusionary Housing Ordinance though the provision of 254 deed-restricted affordable dwelling units. If operated as rental housing, 50 percent of the deed-restricted units must be rented to very low-income households and 50 percent must be rented to low-income households. If the deed-restricted units are sold as owner-occupied housing, 50 percent of the units must be sold to low-income households and 50 percent must be sold to moderate-income households. Since at least half (127) of the deed-restricted units will be affordable to low-income households regardless of whether they are renter- or owner-occupied, the Housing Element counts 127 deed-restricted units as lower-income units and 127 deed-restricted units as moderate-income units.

## **Approved Projects**

Approved projects are either fully entitled or have been approved by the City and are currently, or will soon be, entitled. Entitled units are units considered approved due to a Development Agreement, Housing Agreement/Density Bonus Agreement, or other zoning action (e.g., subdivision, conditional use permit, and variance). Approved projects within the city limits total 4,352 units, 558 of which were inventoried as lower-income units.

### **Creekwood**

The Creekwood development is an 8.36-acre vacant site on the west side of Commerce Boulevard, north of Hinebaugh Channel (approximately 6025 Commerce Blvd.). The development is approved for 96 units (14 of which are deed-restricted and inventoried as lower-income) on the eastern half of the parcel. A mini-storage facility was recently constructed on the western half of the parcel. Access and other infrastructure necessary to support residential use on the site are already in place.

### **Fiori Estates (Stadium Area)**

The City owns 14 undeveloped acres on the west side of the community that adjoin a former baseball stadium site and wastewater holding ponds (the Stadium Area). The Final Development Plan was approved by the City Council in 2008. As Table 9-38 shows, the Fiori Estates apartment complex is approved for 244 units on 11 acres. There is an additional capacity on the remainder of the residentially designated areas within the Stadium Area. This capacity is addressed as a potential site in the potential projects section.

### **Sonoma Mountain Village Project**

Sonoma Mountain Village (SMV) planned development, approved August 24, 2010, is located at the southwest corner of Bodway Parkway and Camino Colegio. SMV is a sustainably designed community based on the “One-Planet Living” ecological footprint principle. The development area is the former site of the Agilent Campus, and contains several existing buildings. In total the final development plan comes to approximately 175 acres. When it was approved, SMV was rezoned as a planned development (PD) that includes a combination of residential, retail, office/business, and commercial uses.

In total 1,892 housing units are approved for development, including 1,694 residential units and 198 market-rate second dwelling units. Housing types include rowhouses, townhomes, live/work, condominiums, single family detached, cottages, estate homes, lofts, apartments, family cohousing, senior cohousing, and second dwelling units. As described in the Affordable Housing Plan, the project will meet the City’s Inclusionary Housing Ordinance through the provision of 254 affordable dwelling units. If operated as rental housing, 50 percent of the deed-restricted units must be rented to very low-income households and 50 percent must be rented to low-income households. If the deed-restricted units are sold as owner-occupied housing, 50 percent of the units must be sold to low-income households and 50 percent must be sold to moderate-income households. Since at least half (127) of the deed-restricted units will be affordable to low-income households regardless of whether they are rented or owner-occupied, the Housing Element counts 127 deed-restricted units as lower-income units and 127 deed-restricted units as moderate-income units. Although densities will likely provide for more affordable housing, the remaining 1,638 units (including 198 second units) are inventoried as above moderate units.

### **University District Specific Plan**

The University District Specific Plan was originally approved in May of 2006 and then amended in June 2014. The Specific Plan divides future housing development into general plan designations. A total of 1,645 units are approved for the University District Specific Plan area. A total of 1,454 of these units are entitled as a part of the Amended and Restated Development Agreement for the Vast Oak and University District LLC properties. These properties, described below, were inventoried as approved and entitled projects.

#### ***Vast Oak and University District LLC Properties***

In 2006 the UDLLC and Vast Oak Properties submitted a tentative map application with their intent to subdivide approximately 226.58 acres in the Vast Oak Property and 34.34 acres in the UDLLC property (APN 045-262-001 through -004, 047-131-019, and 047-131-024 through -027). A new map for the same area was submitted to correspond to the 2014 Specific Plan and was approved in June 2014. The project is approved with a mix of residential, park, open space, public/institutional, and mixed use/commercial uses. Housing would consist of single-family detached and attached dwellings as wells as multi-family stacked-flat, carriage, townhome, live/work condominium ownership, and rental homes.

Vast Oak includes a mix of residential designations and densities. The project is approved for 12 acres of land designated Rural Estate density, resulting in 26 single family homes inventoried as above moderate-income units. It also includes 58 acres of land designated Low-Density Residential, resulting in 331 single family homes inventoried as above moderate-income. There are 60 acres of land designated Medium-Density Residential, resulting in 526 attached dwellings, townhomes, and rental homes inventoried as moderate-income. There are also 24 acres of land designated Mixed-Use on the southeast corner of the specific plan adjacent to the land designated Open Space. This land is approved for 150 multifamily units and 100,000 square feet of commercial use. These units were inventoried as moderate-income. The UDLLC property, located south of Rohnert Park Expressway, will include 22.34 acres of a new designation called Public/Institutional/Medium-Density. This designation is anticipated to result in 203 units of small-lot single family and townhome units and was inventoried as moderate-income.

Finally, there are nine acres of land designated High-Density Residential located on the northwest side of the Vast Oak Property. As described in the Affordable Housing Plan in the Development Agreement, the project will meet the City's Inclusionary Housing Ordinance for both the Vast Oak and UDLLC properties through the provision of a 218-unit affordable apartment complex. This affordable apartment complex will be located on land designated High-Density Residential. These units were inventoried as lower-income.

***Remaining Specific Plan***

The remaining area of the Specific Plan is made up of the Lenden, Gee, and Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District properties located in the northwest corner of the Specific Plan area. Once the 1,454 entitled units from the Vast Oak and UDLLC properties are subtracted from the 1,645 total units approved for the University District Specific Plan, the remaining Specific Plan area has capacity for 191 units. This includes 9 acres of land designated low-density residential that is anticipated to result in 51 units of single family homes, and were inventoried as above moderate-income units. This area will also include 16 acres of land designated medium-density residential that is anticipated to result in 140 single family homes and townhouses. These units were inventoried as moderate-income units.

TABLE 9-39 UNIVERSITY DISTRICT SPECIFIC PLAN RESIDENTIAL CAPACITY				
City of Rohnert Park 2014				
Land Use Designation	Acres	Allowable Density	Expected Units	Income Category
<b>Vast Oak and UDLLC Properties</b>				
Rural/Estate Residential	12	2	26	Above Moderate
Low-Density Residential	58	6	331	Above Moderate
Medium-Density Residential	60	12	526	Moderate
Public/Institutional/Medium-Density Residential	22	12	203	Moderate
High-Density Residential (Affordable Housing Apartment Complex)	9	24	218	Lower-Income
Mixed-Use Development		24	150	Moderate
<i>Subtotal</i>			<b>1,454</b>	
<b>Remaining University Distinct Specific Plan Capacity</b>				
Low-Density Residential	9	6	51	Above Moderate
Medium-Density Residential	16	12	140	Moderate
<i>Subtotal</i>	<b>25</b>		<b>191</b>	
<b>Total Capacity</b>			<b>1,645</b>	

Source: University District Specific Plan, 2014 and University District Specific Plan Development Agreement, 2014

**Southeast Specific Plan**

The Southeast Specific Plan (SESP) and Development Area Plan was adopted December 7, 2010. Preliminary construction activities are currently (2014) underway. The SESP proposes a total of 475 residential units. The project includes a wide range of housing types, including rental and for-sale housing, and proposes to meet the City's requirement for inclusionary housing by on-site construction of affordable units. Housing types include rural estate homes, single-family detached, alley-loaded, "zipper" lot homes, duplexes/duet units, townhomes, and apartments. Residential developments within the mixed-use area are located on two lots and include multifamily and attached single family residential units.

In accordance with the Affordable Housing Plan, the developer will meet the City's Inclusionary Housing Ordinance through the provision of 72 affordable units. This includes 36 apartment units in one apartment complex within the Mixed-Use designation. Eighteen of these units will be affordable to very low-income residents and 18 will be affordable to low-income residents. The other affordable units include 28 duplex/duets and 8 single family alley residences, located within the Medium-Density Residential designation.

The land use designations described in Table 9-40 correspond with the designations shown in Figure 9-6. The residential capacity in the Specific Plan area is based on the Development Area Plan. A total of 475 units are approved for the Southeast Specific Plan area. The Rural Estate Residential and Low-Density Residential designation is anticipated to result in 157 single family units and was inventoried as above moderate-income. The Medium-Density Residential designation is approved for 237 small lot single family units and duplexes. Within this designation 36 units are affordable duplexes/single family alley residences that were inventoried as lower-income. The remaining 201 units were inventoried as moderate-income based on expected rents. The Mixed-Use designation is approved for 81 multifamily units, 36 of which are part of the affordable apartment complex and were inventoried as lower-income. The remaining 45 units within the Mixed-Use development designation were inventoried as moderate-income based on expected rents. A higher floor area ratio would be allowed for a mixed-use project if it were to include residential development as part of commercial structures (1.0 as opposed to 0.4) to encourage the development of housing in this area.

**TABLE 9-40  
SOUTHEAST SPECIFIC PLAN RESIDENTIAL CAPACITY**

**City of Rohnert Park  
2014**

<b>Land Use Designation</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Allowable Density</b>	<b>Expected Units</b>
Rural/Estate Residential	16.0	2	29
Low-Density Residential	21.0	6	128
Medium-Density Residential	27.3	12	237
Mixed-Use Development <sup>1</sup>	7.0	24	81
Total	71.3		475

<sup>1</sup>Mixed use includes up to 10,000 gross square feet of commercial/retail space.

Note: Acres for parks and public facilities are not included in this table.

Source: *Southeast Specific Plan, 2010*.

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## LEGEND

- [Yellow Box] ESTATE RESIDENTIAL
- [Light Yellow Box] LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- [Medium Yellow Box] MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- [Pink Box] P / I / MEDIUM DENSITY
- [Dark Red Box] HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- [Red Box] MIXED-USE
- [Blue Box] PARK
- [Light Blue Box] PUBLIC / INSTITUTIONAL
- [Green Box] OPEN SPACE

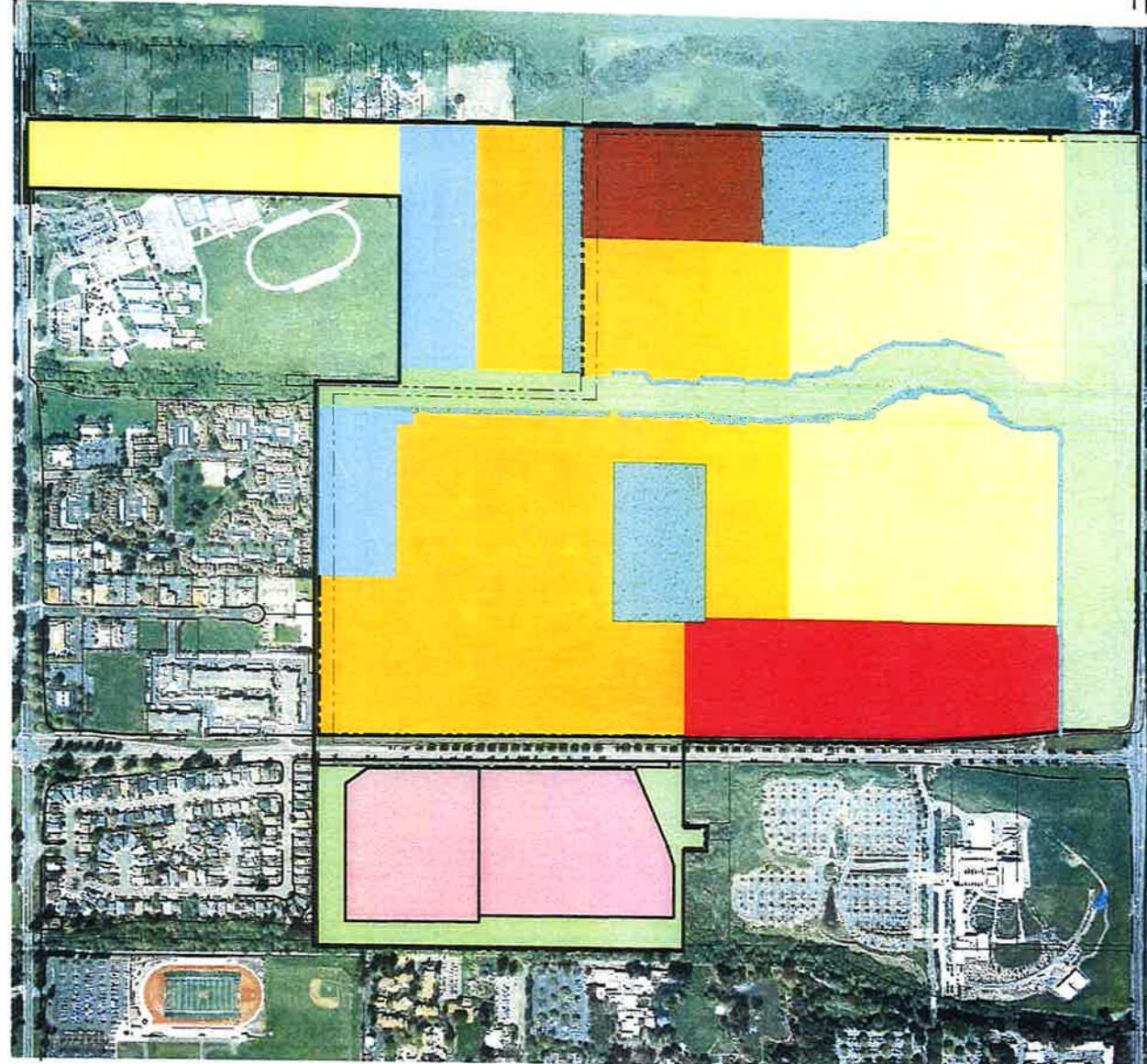


Figure 9-5

CONFIGURATION, UNIT COUNT & UNIT TYPES SUBJECT TO  
CHANGE PURSUANT TO THE TENTATIVE MAP.



0 400 800 1600  
SCALE: 1"=800'

UNIVERSITY DISTRICT LAND USE PLAN  
UNIVERSITY DISTRICT SPECIFIC PLAN  
ROHNERT PARK CALIFORNIA

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**Figure 9-6**  
**Southeast Specific Plan**  
**Land Use**



Source: Southeast Specific Plan, 2010

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## **Potential Projects/Sites**

Potential projects/sites are vacant and underutilized sites that the City has identified as candidates for potential development, but do not yet have approved development applications. There are four potential project sites with capacity for 304 units, in the city of Rohnert Park that will be counted towards the 2014-2022 RHNA. These sites are summarized in Table 9-39 and shown in Figure 9-4.

### **City Hall**

The former City Hall site, combined with other parcels owned by the City along Avram Avenue, is zoned for high-density residential. The surrounding parcels were acquired by the former Community Development Commission in 2007 for future affordable housing. The sites are designated as R-H by the General Plan Diagram, which will allow high-density (up to 24 units per acre) residential development as a permitted use. Therefore, all 61 potential units were inventoried as lower-income units. Access and other infrastructure necessary to support residential uses on the sites are already in place.

### **City Center Area**

There are two parcels in the City Center Area that are zoned for mixed-use development and could accommodate 16 units of housing, two of which would be deed restricted and inventoried as lower-income units. The mixed-use designation allows for an FAR of 1.5 for commercial and office and 2.0 for residential uses mixed with office or commercial. Stand-alone, multifamily residential is permitted on this site.

### **Southwest Shopping Center**

Portions of the seven-acre Southwest Boulevard Shopping Center are aging and it has lost viability as a neighborhood commercial center. While specialty stores occupy some of the commercial space, other commercial space has remained vacant for several years. Ownership of the center is split among several owners and the site is divided among multiple parcels. The portion that is ripe for redevelopment is made up of seven parcels. Multifamily development of up to 143 units has been discussed for just the largest of the seven parcels (this parcel is 3.24 acres); 22 of these units would be deed-restricted and inventoried as lower-income units. Existing access and other infrastructure appears adequate to accommodate residential development on the site.

### **Reserve at Dowdell**

Reserve at Dowdell includes the remaining capacity from the Stadium Area development plan (approved by City Council in 2008) excluding the 244 units from Fiori Estates apartment complex, which is included as an approved project. Reserve at Dowdell is designated Residential High-Density and is planned for 84 units.

## Residential Sites Summary

This sites inventory has relied on the City's Inclusionary Housing Ordinance to inventory approved projects and potential projects/sites. However, if the City were to rely on the default density standard and general plan densities, all approved and potential projects that are designated mixed-use or high-density residential would be inventoried as lower-income units. This methodology would result in a total of 2,995 units inventoried as lower-income and 1,671 units inventoried as moderate and above moderate-income. Table 9-41 summarizes all approved projects and potential projects/sites by general plan designation.

TABLE 9-41 RESIDENTIAL CAPACITY BY GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION				
City of Rohnert Park 2014				
Land Use Designation	Acres	Allowable Density	Expected Units	Income Category Using Default Density Standard
<b>Approved Projects</b>				
Rural/Estate Residential	28	2	55	Moderate and above-income
Low-Density Residential	88	6	510	Moderate and above-income
Medium-Density Residential	103	12	903	Moderate and above-income
Public/Institutional/Medium-Density	22	12	203	Moderate and above-income
High-Density Residential	20	24	462	Lower-Income
Mixed-Use	214	24	2,219	Lower-Income
<i>Subtotal</i>	476		4,352	
<b>Potential Projects/Sites</b>				
High-Density Residential	5	24	155	Lower-Income
Mixed-Use	8	24	159	Lower-Income
<i>Subtotal</i>	13		314	
<b>Total Capacity</b>	<b>489</b>		<b>4,666</b>	

However, the City has elected to rely on the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance to inventory lower-income units. This much more conservative methodology still results in 516 units inventoried as lower-income, 228 more than the 288 lower-income units assigned to Rohnert Park for the 2014-2022 planning period. As shown in Table 9-42, after accounting for capacity from approved projects and potential projects/sites, the City has more than enough capacity in all income categories to meet its fair share of regional housing.

TABLE 9-42 SITES SUMMARY 2014-2022 PLANNING PERIOD					
City of Rohnert Park 2014					
	Very Low-Income	Low-Income	Moderate-Income	Above Moderate-Income	Total
2014-2022 RHNA	181	107	127	484	899
Approved Projects		431	1,474	2,447	4,352
Potential Projects/Sites		85	0	219	314
<b>Total Capacity</b>		<b>516</b>	<b>1,474</b>	<b>2,666</b>	<b>4,656</b>

## Long-Term Growth Areas

The City's regional share of housing for the planning period is provided within the current city limits. However, significant, long-term residential growth could occur in areas outside of the limits. Namely, there are two specific plans and an existing subdivision. The largest of these areas are the Northeast and Northwest Specific Plans (depicted in Figure 2.4-1 of the Land Use and Growth Management Element). Except for the provisions of the Growth Management program, no phasing requirements have been imposed on these areas, and property owners of any specific plan area can submit a specific plan and annexation request to the City. The type and location of residential development for each of the specific plan areas is summarized below, as described in the Land Use and Growth Management Element. These areas are summarized in Table 9-43 below.

**TABLE 9-43  
LONG-TERM GROWTH AREAS OUTSIDE CURRENT CITY LIMITS**

City of Rohnert Park  
2014

Development	General Plan Designation	Realistic Unit Capacity	Existing Use	Infrastructure Capacity (Y/N)	On Site Constraints (Y/N)
Canon Manor Rural Subdivision	Rural Estate, Low-Density Residential	304	Some Rural Homes, Underdeveloped	N	N
Northeast Specific Plan	Rural/ Estate Low-Density, Medium-Density, and High-Density Residential	1,090	Undeveloped	N	N
Northwest Specific Plan	High-Density Residential	363	Undeveloped	N	N
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,757</b>			

### Canon Manor

The Canon Manor rural subdivision of 229 units, an unincorporated area located immediately south of Sonoma State University, was once accessed by graveled roads and supported by individual water wells and septic systems. In the past the subdivision was plagued by failing sewer systems and contaminated water supplies, however, roads have now been paved, and water and sewer lines have been installed. Potential development of the Canon Manor area as provided for by the General Plan Diagram includes approximately 113 Rural Estate Residential infill units and 191 Low-Density Residential units south of Alice Drive. This area is not expected to be annexed by the City of Rohnert Park at any time in the near future but it is within the City's Sphere of Influence.

### **Northeast Specific Plan Area**

The General Plan Diagram provides for 23.1 acres of Rural Estate Residential and 109.1 acres of Low-Density Residential along the east side of Snyder Lane, between Copeland Creek and the “G Section” Neighborhood; as well as 6.6 acres of Medium-Density Residential and 12.5 acres of High-Density Residential along the north and south sides of Eleanor Avenue. Community Design Element Policy CD-43 stipulates that the High-Density Residential development is to be located adjacent to open space and along the proposed north-south arterial and collector streets to maximize accessibility. A total of 1,090 units are proposed for the Northeast area.

### **Northwest Specific Plan Area**

The Northwest Specific Plan proposes development of approximately 363 units on either side of the Wilfred Avenue extension. The Specific Plan was first reviewed by the Planning Commission and City Council in 2008, both of which then provided comments to the applicant. The Specific Plan has been resubmitted and is currently (2014) under review. Community Design Element Policies CD-44 and CD-47 are designed to ensure that residential developments are designed to capitalize on views of the surrounding separator to the west and north, and beyond, and that adjacent commercial areas are compatible with the residential uses.

### **Provisions for a Variety of Housing Types**

State law specifies that jurisdictions must identify adequate sites to be made available through appropriate zoning and development standards to encourage the development of a variety of housing types for all economic segments of the population. This includes single family homes, multifamily housing, second units, mobile homes, farmworker housing, homeless shelters, and transitional housing, among others.

The housing types allowed within the City of Rohnert Park zoning districts are described below.

#### **Single Family**

A “single-family dwelling, attached” is defined in the Rohnert Park Zoning Ordinance as two or more dwelling units situated on separate lots and having a common or party wall separating the dwelling units (duplex, townhouse, zero lot line developments). A “single family dwelling, detached” is defined as a detached building containing a single dwelling unit and surrounded by open space on the same lot. Single family dwellings are permitted in the R-R, R-E, R-L, and R-M zones. A Conditional Use Permit is required for single family units in the R-H zone.

#### **Multifamily**

Multifamily housing made up over 36 percent of the City’s housing stock in 2013. Multifamily developments are permitted in the R-M, R-H, and M-U zones. The maximum densities in these zones range from 6 units per acre in the R-M to 30 units per acre in the R-H zone.

## **Manufactured Housing and Mobile Homes**

Manufactured housing and mobile homes can be an affordable housing option for low- and moderate-income households. According to the California Department of Finance, in 2013 approximately 9 percent of Rohnert Park's housing stock was made up of mobile homes. Pursuant to State law, a mobile home built after June 15, 1976, certified under the National Manufactured Home Construction and Safety Act of 1974, and built on a permanent foundation may be located in any residential zone where a conventional single family detached dwelling is permitted subject to the same restrictions on density and to the same property development regulations. Mobile home parks are conditionally permitted in the R-M and R-H districts.

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Manufactured housing requires a certificate of zoning compliance in R-R/R-E, R-L, R-M, and R-H. .

## **Second Units**

A "second dwelling or residential unit" is defined as an attached or detached dwelling unit that provides complete independent living facilities for one or more persons." It must include permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation on the same parcel where the single family dwelling is situated. A second unit also includes an efficiency unit and a manufactured home. In Rohnert Park second units are allowed in all zones with a Certificate of Zoning Compliance and are subject to the following standards:

- A second residential unit is allowed on any residential lot of at least 4,000 square feet in size;
- A second residential unit must be architecturally compatible with the main unit and must maintain the appearance of a single family residence;
- Only one second unit is allowed per legal parcel;
- The total floor area of a second unit must not be more than 50 percent of the floor area of the existing or proposed main unit, nor can the total floor area exceed 700 square feet or contain more than one bedroom;
- One additional standard size off-street parking space must be provided in addition to the off-street parking requirements required for a single family dwelling; and
- Detached second units must meet the height and setback requirements for accessory structures.

## **Farmworker Housing**

Agricultural operations in the immediate vicinity of the city are generally limited to family-owned-and operated-farms centered on cattle grazing and hay growing that does not customarily require hired and temporary farm labor. However, farmworker housing is permitted by right in the R-R, R-E, and R-H districts. The City also complies with the Employee Housing Act, which requires local governments to treat employee housing providing accommodations for six or fewer employees the same way as a single-family unit with a residential land use designation. The City does not require a conditional use permit or other permit that is not required of a family dwelling of the same type in the same zone, and use of a family dwelling for the purposes of employee housing for six or fewer occupants does not constitute a change of occupancy.

## **Residential Care Facilities**

Residential care facilities licensed or supervised by a Federal, State, or local health/welfare agency provide 24-hour non-medical care of unrelated persons who have a disability and are in need of personal services, supervision, or assistance essential for sustaining the activities of daily living or for the protection of the individual in a family-like environment.

In Rohnert Park small residential care facilities, serving six or fewer clients, are regulated similar to a single family use and are permitted in the R-R, R-E, R-L, R-M, and R-H zones. Large group homes, serving seven or more clients, are conditionally permitted in the same five zones.

## **Live/Work Lofts**

A live/work unit makes new and existing commercial buildings available for joint living and work quarters for individuals and families engaged in art-making, small-scale custom manufacturing, and similar creative endeavors. Live/work uses are conditionally permitted in commercial and mixed-use districts.

## **Mixed-Use**

Mixed-use projects combine both nonresidential and residential uses on the same site. Mixed-use development can help reduce the effects of housing cost burden by increasing density and offering opportunities for reduced vehicular trips by walking, bicycling, or taking public transportation. The preferred pattern of development will be ground floor commercial uses with residential and/or office uses located on the upper floors; however, standalone residential uses are also allowed in the Mixed-Used district. Mixed-use is permitted in the M-U district as well as commercial zones so long as the residential development is located in the same building as a non-residential use. In the commercial zones residential uses as a part of a mixed-use project are only permitted when located in the same building as a nonresidential use.

## **Emergency Shelters**

State law requires that local jurisdictions strengthen provisions for addressing the housing needs of the homeless, including the identification of a zone or zones where emergency shelters are allowed as a permitted use without a conditional use permit. The statute permits the City to apply limited conditions to the approval of ministerial permits for emergency shelters. The identified zone must have sufficient capacity to accommodate at least one year-round shelter and accommodate the City's share of the regional unsheltered homeless population. Section 50801(e) of the California Health and Safety Code defines emergency shelters as housing with minimal supportive services for homeless persons that is limited to occupancy of six months or fewer by a homeless person.

The City's Zoning Ordinance permits large emergency shelters (seven or more persons) in the R-H, C-O, C-N, and C-R zones and conditionally permits shelters in the PI zone.

Pursuant to State law, the City established standards for the following:

- Minimum square foot floor area;
- Proximity to other shelters (300 ft.);
- Length of stay (minimum-28 days, maximum-100 days);

- Security and lighting; and
- Provision of on-site management.

### **Transitional Housing**

Transitional housing is a type of housing used to facilitate the movement of homeless individuals and families to permanent housing. Residents of transitional housing are usually connected to supportive services designed to assist the homeless in achieving greater economic independence and a permanent, stable living situation. Transitional housing can take several forms, including group quarters with beds, single family homes, and multifamily apartments, and typically offers case management and support services to help return people to independent living (often six months to two years). Transitional housing is considered a residential use and is only subject to those restrictions that apply to other residential uses of the same type in the same zone.

### **Supportive Housing**

Supportive housing links the provision of housing and social services for the homeless, people with disabilities, and a variety of other special needs populations. California Health and Safety Code (Section 50675.2) defines “supportive housing” as housing with no limit on length of stay, that is occupied by the low-income adults with disabilities, and that is linked to on-site or off-site services that assist the supportive housing resident in retaining the housing, improving his or her health status, and maximizing his or her ability to live and, when possible, work in the community. Supportive housing is considered a residential use and is only subject to those restrictions that apply to other residential uses of the same type in the same zone.

### **Single Room Occupancy (SRO)**

SRO units are one-room units intended for occupancy by a single individual. They are distinct from a studio or efficiency unit, in that a studio is a one-room unit that must contain a kitchen and bathroom. Although SRO units are not required to have a kitchen or bathroom, many SROs have one or the other. SROs are permitted in the R-R, R-E, R-H, and M-U districts with an administrative permit. The City has two names for its SRO units: the single room occupancy living unit facility, which is permitted strictly in the City’s residential zoning districts, and the single room occupancy residential hotel, which is permitted strictly in the City’s commercial zoning districts. Both are permitted in the M-U district.

### **Financial Resources**

Since the dissolution of Rohnert Park’s redevelopment agency in 2012, the Community Development Commission (CDC), the City has lost its main source of funding for housing and, therefore, coordinates with other agencies and organizations to provide housing programs. As the successor agency to the CDC, the City currently owns a few parcels of vacant land as well as three properties.

## **Administrative Resources**

### **Sonoma County Community Development Commission (SCCDC)**

The City contracts with SCCDC for administrative services for its rehabilitation programs. The SCCDC employs staff with training and experience in conducting such programs. Its services include marketing rehabilitation loan funds, taking applications and obtaining third-party verifications of application information, employing underwriting standards in the approval of loans, obtaining appraisals, verifying payment of taxes, ordering credit reports, obtaining title reports, verifying insurance coverage, procuring pest reports, preparing rehabilitation work programs, procuring contractors for rehabilitation work, monitoring construction and obtaining releases, and preparing and recording final loan documents.

### **Housing Rehabilitation Program**

The Sonoma County Community Development Commission (SCCDC) administers the Housing Rehabilitation Program to all cities in the county with the exception of the cities of Petaluma and Santa Rosa. The program assists low- and moderate-income households with incomes of up to 120 percent of area median income.

SCCDC uses CDBG funding in addition to funds and program incomes that have rolled over from previous years. The program received about \$231,000 in CDBG funds for the FY of 2013/14 plus an additional \$400,000 from roll over funds. The maximum loan amount is \$50,000 for single family homes, \$25,000 for multifamily units, and \$24,000 for mobile homes. Deferred, forgivable loans are available to very low- and low-income households, and amortized loans are available at below-market interest rates to moderate-income households.

The purpose of the program is to provide loans to low-income households to maintain owner-occupied residential properties located within the County, including Rohnert Park. The primary objective of the program is to provide decent, safe, and sanitary housing for low-income residents of the city through the correction of actual or potential health and safety problems in existing structures. The secondary objectives of the program are to preserve the city's affordable housing stock and to assist in the process of neighborhood revitalization. In fiscal year 2013/14, nine houses were rehabilitated in Rohnert Park. An additional five are in the process of being rehabilitated and should be completed by the end of the fiscal year.

SCCDC staff developed brochures, flyers, and press releases to market the program. Advertising and outreach includes newspaper articles and press releases, direct mailings to property owners, and neighborhood informational meetings.

### **Mortgage Credit Certificate Program**

The City participates in the Sonoma County Mortgage Credit Certificate (MCC) Program, which is a Federal income tax program that allows a household to take a portion of their mortgage interest as a credit rather than a deduction. The program is available to low- and moderate-income households. The allocation for 2013 for the cities of Rohnert Park, Cloverdale, Cotati, Healdsburg, Petaluma, Santa Rosa, Sebastopol, Sonoma, and the Town of Windsor was approximately \$3.2 million. This aided 15 to 17 first-time homeowners throughout the county.<sup>19</sup>

### **Mobile Home Rent Stabilization**

Mobile homes constitute a major source of affordable housing in Rohnert Park. In an effort to provide reasonable standards for, and limit space rent increases to reasonable levels, City voters approved Ordinance 494 in 1987. Rather than setting rent ceilings, as in some apartment rent control ordinances, Ordinance 494 established a process by which park owners may obtain adjustments in space rent, linked to changes in the Consumer Price Index and capital improvements within the parks.

The City established a Mobile Home Rent Appeals Board to ensure that Municipal Code Chapter 9.70 (Ordinance 494) is administered fairly for both mobile home park residents and park owners, who may file space rent petitions. If a petition is filed, the Board serves as a quasi-judicial body that issues rulings on the space rent issue. The Board is staffed by the Development Services Department Manager and Development Services Department Assistant. Mobile home park residents fund the Board through their registration fees.

### **Sonoma County Consolidated Plan**

In order to receive Community Development Block Grant, HOME Investment Partnership Act, and Federal Emergency Shelter Grant funds, the City of Rohnert Park executes a Joint Powers Agreement for Community Development with Sonoma County and six other cities within the county that do not qualify for their own entitlements. The City and town managers of the participating municipalities form the Technical Advisory Committee that reviews and makes recommendations to the Board of Supervisors on issues relating to the distribution of funds within their jurisdictions.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds have been used by the City in the past to facilitate the development of affordable housing, fund a rehabilitation program, and carry out an earthquake-bracing program for mobile homes.

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<sup>19</sup>Phone conversation with Fred Consulting Associates, March 13, 2014.

## **Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers**

The Federal Section 8 program provides rental assistance to very low-income households in need of affordable housing. The Section 8 program assists a very low-income household by paying the difference between 30 percent of the gross household income and the cost of rent. Section 8 assistance is structured as vouchers; this allows the voucher recipients to choose housing that may cost above the fair market rent as long as the recipients pay for the additional cost.

The SCCDC acts as the Sonoma County Housing Authority, which operates the Section 8 program; the Housing Authority assists 679 households in Rohnert Park through its rental assistance programs. Specifically, 665 households are assisted through the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) program. Of these households 426 include a disabled family member, 269 include children under the age of 18, and 215 include a senior, age 65 or older. The head of household in 584 of the HCV households is identified as white, 46 as Black/African American, 15 as American Indian/Alaskan Native, 17 as Asian, and 3 as Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander; 85 HCV heads of household identify as Hispanic.

The Sonoma County Housing Authority currently (2014) has 9,290 households countywide on its Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program waiting list. Preliminary screening of the people on the waiting list indicates that 4,310 are families with children, 3,406 are families that include a member with a disability, and 1,157 are families with an elderly head of households. Over 80 percent (7,498) of the households on the waiting list fall into the extremely low-income category; the remaining households on the waiting list include 1,792 very low-income households. Currently the populations with the most urgent special housing needs are seniors, persons with disabilities, persons and families leaving emergency homeless shelters, youth transitioning from foster care, and persons with HIV/AIDS. These are among the groups most vulnerable to unaffordable and substandard housing conditions.<sup>20</sup>

## **Fair Housing of Sonoma County**

Fair Housing of Sonoma County (FHOSC) is a joint project between Fair Housing of Marin and Sonoma County People for Economic Opportunity. FHOSC is funded by HUD to conduct fair housing services in Sonoma County, to counter illegal discrimination, and to educate Sonoma County tenants, managers, and property owners as to their rights and responsibilities under State and Federal fair housing laws.

FHOSC provides bilingual counseling, investigative services, mediation, and legal referrals to persons confronted with housing discrimination, followed by mediation or referrals to HUD, the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing, or to attorneys, as appropriate. There is no charge for these services. The agency also provides information and training for rental property owners, real estate agents, and apartment managers on discrimination issues.

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<sup>20</sup>[http://www.sonoma-county.org/cdc/pdf/cdplan/2010/con\\_plan\\_2010.pdf](http://www.sonoma-county.org/cdc/pdf/cdplan/2010/con_plan_2010.pdf)

## **Community Support Network**

Community Support Network (CSN) is a non-profit agency that provides a wide range of services to mentally and/or emotionally ill and homeless adults. CSN offers a network of social services, including residential alternatives to institutional care, social and vocational rehabilitation, chemical dependency counseling, case management, supportive housing, and other special social services.

## **California Homebuyers Fund**

In 2007 the City of Rohnert Park and the other cities in Sonoma County became an associate member in the California Homebuyers Fund (CHF). Participation in CHF provides Sonoma County residents, including those residing in Rohnert Park, access to a variety of home loan opportunities, including loans designed to benefit homebuyers having low- to moderate-incomes and homebuyers needing assistance with down-payments and related closing costs. The purchase price limits under the CHF guidelines are currently higher than the MCC program, benefiting more residents of Sonoma County.

## **Opportunities for Energy Conservation**

Energy efficiency is directly related to affordability of housing especially for low-income households, as money spent on utilities can substantially reduce the amount that can be spent on food, shelter, and other basic needs.

Rohnert Park has taken many actions to reduce its impact on the environment by becoming more sustainable. Highlights of recent efforts include:

- City Council adopted resolution 2004-111, which sets a goal for greenhouse gas reductions of 20 percent by the year 2010 for internal City operations (baseline year 2000) (May 2004).
- City Council adopted resolution 2005-233, which sets a goal for greenhouse gas reductions of 25 percent by the year 2015 for community-wide use, private and public (baseline year 1990) (July 2005).
- City Council passed resolution 2006-67 adopting Build It Green's (BIG) New Home Construction Green Building Guidelines, 2005 Edition as City of Rohnert Park Referenced Standards (March 2006).
- City Council approved agreement with University District LLC, including provisions for high level of green building construction standards for all new construction (May 2006).
- City staff conducts Sustainability Ordinance workshop with City Council (August 2006).
- Energy Efficiency Ordinance 2007-779. This ordinance also established Title 14-Sustainability in the Municipal Code (March 2007).
- Green Building Ordinance 2007-782 (July 2007).
- Building Permit issued for renovation of vacant office building to convert into a LEED Gold City Hall (September 2007).

On November 26, 2013, the City adopted the 2013 California Building Code which requires new residential buildings to meet a comprehensive set of standards for energy conservation. Builders of these units may achieve compliance by calculating energy performance in a prescribed manner or by selecting from alternative component packages that prescribe a fixed method of compliance. All proposed residential units are checked by the Building Department to ensure that their design and construction complies with Title 24 energy standards. Additions and alterations must also meet these standards if they increase the heated or cooled floor space of a building.

Opportunities for improving energy conservation in the design of residential development include ensuring the consistency of tentative tract maps with Section 66473.1 of the Subdivision Map Act, which requires the designs of subdivisions to provide for future passive or natural heating or cooling opportunities, and requires the planting of trees along streets and in parking lots to reduce heat.

In February 2012 the Regional Climate Protection Authority (RCPA) partnered with the County of Sonoma Permit and Resource Management Department (PRMD) to secure a Sustainable Communities Planning grant from the Strategic Growth Council for \$1 million. The Greenhouse Gas Reduction Implementation Program (GRIP)—which is now also referred to as “Climate Action 2020” is a collaborative effort among all nine cities and the County of Sonoma to take further actions in reducing GHG emissions community-wide.

Through the implementation of this program, participating jurisdictions will achieve compliance with Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) guidelines and other related policies that establish reduction targets for GHG emissions, including AB 32, CEQA, and local GHG reduction goals. Building upon the climate protection efforts and goals established in the 2008 Community Climate Action Plan created by the Climate Protection Campaign, the goal of the GRIP is to update all municipal and communitywide GHG inventories, evaluate emission targets, and create an implementation plan to reach those targets. The updated climate action plans that are developed for each jurisdiction will be tailored to specific circumstances, while at the same time benefiting from a countywide perspective.

The County will develop a comprehensive indicator monitoring program to measure the GRIP’s success toward achieving outcomes related to more sustainable communities and reduced GHG emissions.<sup>21</sup> The County will measure the decreased energy use by sector in accordance with the Sonoma County Community Action Plan through programs such as the Sonoma County Energy Independence Program to provide educational resources and a financing mechanism for energy retrofits. Additional measured outcomes include decreased municipal energy use through efforts of the Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA) and General Services programs such as the construction of solar energy systems, fuel cells, geothermal heat exchange, and an increased local renewable energy portfolio through the existing Renewable Energy Secure Communities (RESCO) grant to SCWA.

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<sup>21</sup>[https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov/attachments/proposal\\_24274/attachment\\_63424.pdf](https://faast.waterboards.ca.gov/attachments/proposal_24274/attachment_63424.pdf)

## Pacific Gas and Electric

Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), which provides gas and electricity services in Rohnert Park, offers public information and technical assistance to homeowners regarding energy conservation. PG&E provides numerous incentives for energy-efficient new construction and home remodeling. Remodeling rebates include cool roofs, insulation, and water heaters. Residents are granted between \$100 and \$200 per 1,000 square feet for installed cool roofs and up to \$500 for attic and wall insulation. Installing new energy-efficient water heaters qualifies residents for a \$30 rebate.

PG&E also offers energy-efficiency tax credits under the Energy Policy Act of 2005 for both homeowners and builders. Existing homeowners are eligible for tax credits up to a maximum of \$500 for energy-efficient improvements. An additional tax credit is available for solar energy systems. Builders of energy-efficient new homes are eligible for tax credits up to a maximum of \$2,000.

PG&E provides a variety of energy conservation services for residents as well as offers a wealth of financial and energy-related assistance programs for low-income customers:

- **The Balanced Payment Plan (BPP).** Designed to eliminate big swings in a customer's monthly payments by averaging energy costs over the year. On enrollment PG&E averages the amount of energy used by the household in the past year to derive the monthly BPP amount. PG&E checks the household's account every four months to make sure that its estimated average is on target. If the household's energy use has increased or decreased dramatically, PG&E will change the amount of monthly payment so that the household does not overpay or underpay too much over the course of a year.
- **CARE (California Alternate Rates for Energy).** PG&E offers this rate reduction program for low- to middle-income households. PG&E determines qualified households by a sliding income scale based on the number of household members. The CARE program provides a 20 percent discount on monthly energy bills.
- **Energy Efficiency for Multifamily Properties.** The Energy Efficiency for Multifamily Properties program is available to owners and managers of existing multifamily residential dwellings containing two or more units. The program encourages energy efficiency by providing rebates for the installation of certain energy-saving products such as high-efficiency appliances, compact fluorescent light bulbs, attic and wall insulation, and efficient heating and cooling systems.
- **Energy Savings Assistance Program.** PG&E's Energy Savings Assistance program offers free weatherization measures and energy-efficient appliances to qualified low- to moderate-income households. PG&E determines qualified households through the same sliding income scale used for CARE. The program includes measures such as attic insulation, weather stripping, caulking, and minor home repairs. Some customers qualify for replacement of appliances including refrigerators, air conditioners, and evaporative coolers.
- **Energy Works Program/Energy Partners Program.** The Energy Works Program provides qualified low-income tenants free weatherization measures and energy-efficient appliances to reduce gas and electricity usage. In order to qualify for the program, a household's total annual gross income cannot exceed the income as set in the income guidelines ([http://www.hasc.org/energy\\_works\\_program.htm](http://www.hasc.org/energy_works_program.htm)); households must receive gas and/or electricity from PG&E; and the residence cannot have participated in the Energy Partners Program in the past 10 years.

- **The Family Electric Rate Assistance (FERA) Program.** PG&E offers a rate reduction program for low- to middle-income large households of three or more people. It enables low-income large households to receive a Tier 3 (131 percent to 200 percent of baseline) electric rate reduction on their PG&E bill every month.
- **The Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) Block Grant.** Funded by the Federal Department of Health and Human Services, this program provides two basic types of services. Eligible low-income persons, via local governmental and nonprofit organizations, can receive financial assistance to offset the costs of heating and/or cooling dwellings and/or to have their dwellings weatherized to make them more energy efficient. This is accomplished through these three program components:
  - The Weatherization Program provides free weatherization services to improve the energy efficiency of homes, including attic insulation, weather-stripping, minor home repairs, and related energy conservation measures.
  - The Home Energy Assistance Program ( HEAP) provides financial assistance to eligible households to offset the costs of heating and/or cooling dwellings.
  - The Energy Crisis Intervention Program (ECIP) provides payments for weather-related or energy-related emergencies.
- **Medical Baseline Allowance Program.** The Medical Baseline Allowance program is available to households where a California-licensed physician has certified that a full-time resident is either dependent on life-support equipment while at home; a paraplegic, hemiplegic, quadriplegic, or multiple sclerosis patient with special heating and/or cooling needs; a scleroderma patient with special heating needs; or suffering from a life-threatening illness or compromised immune system with special heating and/or cooling requirements to sustain the patient's life or prevent deterioration of the patient's medical condition. The program allows customers to get additional quantities of energy at the lowest or baseline price for residential customers.
- **PG&E's SmartAC™ program.** This program offers a simple and convenient way to help prevent power interruptions. When customers sign up, PG&E installs a free SmartAC device that slightly reduces the energy the air conditioner uses automatically in case of a state or local energy supply emergency. PG&E customers receive \$50 for signing up for the SmartAC™ program.
- **REACH (Relief for Energy Assistance through Community Help).** The REACH program is sponsored by PG&E and administered through the Salvation Army. PG&E customers can enroll to give monthly donations to the REACH program. Through the REACH program qualified low-income customers who have experienced uncontrollable or unforeseen hardships that prohibit them from paying their utility bills may receive an energy credit up to \$200. REACH assistance is available once per 18-month period, with exceptions for seniors and mentally- and physically-disabled persons. The Salvation Army determines eligibility by a sliding income scale based on the number of household members. To qualify for the program, the applicant's income cannot exceed 200 percent of the Federal poverty guidelines.

## Section 9.5 Housing Constraints

A number of factors may constrain the development of housing, particularly housing affordable to lower-income households. Constraints to the provision of adequate and affordable housing are created by market, governmental, infrastructure, and environmental factors, among others. These constraints may increase the cost of housing, or may render residential construction economically infeasible for developers. Housing production constraints can also significantly impact households with low and moderate incomes and special needs.

An analysis of these factors can help in the development of programs that lessen both governmental and non-governmental constraints that affect supply and cost of housing.

### Governmental Constraints

Governmental regulations and exactions are designed to achieve desirable land use patterns, coordinate development with infrastructure expansion, finance capital improvements, equitably distribute the cost of public services, maintain the ambiance of existing neighborhoods, improve the urban environment, and preserve open space and unique ecosystems. Local policies and regulations, however, can impact the price and availability of housing and, in particular, the provision of affordable housing. Land use controls, site improvement requirements, fees and exactions, and permit processing procedures, among other issues, may constrain the maintenance, development, and improvement of housing. This section discusses potential governmental constraints in Rohnert Park.

#### Land Use Controls

#### General Plan Policies

In addition to the Housing Element, the Land Use and Growth Management Element and the Community Design Element of the General Plan directly affect the location and type of housing that may be developed as well as the timing of development.

#### Land Use and Growth Management Element

The Land Use and Growth Management Element provides for a variety of housing types, particularly higher-density housing, in order to meet the needs of a growing population and lower-income households.

As shown in Table 9-44, the Element includes five residential land use designations with a density range from 2 units per acre to 24 units per acre. The density and FAR provisions are sufficiently high to allow the development of affordable housing for all income levels. Minimum densities are included in all residential designations in order to maximize residential development on a limited supply of land as well as achieve a balance and variety of housing types.

<b>TABLE 9-44</b> <b>RESIDENTIAL LAND USE DESIGNATIONS</b> <b>City of Rohnert Park</b> <b>2014</b>		
<b>Land Use Designation</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Density (units/gross acre)</b>
Rural Estate	This area is predominantly single family residential development and is intended for Canon Manor, Southeast Specific Plan Area, and designated locations at the city's ultimate physical edge, providing transition between urban and open space uses.	up to 2.0
Low-Density	This classification is mainly intended for detached single family dwellings, but the Zoning Ordinance may permit attached single family units in selected or all areas, provided each unit has ground-floor living area and private outdoor open space. A separate district for mobile home subdivisions or zero-lot-line developments may be included.	4.0 – 6.0
Medium-Density	Dwelling types may include attached or detached single family housing. Multifamily housing type is not permitted, whereas side-by-side duplexes not separated by a property line are permitted.	6.1 – 12.0
High-Density	This designation permits a wide range of housing types, ranging from single family attached to multifamily. It is intended for specific areas where higher densities may be appropriate.	12.1 – 24.0
Mixed-Use Development	This designation accommodates a variety of compatible businesses, stores, institutions, service organizations, and residences in a pedestrian-oriented setting. Allowable uses include multifamily residences, retail shops, financial, businesses, personal services, and restaurants. Automotive and drive-through establishments are not permitted.	FAR-2.0 <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Floor Area Ratios (FARs) for mixed-use classifications are for combined residential and non-residential development; in Planned Developments and Specific Plan areas, limitations on maximum FAR will be set forth in the applicable zoning district. No separate residential density limitations are specified.

Source: City of Rohnert Park General Plan, 2014.

***Urban Growth Boundary and Growth Management***

The Land Use and Growth Management Element provides for the establishment of an Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). The UGB delineates the ultimate edge of urban activity within the Rohnert Park Planning Area through 2020. It includes the area within the current city limits as well as annexed and specific plan areas identified in the General Plan. In November 2000 a 20-year Urban Growth Boundary ballot measure was approved by the voters replacing Policy GM-2 in the General Plan. It may be modified only by public vote, except in certain circumstances. The City then adopted a Growth Management Ordinance that is consistent with General Plan policies.

The UGB promotes a compact urban form that ensures the efficient provision of services and preserves agricultural and open space outside of the boundary. The City's growth management provisions are intended to ensure that growth within the UGB is paced to achieve General Plan buildout over a 20-year period, representing an annual average population growth rate of 1 percent. The provisions also ensure the necessary infrastructure and public facilities are provided for new development.

The growth management program anticipates an average of approximately 225 new housing units per year and only applies a development cap if residential building permits in any two successive calendar years exceed 560 units. Housing that is affordable to very low- and low-income households is not included in the total housing counts. The program also allows the cap to be adjusted up or down by as much as 10 percent by the City Council on an annual basis to accommodate changes in land use program assumptions (e.g., vacancy rate factors and household size).

When applications for residential approvals exceed the growth management program's annual limits, a project's contribution towards housing affordable to lower-income households will be given top priority in determining preference for allocation of development approval (Policy GM-5). The growth management program is also reviewed annually to determine, in part, whether priority should be given to specific housing types to achieve a balanced land use and housing program (Policy GM-4).

During this planning period the City's RHNA allocation is 899 units, of which 288, or 32 percent, are to be affordable to very low- and low-income households. The growth management program's provisions for annual growth (225) exceed the 69-unit annual average needed to meet the moderate and above moderate regional housing need allocated to the City for the 2014-2022 period.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup>Given that 288 of the City's 899-unit RHNA is made up of units affordable to very low- and low-income households, 611 units remain that are affected by the growth management program; affordable units do not count toward the trigger cap calculations. Dividing the 611 units by 8.83 years (the length of time remaining in this planning period), an average of 69 per year would need to be built to fulfill the RHNA. This is well below the 225 unit per year limit imposed by the growth management program.

### ***Balance of Housing Types***

The General Plan encourages a balance of housing types. It requires that specific plans and implementing ordinances construct planned housing types at buildout. Based on this evaluation, it can be concluded that the provisions of the Land Use and Growth Management Element do not represent a constraint on the development of housing for all income levels.

### **Community Design Element**

The Community Design Element is intended to protect and enhance Rohnert Park's physical and visual character. Several of its policies promote a diverse and affordable housing base, including the integration of townhomes and multifamily dwellings with single family residences (Policy CD-17). Policies can also facilitate the reduction of parking requirements for high-density and senior housing (Policy CD-29).

The following is a list of several other policies in the Community Design Element:

- Ensure that the University District is developed in a manner that is sensitive to the existing residential developments to the west (CD-31);
- Ensure that development in existing neighborhoods is respectful of the character of existing uses and causes minimal design intrusion (CD-53);
- Develop linkages within and between neighborhoods through linear parks, interconnected networks of streets (CD-2);
- Promote connections with adjacent neighborhoods (CD-B and CD-2);
- Ensure a fine-grained and integrated pattern of streets that provide continuity between neighborhoods, have a human scale, and enhance the character of neighborhoods (CD-24); and
- Minimize the visual dominance of garages (CD-21).

None of the Community Design Element's goals or policies negatively impacts the affordability or design of new residential development.

### **Specific Plans**

#### **University District Specific Plan**

The University District Specific Plan was originally approved in May 2006 and was updated in 2014, but is not yet constructed. It encompasses approximately 297 acres specifically for mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented development. The development will provide diverse residential opportunities as well as a commercial center to accommodate the needs of the residents of new and existing neighborhoods and SSU students, faculty, and staff.

The plan proposes the following:

- 26 estate units with low-density housing designations;
- 382 low-density residential units;
- 869 medium-density units, consisting of single family detached, clustered housing, and alley-loaded housing (attached housing could also be developed under this designation);
- 218 high-density units, including stacked-flats, carriage units, condominiums, townhouses, apartments; and
- 150 mixed-use units.

#### **Southeast Specific Plan**

The Southeast Specific Plan was adopted December 7, 2010. The plan provides for a maximum of 475 residential units, including 81 multifamily and attached single family residential units, and up to 10,000 square feet of commercial/retail space within an 80-acre planning area. Residential land uses proposed within this area include three types of single family dwellings:

- Rural Estate on 16 acres;
- Low-Density on 21.0 acres; and
- Medium-Density 27.3 acres.

#### **Northeast Specific Plan**

The Northeast Specific Plan is located within unincorporated Sonoma County. The draft plan calls for the development of a residential community of approximately 1,114 units in a variety of housing densities and types, 16.5 acres of parks and bikeways, and nearly 38 acres of other open space on an approximate 275-acre site adjacent to the northeastern edge of the city.

#### **Northwest Specific Plan**

The proposed Specific Plan Area is located just outside the northwest City Limits, west of Highway 101. The planning process will be aimed at identifying a community-based vision for the area. Based on a defined vision, a framework will be developed to guide future land uses, development, and public improvements in the area.

A specific plan or specific plan amendment provides the framework to phase and pace growth within the Specific Plan area so as to ensure the completion of all necessary public facilities concurrently with completion of the Specific Plan. A specific plan identifies adequate financing mechanisms for the infrastructure and public facilities required to support the development.

## Zoning Ordinance

The City regulates the type, location, density, and scale of residential development primarily through the Zoning Ordinance. In general the City's zoning regulations are designed to balance the goal of providing affordable housing opportunities for all income groups, while protecting the health and safety of residents and preserving the character of existing neighborhoods. The provisions of the City's Zoning Ordinance directly control the approval process for residential development and affect the type and design of housing that may be constructed. A complete revision of the Zoning Ordinance was undertaken and a new Zoning Ordinance was adopted in 2003 following the adoption of the General Plan in 2003. The Zoning Ordinance reflects General Plan policies and programs and incorporates State-mandated provisions. It is designed to protect and promote public health, safety, and welfare, as well as to promote quality design and quality of life.

The City's Zoning Ordinance specifies the zoning districts in which residential development may occur and under what circumstances. There are four basic residential zones and one mixed-use zone:

- R-R/R-E District allows single family dwellings as a permitted use. Manufactured housing requires a certificate of zoning compliance as do second units. This is done as a ministerial act. SRO units are allowed with an administrative permit.<sup>23</sup>
- R-L District allows single family dwellings as a permitted use. This district is comprised of four sub-districts: R-L-5,000, R-L-6,000, R-L-8,000, and R-L-10,000. As in the R-R/R-E district, Manufactured housing and second units require a certificate of zoning compliance.
- R-M District allows single family dwellings as well as side-by-side duplexes as permitted uses. Manufactured housing and second units require a certificate of zoning compliance. Multifamily projects are not permitted.
- R-H District allows multifamily housing as a permitted use. This district is comprised of two sub-districts: R-H-2,000 and R-H-1,800. Single family dwellings are allowed with a conditional use permit. SRO units are allowed with an administrative permit. As with the other districts, manufactured housing and second units require a certificate of zoning compliance.
- M-U District allows live/work, multifamily, and townhouse housing as a permitted use. SRO units are also permitted by right.

Table 9-45 summarizes residential uses permitted in residential and commercial districts. Single family residential zoning includes three districts: R-R/R-E, R-L, and R-M. Single family units are permitted right in all single family residential districts. Emergency shelters and residential care facilities with fewer than six people are allowed in single family zoning districts.

<sup>23</sup>An Administrative Permit is a permit that is conditionally approved by Community Development staff—a faster process than a Conditional Use Permit, which is approved by the Planning Commission.

Multifamily residential zoning includes the R-M and R-H districts. Single story duplexes are permitted by right in the R-M and R-H districts, while other multifamily dwellings are permitted by right only in the R-H district. Single family dwellings are permitted conditionally in the R-H district. Emergency shelters and residential care facilities of six or fewer occupants are permitted by right in the R-M and R-H districts. Emergency shelters greater than six persons are permitted by right in the R-H district as well as all commercial districts (C-O, C-N, and C-R).

**TABLE 9-45**  
**HOUSING TYPES PERMITTED BY ZONE**

City of Rohnert Park  
2014

Housing Types Permitted	R-R/R-E Districts	R-L Districts	R-M Districts	R-H Districts	M-U District	C-O District	C-N District	C-R District	P-I District
Affordable Housing Density Bonus	A	A	A	A					
Farmworker Housing	P			P					
Emergency Shelters (6 or fewer residents)	P	P	P	P		P	P	P	
Emergency Shelters (7 or more persons)				C		P	P	P	C
Live/Work					P	C	C		
Manufactured Housing	Z	Z	Z	Z					
Mobile Home Park or Subdivision			C	C					
Multifamily Housing (Duplexes-Single Story)			P	P					
Multifamily Housing (Other)				P	P				
Recovery Facility (6 or fewer persons)	P	P	P	P		A	A	A	
Recovery Facility (7 or more persons)				C		C			C
Residential Care Facility (6 or fewer persons)	P	P	P	P					
Residential Care Facility (7 or more persons)	C	C	C	C					
Second Residential Unit	Z	Z	Z	Z				A	
Single Family Dwellings	P	P	P	C					
Single Room Occupancy Living	A			A	P				
Townhouse					P				

Note: P=permitted by right; C=conditionally permitted by planning commission, A=administrative permit, Z=certificate of zoning compliance

Source: City of Rohnert Park Zoning Ordinance, Section 17.06.

## **Residential Development Standards**

Table 9-46 summarizes the Zoning Ordinance minimum standards for residential lot sizes, yards, open space per unit, and maximum lot coverage. Development standards specific to each zone district are designed to protect and promote the health, safety, and general welfare of residents, as well as implement the policies of the General Plan. These standards also serve to preserve the character and integrity of existing neighborhoods. Generally, development standards can limit the number of units that may be constructed on a particular piece of property. Limiting the number of units would mean higher per-unit land costs and, all other factors being equal, result in higher development costs that could impact housing affordability.

**TABLE 9-46**  
**SELECTED DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS FOR RESIDENTIAL ZONES**

City of Rohnert Park  
2014

District	Minimum Site Requirements			Maximum Density (units/ acre)	Minimum Setbacks			Min. Open Space/ Dwelling Unit (s.f.)	Max. Lot Coverage (%)	Max. Height (ft.)
	Lot Size (sq. ft.)	Width (ft.)	Depth (ft.)		Front (ft.)	Side (interior/ corner) (ft.)	Rear (ft.)			
R-R	40,000	100	150	1	50	10/20	50	N/A	30	35
R-E	17,000	100	150	2	25	10/20	25	N/A	40	35
R-L	5,000	50	100	6	20	5/10	20 <sup>3</sup>	N/A	50	35
R-M	3,700	40	80	12	20	5/10 <sup>1</sup>	20 <sup>3</sup>	500 <sup>4</sup>	40	35
R-H	10,000	60	100	30	20	5/10 <sup>1,2</sup>	20 <sup>3</sup>	400 <sup>4</sup>	60	35
M-U	10,000	60 <sup>5</sup>	100 <sup>5</sup>	24 <sup>6</sup>	10 <sup>1</sup>	10/10 <sup>5</sup>	10 <sup>5</sup>	200	80	45
C-O	10,000	60	100	N/A	15	10/15 <sup>2</sup>	10	N/A	50	45
C-N	10,000	40	100	N/A	15	10/15 <sup>7</sup>	10	N/A	60	35
C-R	20,000	50	100	N/A	15	10/15 <sup>7</sup>	10	N/A	60	65
P-I	10,000	N/A	N/A	N/A	15	10	15	N/A	50	45

<sup>1</sup>The interior side yard setback may be eliminated for attached dwelling units in the R-M and R-H Districts, provided the applicable building code requirements can be met.

<sup>2</sup>In the R-H and C-O districts, interior side yards shall be increased by one foot for every foot of building over thirty-five feet.

<sup>3</sup>The rear yard setbacks may be reduced to ten feet for one-store building additions that are no wider than 50 percent of the buildable width of the lot.

<sup>4</sup>This shall include private open space of a minimum area of 100 square feet when on ground level and/or 60 square feet if equal to or greater than 6 feet above ground.

<sup>5</sup>In the M-U District front, rear, and/or side yard setbacks may be reduced or eliminated if approved by the Planning Commission and if structures remain outside an easement and comply with City-approved design guidelines.

<sup>6</sup>Maximum density within the M-U District shall be dependent on the dimensional requirements of the property (e.g., setbacks, FAR, parking).

<sup>7</sup>The interior side yard setback may be eliminated for attached commercial units in the C-N and C-R districts, provided the applicable building code requirements can be met.

Source: Rohnert Park Zoning Ordinance, 2014.

Modifications to minimum standards are allowed under many circumstances as described below:

- A minimum lot size of 4,500 square feet may be allowed in the RL-District for projects that use design features such as clustering and common open space areas. This is done through specific plan, planned development, and/or subdivision review.
- In the M-U District front, rear, and/or side yard setbacks may be reduced or eliminated if approved by the Planning Commission and if structures remain outside of an easement and comply with City-approved design guidelines. This is done through design review.
- The interior side yard setback may be eliminated for attached dwelling units in the R-M and R-H districts, provided the applicable building code requirements can be met. This is done through specific plan, planned development, and/or subdivision review.

Maximum height limitations on residential development are as follows: 35 feet in R-R, R-E, R-L, and R-M districts, 45 feet in the R-H and M-U districts for primary structures.

None of these development standards have been identified by applicants as prohibitively restrictive. Developers report that meeting the minimum open space and maximum lot coverage provisions has not been an obstacle to the development of housing. Furthermore, non-profit housing groups seeking to provide housing affordable to lower-income households have found the densities allowed in the higher-density districts to be sufficient for their needs, especially with a density bonus. It should also be noted that the maximum allowed density in the R-H zone (30 units/acre) exceeds the City's State-defined default density (20 units/acre) for very low- and low-income housing.

## Parking Standards

Table 9-47 summarizes the residential parking requirements in Rohnert Park. Parking requirements do not constrain the development of housing directly. However, parking requirements may reduce the amount of available lot areas for residential development. The City requires one parking space per dwelling be in a carport or garage (except for multifamily units), allowing greater flexibility in site design and building configuration.

<b>TABLE 9-47</b> <b>RESIDENTIAL PARKING REQUIREMENTS</b> <b>City of Rohnert Park</b> <b>2014</b>	
<b>Type of Residential Development</b>	<b>Required Parking Spaces</b>
Single family units (detached)	2 spaces enclosed in a garage or carport
Single family units (attached)	2 spaces per unit, 1 of which must be covered 1 space per four units for guest parking
Duplexes	4 spaces, two of which must be in a garage or carport 1 space per four units for guest parking
Multifamily units	1 space per studio or one-bedroom unit 2 spaces per two-bedroom unit 2.5 spaces per three-bedroom unit 1 additional space per bedroom for units with four or more bedrooms One guest parking space for every four units
Mobile home parks and trailer parks	1.5 spaces per unit, one of which must be covered
Off-campus student housing	0.75 spaces per bedroom unit or occupant, whichever is greater
Residential care facility	1 space per 500 square foot of gross floor area
Senior housing	1 covered space per unit, plus 1 space per 4 units for guest parking

Source: Rohnert Park Zoning Ordinance, 2014.

The Zoning Ordinance recently reduced parking requirements for residential care facilities, senior housing, and off-campus student housing.

The Development Services Director may grant exceptions to parking requirements through an administrative permit. This provision has been used in the past to allow the conversion of garages to living space without a requirement for any new covered parking to offset the loss of parking.

## Design Review

The Zoning Ordinance requires architectural and design review for any new residential building other than a single family home on a single lot. The site plans, elevation drawings, and landscaping plans of larger projects are typically reviewed by the Planning Commission.

The City adopted a new set of design guidelines in 2012. These guidelines include general principles relating to site design, scale of buildings, and the orientation of structure as well as street and path access to creeks to promote neighborhood and open space connectivity. Guidelines associated with residential design include:

- Variation from adjoining structures in the height, bulk, area, openings or breaks in the facade facing a street, and/or line and pitch of roof.
- Variation from adjoining structures in the arrangement on the parcel.
- Variation in architectural motifs.
- Variation from directly adjacent structures of materials, color, and arrangement of exterior materials.
- Specific guidelines pertaining to main entrances, garages, and driveways.
- Specific guidelines pertaining to multifamily developments including breaking up building facades and rooflines to give the appearance of a collection of smaller structures, and orienting windows of frequently used rooms (e.g., living and dining areas) to overlook common open space and child play areas for increased security.

City adopted specific plans each have a set of design guidelines. Subdivisions of single family units are required to have specific numbers of exterior design variations depending upon the number of lots in the subdivision, and to provide architectural designs that vary from those in adjacent subdivisions. Developers are encouraged to provide a variety of floor plans.

The Zoning Ordinance also includes design standards for manufactured homes to ensure that they are compatible with conventionally-built residential structures in the surrounding area. These standards do not exceed the limitations prescribed by State law.

Although the Zoning Ordinance delegates design review authority to the Director of Planning and Community Development, in practice most residential projects are reviewed and approved by the Planning Commission. The Zoning Ordinance was amended to reflect current procedures and clearly delegated certain responsibilities to the Director during the 2002 Housing Element planning period.

### **Density Bonus**

State law requires the provision of certain incentives for residential development projects that set aside a certain portion of the units to be affordable to lower- and moderate-income households and for senior citizen housing developments. The City implements State law through its density bonus for affordable housing ordinance. Under current State law jurisdictions are required to provide density bonuses and development incentives on a sliding scale, where the amount of density bonus and number of incentives vary according to the amount of affordable housing units provided. The City of Rohnert Park offers a density bonus consistent with State law to developers who agree to construct any of the following:

- At least 10 percent of the total units are designated for low-income households;
- At least 5 percent of the total units are designated for very low-income households;
- A senior citizen housing development as defined in Sections 51.3 and 51/12 of the Civil Code; or
- At least 10 percent of the total in a condominium project for moderate-income households.

The amount of density bonus granted varies depending on the percentage of affordable units provided and ranges from 5 percent to 35 percent. To obtain a density bonus in Rohnert Park, the developer must submit a preliminary proposal for staff review prior to the submittal of any formal request for approval of a density bonus. The purpose of the preliminary proposal is to determine whether the proposed housing development is in compliance with applicable planning regulations. Confirmation of compliance of the preliminary proposal does not constitute approval of the housing development. Rather it indicates that the housing development nominally complies with the City's applicable planning and zoning regulations.

## **Project Review**

Delays in processing housing development applications through a City's review and approval process can add to housing costs. If the developer buys the land outright, there are interest costs, and if they obtain an option to purchase, there are option costs to hold the land.

### **Length of Review**

In recent years varying amounts of time were taken to consider and approve housing construction proposals. However, in general, typical entitlements take three to six months and larger projects—such as a specific plan—take one to two years. As in other cities, CEQA adds considerable time to the process. Generally, the greater the public controversy regarding a proposal, the longer the time spent in the review process. Controversy and resulting delays are often prompted by a zoning change—in other words, if sites are already zoned for residential use, expected delays are minimal. Public hearing continuances have resulted from requests by project opponents for additional information, studies, and project re-designs. Each change in the project design can have associated architect and engineering fees, which grow with each revision.

Processing delays can also result from incomplete submittals by project applicants, inadequate responses to staff requests for additional information and exhibits, and failure to design projects to City standards.

### **Appeal Process**

The review process can also be delayed by provisions of the Municipal Code. A prior provision in the Zoning Ordinance (Section 17.62.070 D.) used to allow the Council to decide whether it wanted to hear an appeal. In 2003 the City Council revised the Zoning Ordinance, eliminating the step of having the City Council first determine if it will hear an appeal before actually hearing the appeal itself.

### **Specific Plan Requirement**

The Land Use Element requires the preparation of specific plans prior to development in any of the growth areas. While this requirement will lengthen the review and approval process, it is necessary to ensure that development occurs in a manner consistent with land use and design criteria, environmentally-sensitive areas are conserved, and adequate infrastructure is provided. Furthermore, the Sonoma Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) requires a “plan for services,” which may be in the form of a specific plan, depending on the size and nature of the project. Under the current General Plan, the City has chosen to use specific plans in relation to future annexations; especially for large, complex projects, a specific plan is an effective tool to meet a variety of agency needs as well as conform to legal mandates. Prior to the Commission’s consideration of a change of organization involving annexation of territory to a city, the applicant must provide a plan for services including written evidence from the affected city that it has the physical and fiscal capacity to adequately serve the subject territory. The plan for providing services must include all of the following information and any additional information required by the Commission or the Executive Officer:

- An enumeration and description of the services to be extended to the affected territory;
- The level and range of those services;
- An indication of when those services can feasibly be extended to the affected territory;

- An indication of any improvement or upgrading of structures, roads, sewer, or water facilities, or other conditions the local agency would impose or require within the affected territory, if the change of organization or reorganization is completed; and
- Information with respect to how those services will be financed.

The City has three professional planning staff to expedite the preparation and approval of specific plans, as well as the residential growth anticipated by the Land Use Element.

## **Adopted Codes**

The City has adopted the 2013 California Building Code incorporating the National Electrical Code, Uniform Plumbing Code, Uniform Mechanical Code, the Uniform Housing Code, and the California Fire Code. The City has amended these codes in a few instances when necessary to protect the health, safety, and welfare of its residents. For example, the City has amended the Building Code with additional requirements for concrete slab floors to mitigate local expansive soil conditions. Lighted address numbers are required to improve identification of homes by emergency personnel. Smoke detectors are required in single family homes and automatic fire alarm systems must be provided in multifamily complexes and condominium complexes. Automatic fire suppression systems must be installed in new residential structures and substantially-remodeled dwelling units. While these measures result in higher initial housing costs, they are offset over the long run by savings on homeowners insurance and property damage.

In January 2013 the California Building Standards Commission (CBSC) adopted the 2013 California Green Building Standards Code, otherwise known as "CALGreen," which became effective January 1, 2014. CALGreen is California's first green building code and a first-in-the-nation State-mandated green building code. It is formally known as the California Green Building Standards Code, Title 24, Part 11, of the California Code of Regulations. CALGreen establishes mandatory minimum green building standards and includes more stringent optional provisions known as Tier 1 and Tier 2. Cities and counties, at their discretion, may adopt Tier 1 or Tier 2 as mandatory or adopt and enforce other standards that are more stringent than the CALGreen Code. The City of Rohnert Park has adopted CALGreen, including voluntary residential and nonresidential Tier 1 measures for all new construction except for the Energy Efficiency Provisions contained in Appendix A4 Division A4.2 and Appendix A5 Division A5.2.

CALGreen requirements for new buildings include:

- Reduce water consumption by 20 percent;
- Divert 50 percent of construction waste from landfills;
- Install low pollutant-emitting materials;
- Separate water meters for nonresidential building indoor and outdoor water use;
- Moisture-sensing irrigation systems for larger landscape projects; and
- Mandatory inspections of energy systems (e.g., heat furnace, air conditioner, mechanical equipment) for nonresidential buildings over 10,000 square feet to ensure that all are working at their maximum capacity and according to their design efficiencies.

The City's building code requirements do not adversely impact the cost of construction. The requirements address basic health and safety considerations.

On average five residential code enforcement actions occur each month. Given that buildings constructed in Rohnert Park are aging, the need for building code enforcement activity has increased in recent years.

## **Site Improvements**

The City has residential development requirements for landscaping, street width, fences, and walls. The City adopted these standards to ensure that minimum levels of design and construction quality are maintained and adequate levels of street and facility improvements are provided. While the City's development standards are similar to those in other jurisdictions, there may be some standards that exceed the level necessary to ensure adequate circulation and parking, drainage, environmental protection, and protection from visual nuisances. The City's standards are summarized below. The standards included in this summary are those which typically have a potential to affect housing costs, but are necessary to provide a minimum level of design and construction quality in the city's neighborhoods.

**Landscape:** Landscape plans should demonstrate a recognizable theme for the overall development by choice and location of materials. Street trees (minimum 15 gallon size) are required, as is the installation of utility lines underground to enhance the appearance of residential neighborhoods. Planters must be installed and maintained adjacent to every street frontage for the full length.

**Residential Streets:** The Community Design Element calls for a 52-foot wide local neighborhood street section (CD Figure 3.2-5) that provides two travel lanes, two parking lanes, sidewalks, and curbs and gutters on either side. This design is intended to adequately accommodate traffic, parking, pedestrians, and drainage.

These requirements are standard and reasonable; most architects would regularly incorporate them into their plans and are not seen as particularly onerous for developers.

## **Water Availability**

Issues related to water supply are complex in Sonoma County. Rohnert Park has been party to multiple water supply-related lawsuits, including one on the 1999 General Plan EIR that the City settled and a Water Supply Assessment (WSA) prepared by the City in 2005.<sup>24</sup> As the culmination of several years of litigation, in November 2008 a State Court of Appeals ruled in favor of the City of Rohnert Park, upholding the validity of the City's 2005 WSA, which states that the City has adequate and sufficient water supplies to implement its General Plan. The General Plan provides the framework for all of the specific plans described in the Residential Sites Inventory chapter of this Housing Element along with the number of housing units they are to contain. The City will have adequate water supply to fulfill the 2014-2022 RHNA.

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<sup>24</sup>Final Water Supply Element <<http://www.ci.rohnert-park.ca.us/index.aspx?page=417>>.

The City of Rohnert Park currently derives its drinking water supply from 26 active municipal wells, the Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA) Petaluma Aqueduct, and recycled water. The sources of the aqueduct water are from the Dry Creek, Eel River, and Russian River watersheds. The City is able to achieve a balance of these supplies as necessary to meet demands and limit impacts. For instance, between June and September, in accordance with the Temporary Impairment MOU, the City may reduce its use of SCWA water and make up for this reduction with groundwater and recycled water.

In 2003 the City installed residential water meters. Water demand has dropped as a result of meter installation and commodity pricing. The 2005 WSA assumed a 10 percent reduction in single family residential unit demand between 2005 and 2025 as a result of water conservation efforts; this is consistent with the City's water conservation policy, which seeks to achieve a voluntary 10 percent reduction through conservation efforts.

Recycled water is supplied by the City of Santa Rosa Subregional System. The Subregional System maintains a contract with each individual user on the Rohnert Park Urban Reuse system, including the City. Rohnert Park is one of the largest users of reclaimed water in the county. Sites in Rohnert Park that use reclaimed water include all parks and school grounds south of Golf Course Drive, the North and South Rohnert Park Municipal Golf Courses, Roberts Lake, and various commercial and industrial sites.

According to the City's 2010 Urban Water Management Plan, "combined projected water supplies are sufficient to meet projected demands." While new development extending to the 2020 Urban Growth boundary would necessitate the installation of additional distribution lines to serve growth outside of the existing city limits, specific plan developers are aware of this additional cost and are prepared to incur it.

### **Impact Fees and Exactions**

The City charges a variety of development impact fees. While in the past the City charged fees for capital outlay, water and sewer connections, water reclamation, traffic impacts, and parks/open space/recreation, these were simplified in 2004 with the adoption of the Public Facilities Financing Plan (PFFP), which was last updated in 2012. The PFFP outlines a comprehensive strategy for managing the costs of capital facilities, maintenance, and services that are impacted by new development. Fees are adjusted for inflation annually, and vary by unit type and location. For example, fees charged per single family dwelling unit are higher than those charged per multifamily dwelling unit and fees charged to greenfield development are higher than those charged to infill development.

While development impact fees may affect housing prices, the only alternatives would be their payment by the existing taxpayers of the City of Rohnert Park or no further residential development, either of which is infeasible.

Table 9-48 summarizes the 2014 development impact fees charged by Rohnert Park. The average fees for a typical single family home are \$24,000 per unit, which represents 11.6 percent of the median price of \$277,500 for a three-bedroom home (Table 9-23). The average fees for a typical multifamily unit are \$15,000 per unit, which represents 4.6 percent of a typical multifamily unit development costs.<sup>25</sup>

<b>TABLE 9-48 PER UNIT DEVELOPMENT IMPACT FEES ON HOUSING</b>				
(Public Facilities Finance Plan) City of Rohnert Park 2014				
<b>Location</b>	<b>Single family</b>	<b>Multifamily</b>	<b>Senior Housing</b>	<b>Assisted Living</b>
Northeast Specific Plan Area	\$27,873	\$17,340	N/A	N/A
University District Specific Plan Area	\$28,270	\$17,434	N/A	N/A
Southeast Specific Plan Area	\$25,590	\$16,560	N/A	N/A
Wilfred Dowdell Specific Plan	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Northeast Specific Plan Area	\$27,873	\$17,340	N/A	N/A
Stadium Lands Planned Development	N/A	\$12,964	N/A	N/A
Canon Manor Specific Plan Area	\$20,130	\$13,144	\$N/A	\$N/A
Infill West of Highway 101	\$19,445	\$12,520	\$11,907	\$10,013
Infill East of Highway 101	\$17,967	\$11,569	\$10,983	\$9,551

*Source: City of Rohnert Park: Council Agenda Item, Resolution No. 2012-44—Updating the Public Facilities (PF) Fee for All Development in the City of Rohnert Park <<http://www.rpcity.org/Modules>ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=6927>>, accessed January 16, 2014.*

<sup>25</sup>Based on development costs for a typical studio, one-, two-, and three-bedroom unit provided by Burbank Housing Development Conversation.

The Development Services Department also charges development fees (9-49). The Department recently updated the fee schedule, making as much an effort to be in-line with neighboring communities as possible. Furthermore, the previous study concluded that fees charged were significantly lower than all surveyed cities, and that the City provided services with limited cost recovery from applicants for staff time and materials.

TABLE 9-49 PLANNING FEES AND DEPOSITS		
City of Rohnert Park 2013		
Type	Fee/Deposit	
<b>Fees</b>		
Administrative Permit		\$650
Sign Program Reviews	New	\$520
	Revised	\$348
Site Plan and Architectural Review (Building Remodel)		\$1,210 <sup>1</sup>
Rezonings		\$6,450
Appeals <sup>3</sup>	City Council	\$281 <sup>1</sup>
	Planning Commission	\$390 <sup>1</sup>
<b>Deposits</b>		
Specific Plans	Preliminary Plan	-- <sup>2</sup>
	Amendment	
	Preparation	
Use Permits		\$1,000
Site Plan and Architectural Review (New Structure)		\$1,200
Planned Development		-- <sup>2</sup>
Negative Declaration (Initial Study)		\$2,000
Tentative Maps	Minor (less than or equal to 4 lots)	\$4,000
	Major (greater than or equal to 5 lots)	-- <sup>2</sup>
Development Agreements		-- <sup>2</sup>
Variance		\$2,500
General Plan Amendments		\$5,000

<sup>1</sup>Plus the actual cost of publishing/noticing

<sup>2</sup>Actual cost of time and materials charged against an Initial Deposit as determined by staff. An approved Reimbursement Agreement is required.

<sup>3</sup>This is the fee for residents. Non-resident fee is \$1,125 for Planning Commission and \$1,560 for City Council.

Source: *City of Rohnert Park, accessed January 16, 2014.*

## Park and School Dedications

Rohnert Park has developed according to the neighborhood concept. Residential neighborhoods are constructed around a park and/or school site, the dedication of which is required by the City's subdivision regulations. The required area is approved by the City Council upon approval of the tentative map with the City's Parks and Recreation Commission providing input regarding the proposed park site and its improvements. Standards in the General Plan provide guidance as to how much land needs to be dedicated.

## Inclusionary Housing Program

The inclusionary housing requirement is a critical component of the City's housing program and an active means of providing affordable units to households typically excluded from the housing market. In 2009, the case of Palmer/Sixth Street Properties, L.P. vs. City of Los Angeles, 175 Cal. App 4th 1396 (2009), held that the City of Los Angeles Inclusionary Housing Ordinance was invalid for rental properties under the Costa Hawkins Act. Since that time there have been no contrary court decisions to Palmer, and there have been no legislative changes to alter the holding of Palmer. In light of this court case, Rohnert Park no longer requires market rate rental projects to provide affordable units. The City only applies the inclusionary requirements to ownership projects. Developers of residential ownership projects over five units are required to sell 15 percent of the units at prices affordable to low- and moderate-income households. It is City practice to require that affordable units are comparable in number of bedrooms, exterior appearance, and overall quality of construction to market rate units in the same project.<sup>26</sup> Homes must remain affordable for 45 years.

Furthermore, the inclusionary program is intended to promote the economic integration of lower-income households in neighborhoods and the dispersion of such units throughout the city. The requirement may also provide an incentive for developers to take the next step and increase their project's share of units affordable to lower-income households to 35 percent in order to qualify for a housing density bonus.<sup>27</sup>

The inclusionary requirement is also intended to offset the negative effects of new market-rate housing on the provision of non-market rate housing. The construction of above moderate-income housing depletes the amount of available residential land, while contributing to rising land prices because of a greater scarcity of developable sites, although given that the Rohnert Park General Plan can accommodate a much greater population than projected by ABAG or housing units required by the RHNA, housing sites are not scarce. Market-rate housing development also exacerbates the affordable housing problem by creating greater needs for goods and services typically provided by employees earning lower wages.

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<sup>26</sup>Any differences in size or interior features of affordable units compared to those of market-rate units requires written approval of the Planning Manager and the City Manager, and requires that construction be of similar quality to market-rate units and consistent with contemporary housing standards.

<sup>27</sup>In way of further explanation, there is nothing in either the density bonus or inclusionary housing provisions from preventing a developer from taking advantage of the density bonus option as well as complying with the inclusionary housing requirements, creating more flexibility for the developer.

Since 2003, when the Inclusionary Housing Program (as well as the In-Lieu Fee requirements and Housing Trust Fund) was adopted by City Council, 599 affordable units have been constructed and an additional 314 affordable units approved.

### Inclusionary Housing Options

Instead of building at least 15 percent affordable units, developers have two options: (1) pay in-lieu fees that will be used to create affordable housing, or (2) commit to one of three “alternative equivalent actions.”

#### In-Lieu Fees

In certain circumstances developers have the option of paying in-lieu fees into the Housing Trust Fund, which is solely dedicated to assisting in the development of affordable housing. In June 24, 2012, the Housing Trust Fund had a balance of \$240,000. Two developers have taken advantage of the in-lieu fee option so far. In the case of one developer, in-lieu fees were calculated based on the maximum HUD assistance for low- and very low-income one-, two-, and three-bedroom units in Sonoma County.<sup>28</sup> In the case of the other developer, the required affordable units were built, but the moderate-income units would not sell (given current market conditions) so an agreement was negotiated with the City to pay in-lieu fees for those units to enable them to be marketed without restrictions. The City has not adopted an in-lieu fee, but this option is available to future developers subject to the completion of an in-lieu study.

In-lieu fees can be made for fractions of required units or when a project is located on less than one acre of land or if it contains 10 or fewer units. However, in-lieu fees will only be accepted to meet the inclusionary housing requirement if the developer can produce financial data showing that it is not feasible to build affordable units (i.e., the array of incentives offered by the City do not mitigate additional costs incurred by the developer).<sup>29</sup> In the case of demonstrated infeasibility, the cumulative impact on development costs is eased by the ability to pay in-lieu fees instead of requiring the on-site building of affordable units.<sup>30</sup>

There has been extensive debate over the question of who bears the cost of an inclusionary requirement. Depending on the relative strength of the housing market, the costs may be incurred by:

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<sup>28</sup>In case the developer decided to build the 15 percent required low-income units (35 units—the entire project has 200 units) and pay into the Housing Trust Fund to help facilitate a future affordable project which would include 17 very low-income units. The unit size proportions of the development were used to calculate that the 17 units should be broken down as follows: 8 one-bedroom, 8 two-bedroom, and 1 three-bedroom unit. The subsidies per unit were \$14,500 (per one-bedroom unit), \$17,500 (per two bedroom), and \$23,000 (per three bedroom unit).

<sup>29</sup>To prove financial infeasibility, developers must submit a report identifying: (1) all overriding conditions impacting the project that prevent the developer from meeting the inclusionary requirement, (2) sufficient independent date, including appropriate financial information, that supports the developer’s claim that it is not feasible to constructed the required affordable units, and (3) a detailed analysis of why the concessions and incentives provided will not mitigate the identified overriding conditions preventing the construction of the affordable units.

<sup>30</sup>See the further discussion that follows on the cumulative effects of the inclusionary housing requirement in general.

- Landowners who may receive a lower price for their land if developers are expecting a lower profit margin from the inclusionary requirement;
- Developers who may have to accept lower profits if housing prices cannot be raised; and/or
- The purchasers of market-rate units who may have to pay higher housing prices if the local and regional housing supply is limited and prices are at least as high in areas outside the city.

The fact that landowners, developers, and/or the purchasers of market-rate units may incur a portion of the cost of providing affordable units, may be construed to act as a constraint to the overall development of housing in a community. Rohnert Park's inclusionary ordinance, however, mitigates this prospect by providing a wide range of incentives to developers who provide affordable housing units. These incentives include:

- Expedited processing for development applications;
- Deferment of fee payment;
- An additional density bonus (to the maximum 35 percent already granted by the City, subject to City Council review and approval);
- Development standard reductions/modifications (i.e., minimum lot size, open space, parking and/or setback requirements);
- Approval of mixed-use zoning in conjunction with a housing project if non-residential uses will reduce the cost of residential development and if non-residential uses are compatible with residential uses and surrounding development; and
- Direct financial assistance in the form of a loan or grant (money from the trust fund).

These incentives are meant to offset development costs by, for example, providing a density bonus above that currently allowed in the City (a maximum of 35 percent). In the case of the developer that elected to pay in-lieu fees, a parking reduction was also granted, helping offset costs.

#### **Alternate Equivalent Actions**

Instead of building affordable units or paying in-lieu fees, developers can choose to propose among three other options: donate land; transfer inclusionary credits; or create second units. An applicant may donate land to a nonprofit housing developer in place of actual construction of required affordable units upon approval by the City Council. The dedicated land must be appropriately zoned, buildable, free of toxic substances and contaminated soils, and large enough to accommodate the number of required affordable units. An applicant may also transfer inclusionary unit credits from one residential development project to another, upon approval of the City Council. Credit certificates are issued for specific income categories and may only be used to satisfy the requirements for affordable units within the same category. Finally, an applicant may develop second units to meet not more than 50 percent of the inclusionary housing requirement at a ratio of two second units per required affordable unit. Furthermore, these second units must meet the City's continued affordability requirements for affordable housing.

## **Conclusion**

The inclusionary housing requirements have not had a negative effect on housing production in the city since they were instituted in 2003. A substantial number of housing units have been built in the city since 2003, and property owners have initiated and completed specific plans for virtually all growth areas. The inclusionary requirements do not have the effect of diverting residential development to other Sonoma County jurisdictions, since inclusionary requirements have been adopted by neighboring Santa Rosa, Petaluma, and Cotati, as well as Healdsburg, Sonoma, Sebastopol, and Windsor. Also, given that the City's development processing procedure times and impact fees are in-line with those in neighboring communities, the cumulative effect of City development requirements is not overly burdensome.

Limiting the inclusionary requirement to 15 percent, providing alternative means of compliance, as well as various incentives, the program is not seen as an undue or onerous constraint on the provision of market-rate housing.

## **Constraints to Housing for Persons with Disabilities**

Given that persons with disabilities frequently have difficulty finding housing that meets their needs, the State requires special analysis of governmental constraints to housing for persons with disabilities.

## **Zoning and Land Use Policies and Practices**

The City complies with State and Federal fair housing laws and has a number of its own fair housing practices (See 9.3). The Zoning Ordinance's definition of "family" complies with applicable statutory and case law and does not restrict the number of individuals who may reside in a unit that otherwise complies with the Building Code. The Land Use Element does not require any minimum distance for the siting of community care facilities housing disabled persons. The City works with affordable housing developers to provide housing tailored to those with physical and mental disabilities. There are approximately 6 adult residential facilities in Rohnert Park for developmentally disabled adults that can accommodate up to 36 individuals.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>"Find Licensed Care." California Department of Social Services, Community Care Licensing Division. 1/10/2014.  
[http://www.ccld.ca.gov/docs/ccld\\_search/ccld\\_search.aspx](http://www.ccld.ca.gov/docs/ccld_search/ccld_search.aspx)

## Evaluation of the Permit and Processing Procedures for Reasonable Accommodations

The City has adopted a reasonable accommodation ordinance, which provides a procedure to request reasonable accommodation for persons with disabilities seeking equal access to housing under the Federal Fair Housing Act and the California Fair Employment and Housing Act. A request may be made by any person with a disability, their representative, or any entity. A request may include a modification or exception to the rules, standards, and practices for the siting, development, and use of housing or housing-related facilities. These modifications would eliminate regulatory barriers and provide a person with a disability equal opportunity to housing of their choice. Requests will be reviewed by the development services director, who will make a written determination within 45 days and either grant, grant with modifications, or deny a request for reasonable accommodation. In granting a request, the reviewing authority may impose any conditions of approval deemed reasonable and necessary.

The City complies with all State laws regulating licensed residential care facilities. Facilities with fewer than six persons in single-family zones are treated the same as any other single-family home. The City also complies with State laws regarding facilities with seven or more people (a conditional use permit is required in High Density Residential zones). The public comment period for group homes is no different from that for other types of residential development.

## Building Code Review

The City has adopted the 2013 California Building Standards Code.

## Nongovernmental Constraints

Nongovernmental constraints are those that are not created by local governments, but may be lessened through their actions.

## Construction Costs

Construction costs vary widely according to the type of development, with multifamily housing being somewhat less expensive to construct than single-family homes, on a per square foot basis. They are also influenced by market demands and market-based changes in the cost of materials.

## Construction Materials

Housing prices are also influenced partly by the types construction materials used. Homes in Rohnert Park are generally of wood frame construction and finished with stucco or wood siding. This type of construction is the least expensive conventional method (brick, stone, and concrete block are more costly). Composition shingle and built-up roofs, which are found on a large share of the community's homes, are also the least expensive, followed by wood shingle, wood shake, concrete tile, metal tile, and clay tile.<sup>32</sup>

A reduction in amenities and the quality of building materials can result in lower construction costs and lower purchase prices. Per-unit costs also decline with the size of the project, as developers benefit from economies of scale and are able to produce housing at a lower per-unit cost. However, high quality design and sufficient tenant amenities are generally required by City policies and standards to maintain minimum health and safety standards, and to achieve a minimum standard of design quality.

The cost of lumber and wood products accounts for one-third of the costs of materials used to build a home. A typical 2,000-square foot home uses nearly 16,000 board feet of lumber and 6,000 square feet of structural panels, such as plywood.<sup>33</sup> The composite price for lumber has increased with the increase in housing prices from under \$300 per 1,000 board feet for much of 2007 and 2008 to \$394 per 1,000 board feet in 2013 and \$400 per 1,000 board feet in 2014. In 2014 RS Means (a reliable published source for construction industry costs) estimated that the hard construction costs in the Santa Rosa area was \$186 per square foot for a typical one- to three-story multi-family residential project with wood siding and frames and a floor area of 22,500. Based on the International Code Council Building Valuation Data, a one- and two family residential construction would cost approximately \$118 per square foot. This equals a rough estimate of \$186,000 for a 1,000 square foot apartment and \$236,000 for a 2,000 square foot single-family home.

The average home in the U.S. in August and September 2013 was built on 14,359 square feet, had 2,607 square feet of finished area, and sold for \$399,532. The average share of the home's sale price that goes to construction cost jumped from 59 percent in both 2009 and 2011 to 62 percent in 2013. Finished lot costs, accounting for the second largest share of the sales price, dropped from 22 percent in 2011 to 19 percent in 2013. On average, lot sizes are shrinking, but both the cost and the size of the home are on the rise.

## Land Costs

Land costs have a demonstrable influence on the cost and availability of affordable housing. As land becomes less available, the price of land increases. Approximately 25 percent of housing costs are attributable to land costs in most real estate markets. Land costs are also affected by such factors as zoning density, the availability of infrastructure, the existence or absence of environmental constraints, and the relative amount of similar land available for development.

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<sup>32</sup>Residential Cost Handbook, 1990.

<sup>33</sup>National Association of Home Builders

According to online listings from Zillow.com, in March 2014 three vacant residential parcels were listed for sale in the city. These vacant parcels ranged in price from \$99,000 to \$980,000. The prices of land vary depending on a number of factors, including size, location, the number of units allowed on the property, and access to utilities. The asking price for land available ranged from \$8.11 to \$19.80 per square foot, with an average price of \$14.90 per square foot (or \$650,000 per acre).

Developed residential, commercial, and industrial properties that are zoned for residential uses can also be redeveloped with new housing developments. The cost to clear an acre of land for redevelopment significantly increases the cost of development, as do the local, State, and Federal policies relating to relocation and replacement of low-income housing residents. Depending on the existing improvements that must be removed to redevelop a site, the total cost to acquire a parcel, relocate occupants, and possibly mitigate hazardous materials can be quite expensive. This can pose a problem for development if Rohnert Park rents or sales prices cannot support the higher cost development.

## **Financing Costs**

### **Mortgage Interest Rates**

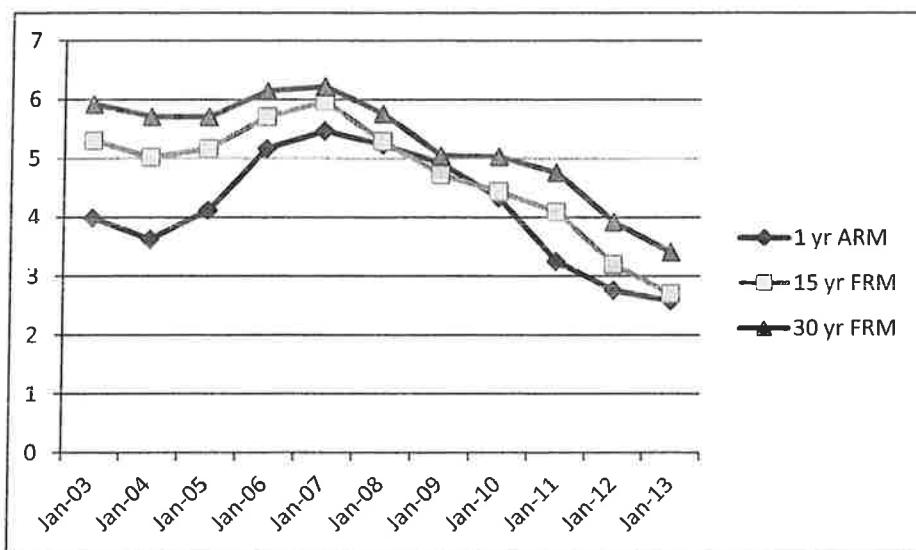
Mortgage interest rates have a large influence over the affordability of housing. Higher interest rates increase a homebuyer's monthly payment and decrease the range of housing that a household can afford. Lower interest rates result in a lower cost and lower monthly payments for the homebuyer. Besides lowering monthly interest payments for new buyers, lower interest rates allow existing homeowners to refinance their homes, thereby lowering monthly housing costs and perhaps preserving their ownership status.

When interest rates rise, the market typically compensates by decreasing housing prices. Similarly, when interest rates decrease, housing prices begin to rise. There is often a lag in the market, causing housing prices to remain high when interest rates rise until the market catches up. Lower-income households often find it most difficult to purchase a home during this time period.

As shown in Figure 9-7, mortgage rates decreased from 2007, hitting a historic low in 2013 of 3.41 percent for a 30-year fixed-rate mortgage. In 2013 interest rates started to increase; but still remain historically low as of 2014. The mortgage banking crisis that began in 2008 affected the availability of construction financing and mortgage loans. Lenders that had once offered mortgage loans more freely became much more restrictive after 2008. Lenders required down payments of 20 percent and credit scores higher than 680 to receive competitive interest rates. These restrictions placed homeownership out of reach for many, though in 2013 lenders began to ease the qualifications required for a competitive mortgage rate. As the economy continues its slow recovery, lenders may continue to make mortgage loans more accessible, although they may never be as easy to obtain as they were prior to 2008.

**FIGURE 9-7 MORTGAGE RATES**

January 2003-January 2013



Notes: Mortgage Rates:

ARM-Adjustable Rate Mortgage

FRM- Fixed Rate Mortgage

Source: Freddie Mac Primary Mortgage Market Survey, January 2014.

## Construction Financing

Financing costs for construction are affected partly by how early in the development process loans must be taken out and how long the loans must be carried. Project delays can increase total interest payments, and create greater financial risk for a project. Overall, construction financing usually represents a small contribution to total housing costs.

While there is more scrutiny of developer credentials and banks are requiring a higher loan-to-value ratio, the cost of construction financing is historically low, with prime rates below 5 percent in 2014. Faced with a lagging housing market, the Federal Reserve has been cutting interest rates since late 2007, enabling many projects to pencil out that would not otherwise. Where financing is available, construction capital seems to be directed at the best transactions—those with large, established, and well-capitalized sponsors. Given recent trends, the availability of financing is likely to be less of a constraint on new housing construction during this Housing Element planning period than it has been in the recent past. The City is already noticing increased interest in new projects and an increase in stalled projects restarting.

## **Down Payments and Move-In Costs**

The ability to accumulate a down payment remains a formidable barrier to many potential homebuyers. Low-income households find it difficult to make the transition from rental to ownership units because they cannot accumulate a down payment while renting.<sup>34</sup> In December 2013 a \$317,750 home (the median price in Rohnert Park) would require a 20 percent down payment of \$63,350.<sup>35</sup>

Similarly, low-income households may find it difficult to obtain rental housing because they may have problems accruing the necessary down payment in the form of security deposits and first and last months' rents.

## **Environmental Constraints**

In its 2010 Draft Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, the City assessed Rohnert Park's vulnerability to natural disasters based on information provided by ABAG. The ABAG multi-jurisdictional Local Hazard Mitigation Plan lists nine hazards that impact the Bay Area, including five related to earthquakes (faulting, shaking, earthquake-induced landslides, liquefaction, and tsunamis) and four related to weather (flooding, landslides, wildfires, and drought). Of the five earthquake-related hazards listed, surface faulting, landslides, and tsunamis are not considered hazardous to the city. Rohnert Park is also not subject to dam inundation, as there are no dam structures that would pose a threat within the vicinity.

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<sup>34</sup>CDBG Program Application for First Time Home Buyer Program, 2000.

<sup>35</sup>DQNews: <http://www.dqnews.com/Charts/Monthly-Charts/CA-City-Charts/ZIPCAR.aspx>

Table 9-50 shows the acreages of urban land that are subject to the respective hazard list.

<b>TABLE 9-50 ACRES OF URBAN LAND VULNERABLE TO NATURAL DISASTER IMPACTS</b>			
<b>City of Rohnert Park 2010</b>			
<b>Hazard</b>	<b>Plan Year 2005</b>	<b>Plan Year 2010</b>	<b>Change</b>
<b>Total acres of urban land</b>	<b>4,156</b>	<b>4,155</b>	<b>-1</b>
Earthquake faulting <sup>1</sup>	None	None	--
Earthquake shaking (within highest two shaking categories) <sup>2</sup>	4,142	4,146	4
Earthquake-induced landslides <sup>1,3</sup>	N/A	N/A	--
Liquefaction (within moderate, high, or very high liquefaction susceptibility)	4,060	4,053	-7
Flooding <sup>4</sup> (within 100-year floodplain)	152	18	-134
Flooding (within 500-year floodplain)	85	64	-21
Landslides (within areas of existing landslides)	N/A	N/A	--
Wildfire (subject to high, very high, or extreme wildfire threat)	N/A	N/A	--
Wildland-urban interface fire threat	521	510	-11
Dam inundation (within inundation zone)	N/A	N/A	--
Sea level rise <sup>5</sup>	N/A	N/A	--
Tsunamis <sup>6</sup> (within inundation area)	N/A	N/A	--
Drought <sup>7</sup>	4,156	4,155	-1

<sup>1</sup>Within California Geological Survey zone.

<sup>2</sup>In large part because the Healdsburg-Rogers Creek fault and the San Andreas Fault System.

<sup>3</sup>No acreage is susceptible to landslides, as the City is relatively flat and not adjacent to hillier areas.

<sup>4</sup>The decrease is due to better and more accurate mapping.

<sup>5</sup>The sea level rise map is not a hazard map. It is not appropriate to assess infrastructure exposure to sea level rise.

<sup>6</sup>The City of Rohnert Park is not subject to tsunami inundation.

<sup>7</sup>The entire City of Rohnert Park is subject to drought.

Source: City of Rohnert Park Draft Local Hazard Mitigation Plan 2010.

The City was impacted by the 2005 and 2006 winter storms, with general ramifications ranging from flooding events to power outages.<sup>36</sup> The City's public works crews assessed the flooded areas and were able to clean out blocked drainage trash gates, remove debris from ditches and culverts, and place flooded, road closed ahead, and road closed signs, as needed, to warn the public of flooded areas. Today, public works has some provisions for sandbags that are primarily available to areas where living space is at risk of being flooded or impacted. Vehicles, properties, and buildings sustained damage from flood waters particularly on Martin Avenue and Heartwood Court. The City's 2010 Draft Local Hazard Mitigation Plan has policies to reduce the flood risk by ensuring new development pays its fair share of improvements to the storm drainage system, providing sandbags and plastic sheeting to residents (delivering, if necessary), and ensuring the design of new subdivisions to reduce or eliminate flood damage. Additionally, when trees fall in the roadway, they are moved out of the roadway, and when the storm clears, the trees are cut up and removed.

Rohnert Park is subject to periodic drought conditions as part of the climacteric cycle for the region. The City's adopted Water Supply Assessment (WSA) examines the city's future development under its General Plan and the ability of the current and projected water supply to accommodate the existing population as well as future growth. Potential drought problems have been examined in the City's WSA and are accompanied by measures recommended to help address these problems. Furthermore, the City expects to work with ABAG, the Sonoma County Water Agency, and any applicable water supply agency on this issue. The City also plans to work with ABAG to develop specific information about the kind and level of damage to buildings, infrastructure, and critical facilities, which might result from any of the hazards previously noted. The City has reviewed the hazards identified and ranked the hazards based on past disasters and expected future impacts. The conclusion is that earthquakes (particularly shaking), pose the greatest risk for potential loss of properties.

Since 1855 more than 140 earthquakes have been felt in the Santa Rosa area. The 1906 earthquake caused 61 deaths and major damage in Santa Rosa, Sebastopol, Healdsburg, and other communities. The last major earthquake felt by Sonoma County was a 5.7-magnitude seismic event on the Healdsburg Fault in Santa Rosa in 1969. Since 1965 nine major earthquakes have resulted in significant physical and structural damage in Sonoma County. Analysis of seismic data indicates that 8.5 and 7.5 magnitude earthquakes can be expected for the San Andreas and the Healdsburg-Rodgers Creek Faults respectively. Earthquakes of magnitudes 8.0 or more on the San Andreas Fault can be expected every 50 to 200 years.

The City of Rohnert Park would be subjected to very high levels of shaking in the event of a 7.1 earthquake on the Healdsburg-Rodgers Creek Fault. In such an event the Association of Bay Area Governments estimated in 1996 that at least 13,669 dwelling units in Sonoma County would be uninhabitable.<sup>37</sup> ABAG estimated that 1,821 acres of existing residential land would have high potential for shaking based on 2009 hazard mapping estimates.

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<sup>36</sup><http://www.ci.rohnert-park.ca.us/Modules>ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=5583>

<sup>37</sup>"Shaken Awake!," Association of Bay Area Governments, 1996.

More than half of the “red-tagged” units, deemed uninhabitable in its current condition, are anticipated to be mobile homes, which tend to sustain greater damage from equivalent intensities of shaking than wood-frame buildings. During an earthquake the jacks on which a coach is typically placed will tip, causing the coach to fall off some or all of its supports. Although the jacks may punch holes through the floor of the coach, it is usually relatively undamaged. Despite the minimal damage, however, the mobile home becomes uninhabitable, as it must be returned to its foundation, leveled again, and reconnected to utilities. The City’s Draft Local Hazard Mitigation Plan in 2010 stated that the housing department should identify and work toward tying down mobile homes used as year round permanent residents an appropriate cost-sharing busis.

Although single family, wood-framed homes are less likely to be red-tagged, significant damage can occur from falling hot water heaters, failed cripple walls, falling unreinforced masonry chimneys, and dislocation of structures from their foundations. Two-story homes with living space over garages are particularly vulnerable to damage.

Similarly, multifamily wood-framed buildings may have living areas above parking areas, supported only by posts. The “soft” first story may also be constructed of concrete masonry unit bearing walls. These designs offer little resistance to lateral seismic forces. In 2001/2002 the City’s building official identified 30 to 40 multifamily units in four buildings with ground floor parking that could be highly susceptible to seismic damage. A consultant was retained by the City in 2005 to collect data on the susceptibility of all residences in Rohnert Park to seismic activity with the goal of producing a seismic retrofit ordinance. The Building Division is in the process of preparing such an ordinance based on the data that was collected. The City’s Draft Local Hazard Mitigation Plan in 2010 required engineering plan sets for retrofitting of heavy two story homes with living areas over garages, split level homes, and soft story retrofits, until standard plan sets and construction details become available. It also mentioned that the Building Department is responsible for providing technical assistance in seismically strengthening soft-story structures.

During the previous Housing Element planning period, the Rohnert Park Community Development Commission (CDCRP) completed the installation of earthquake-resistant bracing systems in more than 474 mobile homes, which represent nearly one-third of the 1,466 mobile homes within the city. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, which are allocated through the County, are periodically used to install Mobile home bracing systems.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Email correspondence with Gary Tabbert, Sonoma County Community Development Commission, Community Development Associate, 2/17/09.

## Section 9.6 Housing Goals, Policies, and Programs

This Section contains the City's Housing Plan for the 2015-2023 Housing Element planning period. State law recognizes the vital role local governments play in the supply and affordability of housing. Each local government in California is required to adopt a comprehensive, long-term general plan for the physical development of the city or county. In order to make adequate provision for the housing needs of all economic segments of the community, the Housing Element must do all of the following:

- Identify the agencies and officials responsible for the implementation of the various actions and the means by which consistency will be achieved with other general plan elements and community goals.
- Identify adequate sites which will be made available through appropriate zoning and development standards and with the public services and facilities needed to meet the needs of all income levels. This shall include rental housing, factory-built housing, mobile homes, emergency shelters, and transitional housing.
- Assist in the development of adequate housing to meet the needs of low- and moderate-income households.
- Address and, where appropriate and legally possible, remove governmental constraints to the maintenance, improvement, and development of housing.
- Conserve and improve the condition of the existing affordable housing stock.
- Promote housing opportunities for all persons regardless of race, religion, sex, marital status, ancestry, national origin, or color.

The following goals, policies, and programs are designed to address the existing and projected housing needs of the City of Rohnert Park. Each program has one or more individuals, bodies, or agencies responsible for its implementation, along with a potential or committed funding source, and a schedule for its implementation during the 2015-2023 planning period.

### GOAL HO-1: NEW HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

#### GOAL HO-1

Provide opportunities for housing development that accommodates projected growth and facilitates mobility within the ownership and rental markets.

#### Policies

##### Policy HO-1.1 Residentially Zoned Land

The City shall continue to provide an adequate supply of residentially zoned land at sufficient densities to accommodate its fair share of the existing and future housing needs.

**Policy HO-1.2**

**Specific Plan and Annexation Assistance**

The City shall facilitate residential development within new growth areas by assisting with the preparation of specific plans and annexation applications.

**Policy HO-1.3**

**Downzoning**

The City shall deny proposals for residential down-zonings or reclassifications of residentially-designated property to nonresidential uses if such changes would have adverse impacts on the achievement of the City's Quantified Objectives that could not be offset or minimized.

**Policy HO-1.4**

**Public Facilities Financing Plan**

To ensure the adequate provision of streets, water, wastewater, solid waste and parks, the City shall require a Public Facilities Financing Plan for all new developing areas to ensure all necessary infrastructure and public facility improvements are constructed concurrently with development.

**Policy HO-1.5**

**Assessment Districts and Agreements**

The City shall continue to establish assessment districts and use subdivision agreements to finance adequate infrastructure.

**Policy HO-1.6**

**Housing Priorities**

As part of any allocation criteria related to implementation of the City's Growth Management Ordinance, the City shall give priority to projects that address the housing needs identified in the Housing Element and further the City's housing programs.

**Programs**

**Program HO-1.A**

Following the approval of a specific plan and prior to construction, the City shall require program applicants to post sites designated for high-density housing with visible, durable signs containing information about the site's development potential. The City shall require such information to be provided in appropriate sales offices and to prospective buyers of homes within the project.

Responsibility: Development Services Director

Funding Source: Project Applicant

Timing: Ongoing (following approval of specific plans and prior to issuing building permits)