

CITY OF SONOMA

City Council Meeting



July 29, 2019

Study Session #1

Overview on the General Plan,
Development Code, Urban Growth
Boundary

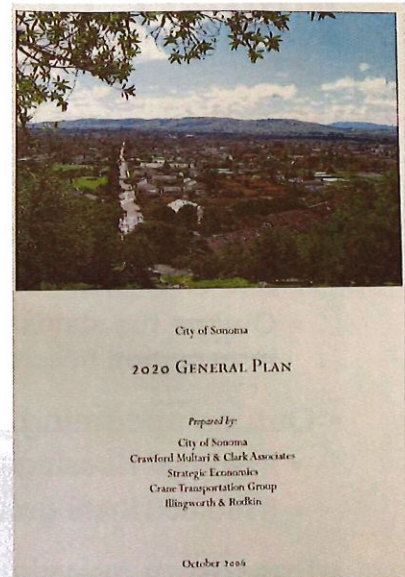
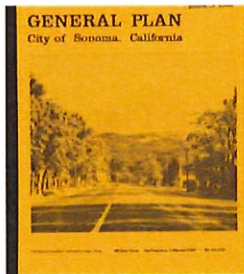
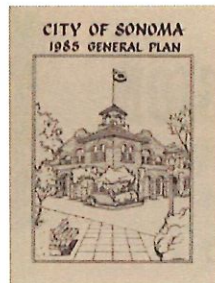
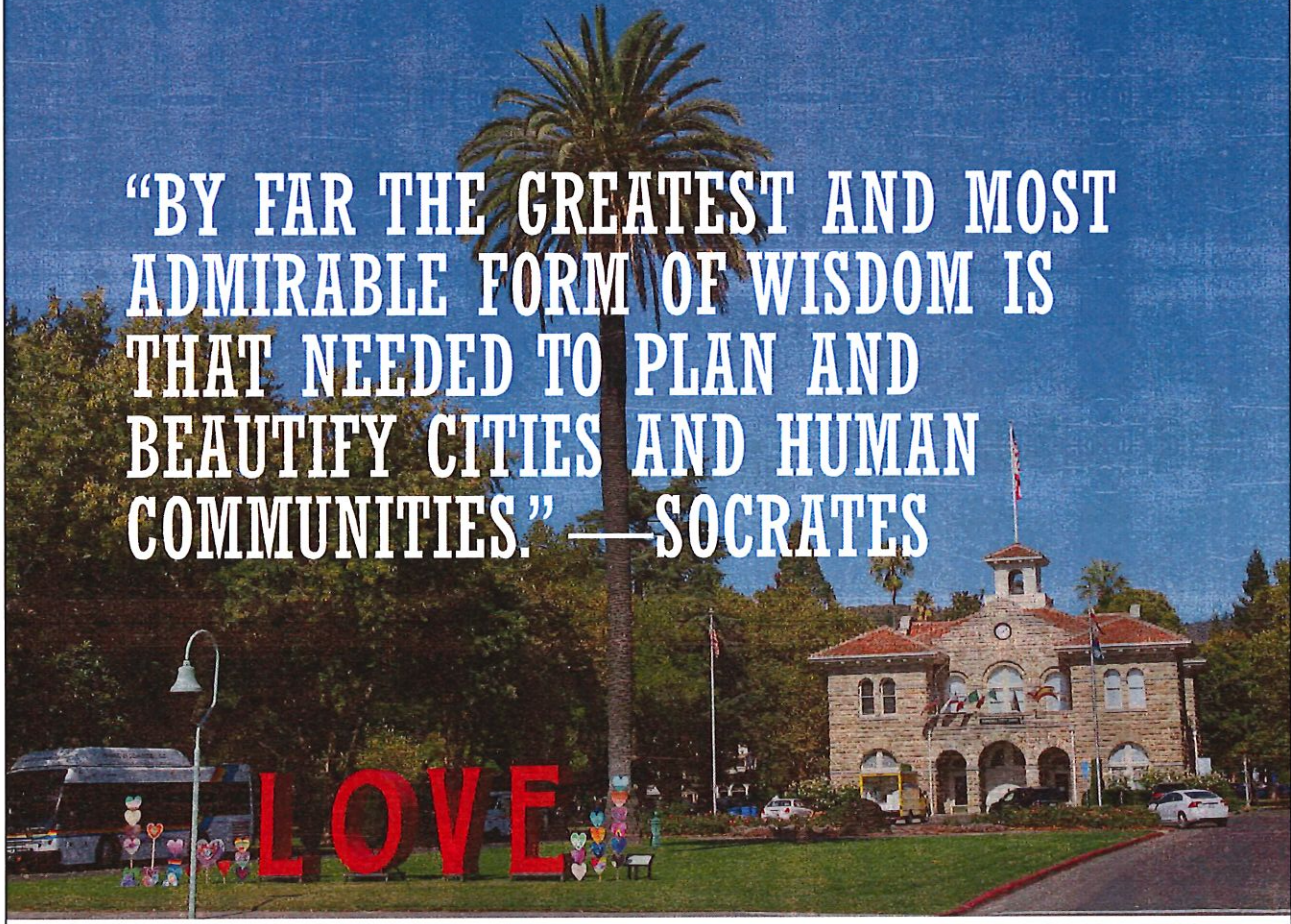


PURPOSE OF STUDY SESSION

- **EDUCATION AND BACKGROUND**
- Begin discussion regarding updating the City's General Plan.
 - Discussion of key planning tools.
 - Outline the status of the City's current General Plan elements and information needed for a future update.
- Outline upcoming Housing requirements and opportunities
 - Regional Housing Need Allocation (RHNA) – next round of #s
 - \$160,000 State grants available for housing policies/programs
- Provide an overview of the City's boundaries – City Limits Line, Sphere of Influence and Urban Growth Boundary.
 - Review issues and options for UGB.



“BY FAR THE GREATEST AND MOST ADMIRABLE FORM OF WISDOM IS THAT NEEDED TO PLAN AND BEAUTIFY CITIES AND HUMAN COMMUNITIES.” —SOCRATES



THE 6TH CITY GENERAL PLAN (THE FIRST - 1964)



- **General Plan** – The first level planning document. Often referred to as “a constitutional blueprint for the future”.
- **Specific Plan** – Next level planning document that implements the goals and policies of the General Plan for the development of a specific geographic area. Contains detailed development standards, distribution of land uses, infrastructure requirements, and implementation measures.
- **Zoning** – (the “Development Code”) establishes zoning districts, overlay zones, permit types (i.e., Conditional Use Permits (CUP’s), Sign Reviews, Planned Developments (PD’s), Variances, etc.), setbacks, uses within zoning Districts, non-conforming uses, parking requirements, etc.
- **CEQA** – California Environmental Quality Act – Categorical Exemptions, Initial Study, Negative Declaration (ND), Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND), Draft EIR (DEIR), Final EIR (FEIR), Subsequent EIR, Supplemental EIR, Addendum EIR.
- **State Subdivision Map Act (SMA)** – Lot Line Adjustments, Tentative Parcel Map, Parcel Pap, Tentative Subdivision Map, Final Map, exactions and dedications.

PLANNING TOOLS



GENERAL PLAN 101

GENERAL PLAN

INTRODUCTION

A General Plan is . . .

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- **Required by State Law.**
- A means of **linking community values**, vision, and objectives.
- The **blueprint** for Sonoma's future.
- A master policy document that provides the **general framework for all zoning and land use decisions** within a community. It provides guidance, prioritizes, organizes and directs the patterns of land use throughout the City. All other planning documents and all projects must be consistent with the General Plan.
- A **comprehensive and long-term policy document** guiding growth and development (and includes a General Plan map).



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A General Plan Consists of . . .

- "Elements" or topic areas
 - **7 required** elements by State Law.
 - Optional Elements that reflect local issues and priorities are permissible (no limit on number).
- Necessary background analysis (sometimes included in appendices).
- Typically a 20 year time horizon; not legally required to update.
 - (Sonoma next General Plan – 2035 or 2040?)
 - Only the Housing Element has a requirement to be updated on a schedule (5 and 8 year cycles)

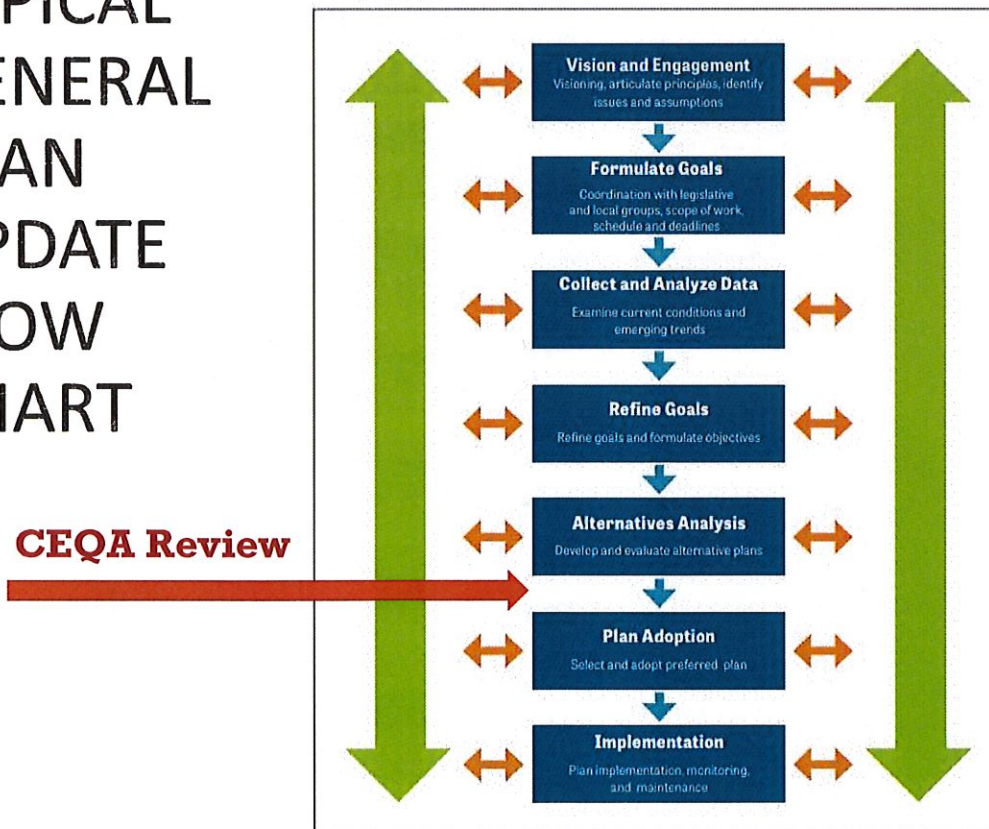


REQUIRED ELEMENTS



TYPICAL GENERAL PLAN UPDATE FLOW CHART

General Plan Flow Chart



COMMUNITY OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

To be successful, the process for updating the General Plan must incorporate a strategy and provide effective tools for community participation. Below are examples ...

- Invite and encourage broad-based community participation.
- Identify stakeholders for specific areas / meeting.
- Conduct a community survey, forums, workshops, etc.
- Provide easy to find on-line access to informational materials and other documents.
- Use new on-line engagement tools to make it easy for broad participation.
- Hold public hearings, workshops, and other events throughout the update process.



CURRENT CITY OF SONOMA GENERAL PLAN VISION STATEMENT

Sonoma is a beautiful, environmentally friendly, and safe place, widely recognized as one of the most desirable cities in Northern California to live, visit, and do business. Ours is a diverse community where residents and their children can and want to remain.



2020 GENERAL PLAN GOALS, POLICIES AND IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

		(2015 - 2023)						
		CHAPTER 1	CHAPTER 2	CHAPTER 3	CHAPTER 4	CHAPTER 5	CHAPTER 6	
	TOTAL	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (LAND USE)	LOCAL ECONOMY	ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES	CIRCULATION (Updated 2016)	PUBLIC SAFETY	NOISE	HOUSING ELEMENT (Updated 2015)
GOALS	24	6	1	4	4	2	1	6
POLICIES	144	22	13	19	38	10	6	36
IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES	176	39	17	26	35	21	13	25



Current General Plan Structure	
State Mandated Elements	Sonoma 2020 General Plan
Land Use (Map)	1.0 Community Development
Circulation	4.0 Circulation (updated 2016)
Housing	7.0 Housing (updated 2015)
Open Space	3.0 Environmental Resources
Conservation	
Safety	5.0 Public Safety
Noise	6.0 Noise
Optional Element	2.0 Local Economy



LOCAL ECONOMY

PRELIMINARY ITEMS TO CONSIDER

- Conduct an Economic Development Assessment and Strategic Plan (prior version; early 2000s)
 - An overview of existing economic conditions in Sonoma including demographics, socioeconomics and employment in conjunction with Sonoma County Economic Development Board/Sonoma Valley Chamber of Commerce;
 - Key findings and recommendations based on an analysis of existing conditions;
 - Define both citywide goals and area-specific goals for economic development;
 - Identify both citywide policies and implementing actions and area-specific policies and implementing actions to improve economic conditions and capitalize on Sonoma's strengths;
 - Determine industry clusters for focus and support.



ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

PRELIMINARY ITEMS TO CONSIDER IN UPDATE

- May want to split into two separate and distinct Elements.
- **Conservation Element.** Provide for the conservation, development and use of natural resources by identifying natural resources throughout the City and establish guiding policies for the conservation, development and utilization of these resources. This element can address Water, Agriculture, Soils, Plant & Animal Habitat, Threatened & Endangered Species, Freshwater Fishing, Energy, Mineral, Archaeological-Cultural-Historical, and Solid Waste resources. *Climate Action will be a large component or could be a separate element.*
- **Open Space Element.** Detail how open space and recreational areas will be preserved and managed. Establish a long-range vision for the future development of parks and open spaces within the City and include parks, gardens, greens (The Plaza), trails, tree-lined streets and gathering spaces in planning for open space.



CIRCULATION PRELIMINARY ITEMS TO CONSIDER IN UPDATE

- Updated Recently – 2016
 - Systemic Safety Analysis Report (2019)

- Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) replaces Level of Service (LOS)
- In 2013, Governor Brown signed Senate Bill 743 (SB 743), which requires dramatic changes to the CEQA Guidelines to facilitate a reduction in GHG emissions by promoting an increase in infill development.
- July 1, 2020 is the statewide implementation date and public agencies may opt-in use of new metrics prior to that date. OPR released a December 2018 Technical Advisory that contains recommendations regarding assessment of VMT, thresholds of significance, and mitigation measures.
- Sonoma will need to develop its VMT thresholds by July 1, 2020, along with all other cities and counties in the State that haven't already done so.



PUBLIC SAFETY PRELIMINARY ITEMS TO CONSIDER UPDATE

- In light of recent statewide and local wildfires, update the Element to address wildland and urban interface areas and establish and provide a process to review post event recovery strategies.



HOUSING PRELIMINARY ITEMS TO CONSIDER IN UPDATE

- Housing Element last updated in 2015; 8 year plan; from 2015 to 2023.
- Deadline for submittal of new Housing Element - **December 2022**.

Update timelines:

- Release in April 2020 of Regional Housing Needs Determination (RHND) by the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) to ABAG.
- ABAG is responsible for allocating a portion of the region's housing need to each city and county in the Bay Area called "The Regional Housing Need Allocation" – RHNA, which is the state-mandated process to identify the number of housing units, by affordability level, that each jurisdiction must accommodate in the Housing Element of its General Plan (Government Code §65584).
- Jurisdictions can partner with their neighbors to form a "sub-region" to conduct its own RHNA process to allocate the sub-region's housing need among its members. Jurisdictions that wish to form a sub-region must inform ABAG by **February 1, 2020**.



HOUSING EFFORTS



"Housing Our Community" Town Hall Series

4/25/2019 – LEARN, Housing 101

5/16/2019 – DISCUSS, Housing Experts Panel

6/20/2019 – EXPLORE, Community Workshop

Next Steps ...

Housing Action Plan

Update to Development Code (housing related items)

Review and location of RHNA numbers

Housing Element Update (includes an updated vacant land inventory)



THE MAPS WE HAVE...

City limits

Sphere of influence

Urban Growth Boundary

MAPS

- General Plan Land Use Map
- Zoning Map
- Boundaries Map



CURRENT BOUNDARY LINES

City Limit Lines – the defined boundary of a City established by LAFCo.

“Sphere of Influence” (SOI) - A plan for the probable physical boundaries and service area of a local agency as determined by the Commission (California Government Code §56076).

Urban Growth Boundary/Urban Limit Line -- An urban growth boundary (UGB) separates urban areas from the surrounding natural and agricultural lands, or greenbelts. It puts a limit on how far out a city can expand. UGBs are often set for a specified period of time, such as 20 years. Different cities may call these barriers by different names, such as “urban limit lines” or simply “growth boundaries,” and are created to prevent “urban sprawl” development and encourage sustainable growth practices.

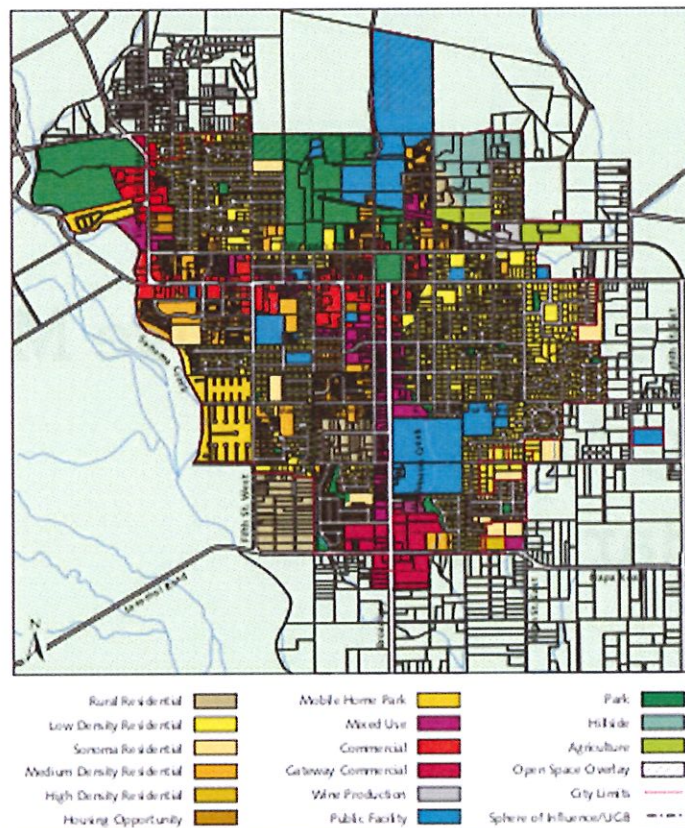


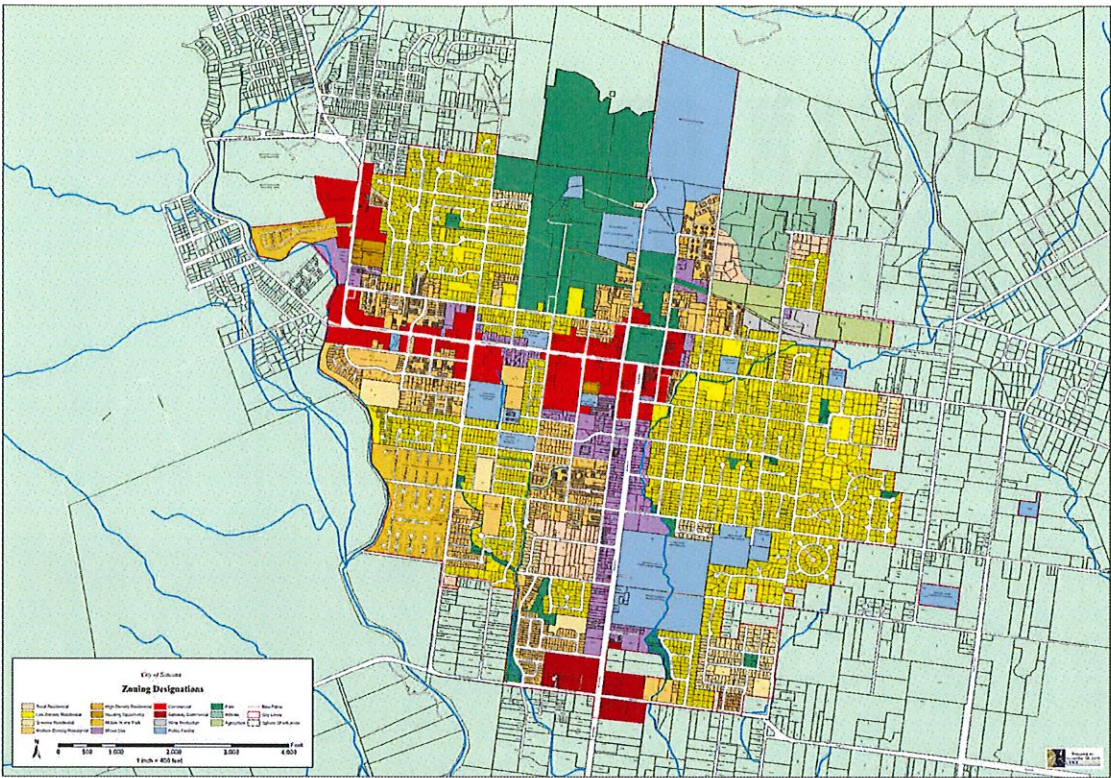
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Land Use Plan

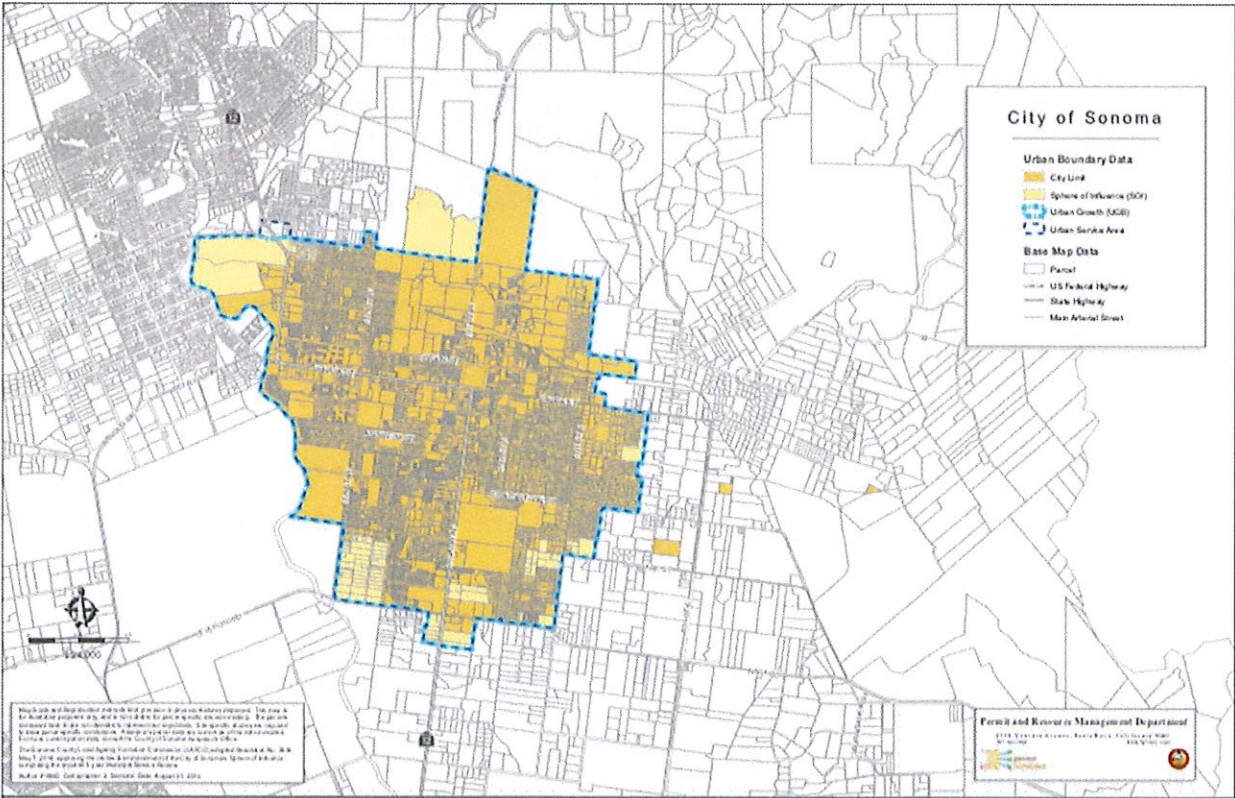
Source: City of Sonoma, October 2006



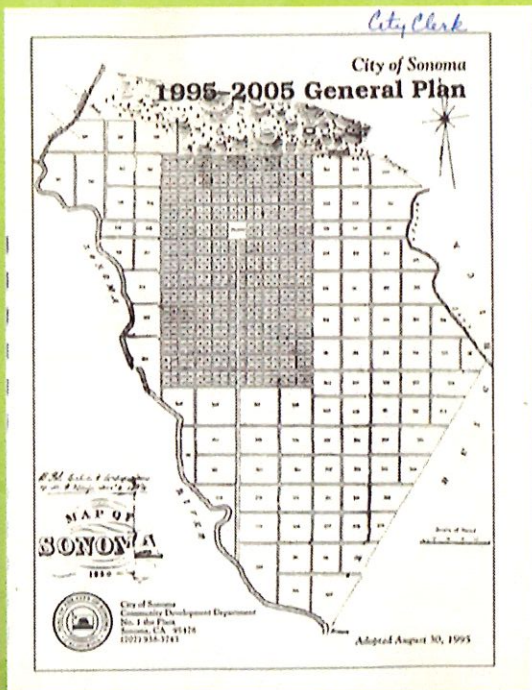
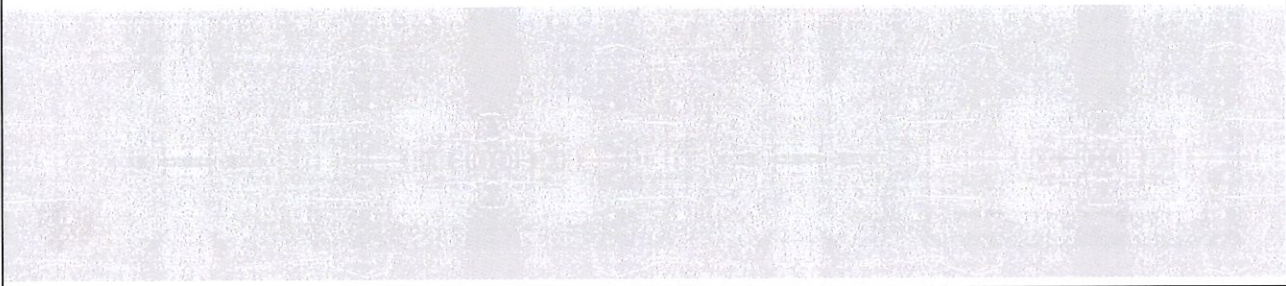
ZONING MAP



LAFCO APPROVED URBAN BOUNDARY MAP



URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARY

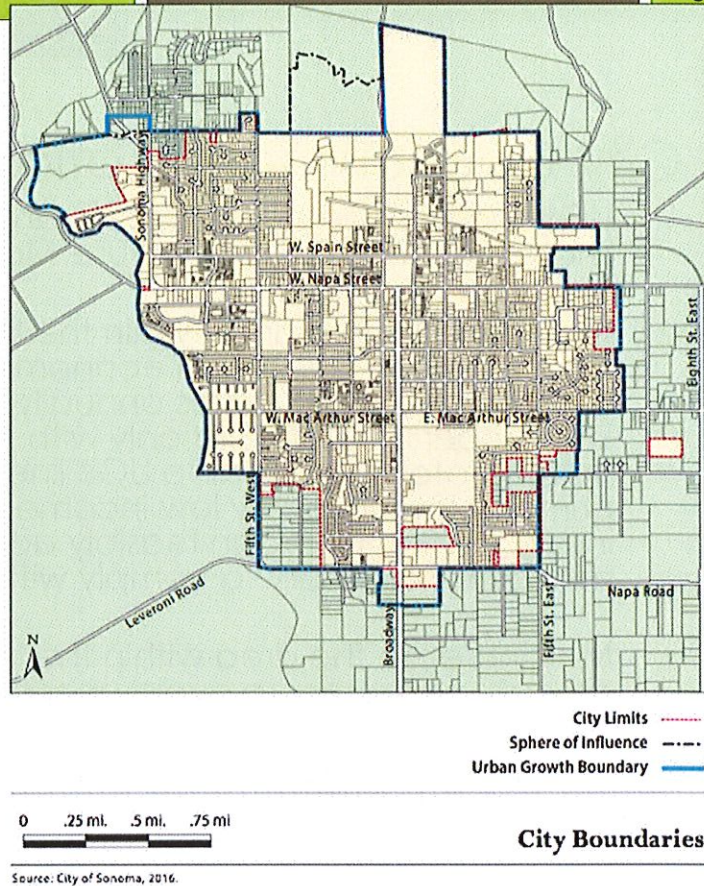


The voter
approved UGB
2000

Amended the 1995 –
2005 General Plan
setting a
“cornerstone policy”
that established the
“geographic limits of
long-term
development”.

URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARY (UGB)

- Adopted by voters in 2000 for 20-year term.
- Embedded in the 2020 General Plan.
- Co-terminus with Sphere of Influence of Feb, 2000, except now for the Montini Preserve.
- When its term ends, it remains in place but may be modified by the City Council - unless renewed...



The General Plan was amended...

Added an urban boundary **GOAL** to the Community Development (land use) Element that allows uses compatible with preserving agriculture and open space resources.

- Added urban growth boundary **policies** that:
Placed the Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) line on the Land Use Map
- Prevented the amendment of the Goals and Policies in the Measure from being amended before December 31, 2020, except by a vote of the people **or by the City Council under three circumstances.**

City Council modification of the UGB:

1. UGB line may be decreased to any area smaller than shown on the existing Land Use Map;
2. May increase the area within the UGB line for residential development to serve all economic segments of community up to 5 acres annually/20 acre total prior to December 31, 2020, but only with specific findings (immediately adjacent to UGB line, water and sewer, primarily low and very low income housing, no land inside existing UGB can feasibly accommodate, minimum necessary to comply with state law);
3. May increase the area within the UGB the minimum amount necessary to avoid unconstitutional taking;

A content specific UGB hearing is required in addition to regular public hearings.

The “UGB” does not expire on December 31, 2020 - the ability to amend the UGB transfers to the City Council

After December 31, 2020, **Implementation Measure 1.5.1** shall not apply, and the City Council, if it deems it in the public interest, may amend the General Plan provisions regarding the UGB in accordance with state law without a vote of the people.

How Does UGB Operate?

- The UGB generally provides that the City shall not approve any discretionary entitlement for development outside the UGB.
- For the City that is basically water connections and encroachment permits.
- Forces and limits rural level of development due to need for well/septic.

Possible things to consider:

- Mapping changes
 - (1) include the Montini Preserve which is within the SOI but not within the UGB or city limits;
 - (2) expand the SOI to create more developable areas between the current city limits and the SOI/UGB;
 - (3) Expand the UGB to allow for housing only;
 - (4) create an "Area of Concern" (AOC) through LAFCo - which is geographic area beyond the SOI in which land use decisions or other governmental actions of the County impact directly or indirectly upon the City or in which urbanization may be anticipated in the intermediate or long-range planning horizons. For example, a development project outside the limits of the SOI may result in the City providing services of adjusting its planning assumptions.
- Language of UGB could be refreshed for clarity and easier administration (.i.e., infrastructure, etc.)

General Plan Amendment options:

1. Retain UGB as is; continues after 2020; boundaries can be changed by a majority of the City Council.
2. Council places UGB on ballot (March or November 2020)
3. Voters place UGB on ballot (March or November 2020)
4. Create public process to review UGB and potentially create updated UGB with buy-in from community and stakeholders.

Issues / Context:

- CEQA review
- Timelines for March 2020 or November 2020 ballots



DEVELOPMENT CODE

- **Current (Zoning) “Development Code” was adopted in 2002.**
- **...And four years later the City adopted a new General Plan in 2006.**
- Initial Considerations
 - State Law issues – objective standards for housing development.
 - Public noticing requirements including on-site
 - Parking requirements
 - Definitions are antiquated or inconsistent
 - Internal consistency – references



Considerations for Development Code Update



FUNDING / TIMING

- Staff to return with recommendations for process and timing.
 - A General Plan consultant will have deep experience and expertise to provide recommendations to the City Council and staff.
- Funding Reserved
 - \$500,000 – reserved for General Plan Update
 - \$100,000 – reserved for UGB process
 - \$160,000 – State grant for housing streamlining
 - Need to return with overall budget estimate



COUNCIL QUESTIONS



PUBLIC COMMENT

NEXT STEPS

