

General Plan Sonoma: Policy Development Schedule and Community Engagement Framework



General Plan Sonoma
Board of Supervisors
April 14, 2026



Background



- ❑ Board initiated work plan for General Plan update in December 2023
- Community Visioning (June 2024 – August 2025)
 - Extensive community engagement
 - Draft Vision and Guiding Principles
 - Draft General Plan 2020 Audit
- Policy Development (January 2026 – February 2029)

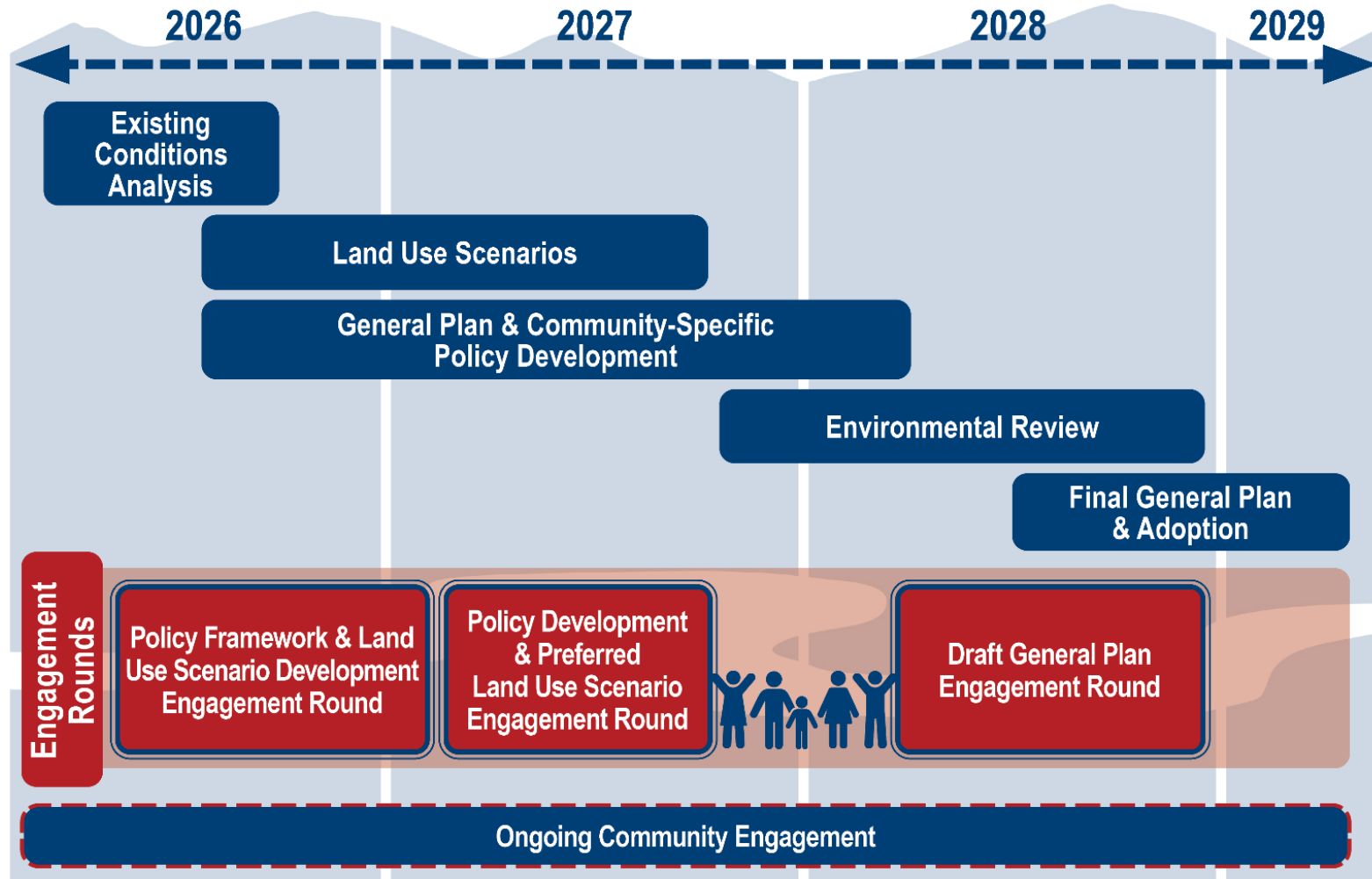


General Plan Sonoma Policy Development Schedule



Schedule

Policy Development



Project Status

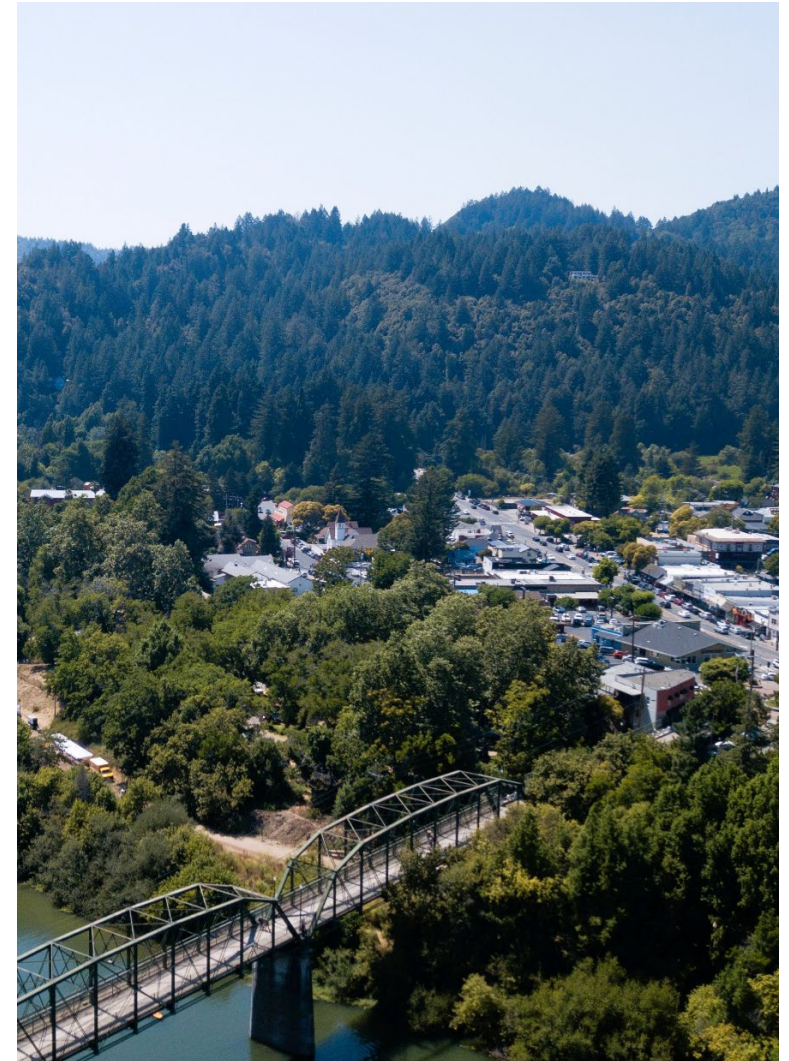


Current Focus:

- Public workshops with the Planning Agency and Board of Supervisors
- Community Engagement Framework
- Existing Conditions Analysis (concluding this summer)
 - Existing Conditions and Trends Report
 - Community-Facing Summary Report
 - Key Trends Brief

What's Next:

- Community engagement (this fall)
 - Review key issues
 - Identify policy priorities
 - Input on development of land use scenarios



Community Engagement Framework



Community Engagement Framework Goals

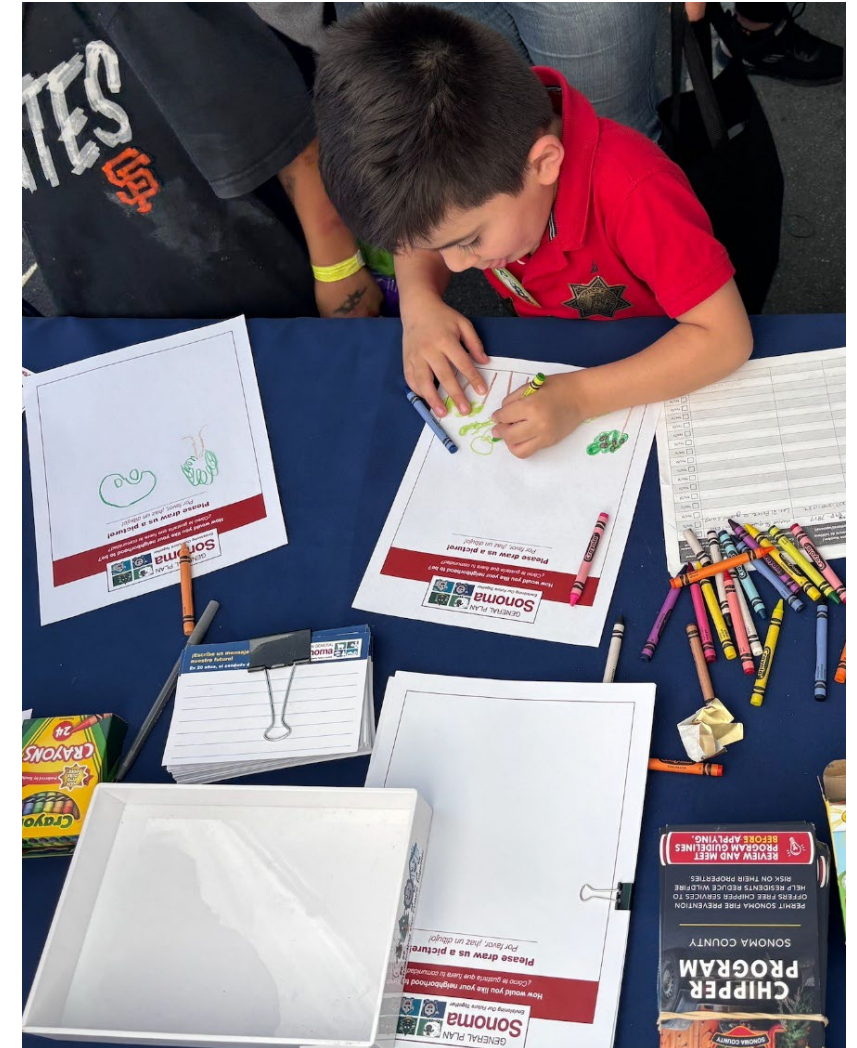


- Raise awareness of General Plan Sonoma and the importance of public input.
- Engage a diverse and representative community.
- Provide accessible and varied engagement opportunities.
- Remove barriers to engagement participation.
- Provide flexibility in the planning process to adapt the approach.
- Promote transparency and accountability through language translation and interpretation.
- Track and report progress.
- Build public trust and ownership in the process.
- Address tradeoffs openly and equitably.
- Collaborate with jurisdictions and other agencies.

Community Engagement Commitments



- Accessibility and inclusion
- Equity-focused engagement
- Transparency and follow-through
- Flexibility and responsiveness
- Respect for community time and lived experience



Community Engagement Framework Contents



- Purpose and intent
- Engagement goals
- Engagement commitments
- Audiences for engagement
- Engagement methods
- Getting the word out
- Engagement timing and adaptability
- Barriers to engagement
- Alignment with County equity and accessibility policies
- Community Based Organizations partners
- Roles and responsibilities
- Reporting and transparency

Engagement Methods



- In-Person and Virtual Workshops
- Online Engagement (interactive surveys, mapping activities, polls, etc.)
- Community Events
- Hard-to-Reach Engagement
- School-Based Youth Engagement
- Storytelling Through Arts
- Video Engagement
- Issue-Focused and Technical Panels
- Tribal Partnerships
- Advisory Council/Commission Meetings (C/MAC)
- Planning Commission/Agency and Board Meetings



Policy Framework Fall Outreach



- Focus: Review key issues, identify policy priorities, and provide input on the development of land use scenarios
- Anticipated engagement activities:
 - In-person and virtual workshops
 - Online interactive survey
 - Community events
 - Focus group meetings with underserved communities
 - Educational video(s)
 - Storytelling through arts activities (ideas include digital or in-person mural wall or photo scrapbook)
 - Workshops at Santa Rosa Junior College
 - Tribal engagement



Draft Vision and Guiding Principles



Draft Vision



Unincorporated Sonoma County is home to small towns and rural communities united by a deep appreciation for its natural beauty, native ecosystems, and iconic agricultural and open space lands, ~~including farms, ranches, and forests that together shape the county's landscape and identity.~~ **Residents** ~~We~~ share a commitment to fostering an inclusive, equitable, and resilient community. We embrace thoughtful development that expands housing and economic opportunity, with a focus on **city and community centered growth**, conservation of natural resources, protection of agricultural and open space lands, and celebration of our unique unincorporated communities. Our future is grounded in responsible growth, climate resilience, resource stewardship, and sustainable infrastructure to support a high quality of life for **current and future generations** ~~to come.~~

Draft Guiding Principles



Equity Inclusion and Community Identity

Celebrate the character, culture, and identity of Sonoma County's people and places, ensuring all residents have equitable access to housing, services, and opportunity - and meaningful ways to participate in shaping their future.



Sustainable Land Use and Resource Stewardship

Prioritize city-centered growth, while focusing development in unincorporated communities on meeting local needs including housing, infrastructure, and economic opportunities that support long-term community vitality. Promote thoughtful, ~~city-centered~~ growth to accommodate the County's fair share of regional ~~needs growth~~, meet the needs of residents, and protect Sonoma County's iconic agricultural ~~lands, and~~ open spaces ~~lands~~, rural character, natural beauty, and ecosystems. Conserve water, wildlife habitat, open space, and agricultural lands to ensure long-term ecological health and preserve nature-based services like clean water, healthy soil, and climate resilience ~~that benefit the public~~.



Resilient and Diverse Economy

Foster a thriving and diverse local economy by enabling conditions for good-paying jobs, workforce development, and the success of small businesses and agriculture—expanding opportunities that meet local needs and build long-term community resilience.



Robust and Adaptable Agriculture and Local Food Systems

Celebrate Sonoma County's deep agricultural roots and the essential role agriculture continues to play in the County's landscape. Support the viability and adaptability of agricultural lands and operations in the face of changing environmental and economic conditions. Support innovation, diversification, and sustainable practices that protect natural resources and strengthen climate resilience. Ensure the stability, adaptability, and productivity of the County's agricultural lands and industries. Expand access to healthy, local food by supporting producers, farmworkers, and food systems that connect communities to the land. Ensure that agricultural workers and families have safe conditions, ~~and~~ access to opportunity, ~~and~~ access to housing.

Draft Guiding Principles



Complete Connected, and Healthy Communities

Facilitate housing, mobility, parks, services, and infrastructure that support vibrant, inclusive communities while protecting open space and working lands. Ensure that all residents, **especially including** in rural and underserved areas, can safely and efficiently access daily needs and opportunities.



Tribal Partnership and Cultural Stewardship

Honor the sovereignty, history, and living cultures of Native American Tribes and Indigenous Peoples in Sonoma County. Continue and expand government-to-government engagement with **Sonoma County's federally recognized tribes local tribal governments** through intergovernmental agreements, regular consultation, and co-management arrangements, building on County Administrator's Office-led Tribal Affairs and Climate Action initiatives. Prioritize early notice, enforceable agreements, incorporation of Traditional Ecological Knowledge, and capacity-building support for tribal participation.



Climate Action and Long-Term Resilience

Prepare for a changing climate and environmental challenges through proactive planning: reduce emissions through climate-smart infrastructure, prioritize development in low-hazard areas, support emergency preparedness, and harness the protective and restorative benefits of nature. **Protect communities from wildfire, flooding, and other climate hazards, while planning for the well-being of current and future generations.** Support the well-being of current and future generations by protecting communities from wildfire, flooding, drought, and other climate hazards.

Next Steps



Next Steps

1. Revise and finalize the Community Engagement Framework and Vision and Guiding Principles based on feedback received today.
2. Implement the Community Engagement Framework through engagement activities throughout the remainder of the project.
3. Implement the tasks outlined in the General Plan Policy Development Schedule.



Board Discussion



- Provide feedback on the Draft Community Engagement Framework.
- Provide feedback on the draft Vision and Guiding Principles.



Questions



