



# City of Sebastopol

## Planning Commission Staff Report

Mayor  
Sarah Glade Gurney  
Vice Mayor  
Una Glass  
City Council  
John Eder  
Robert Jacob  
Patrick Slayter

Meeting Date: March 22, 2016  
Agenda Item: 8A  
To: Planning Commission  
From: Kenyon Webster, Planning Director  
Subject: General Plan EIR Scoping Hearing  
Recommendation: Conduct Public Hearing, Provide Any Comments  
CEQA Status: EIR to be Prepared

Planning Director  
Kenyon Webster  
Assistant Planner  
Jonathan Atkinson  
Administrative Assistant  
Rebecca Mansour

**Introduction:** This staff report addresses a scoping hearing for the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) on the proposed General Plan.

**Background:** On March 1, 2016, the City issued a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) for the General Plan Update. The NOP provides an opportunity for the public and agencies to provide the City with input regarding topics that should be addressed in the DEIR. Public and agency comments will be received over a 30-day period, ending on March 31, 2016. A copy of the NOP is attached for the Commission's reference.

The DEIR is currently being prepared by the project consultant, De Novo Planning Group, and is scheduled to be released for formal public review in May 2016. State law requires local jurisdictions to hold a "scoping meeting" as part of the preparation of environmental impact reports. The purpose of this meeting is to allow the public and any interested agencies an opportunity to provide comments on the "scope" and content of the DEIR prior to its completion.

The scoping meeting is not intended to be a forum to discuss the contents of the General Plan Update.

To comply with this State regulation, the DEIR scoping meeting will be held as a public hearing item on the March 22, 2016 Planning Commission agenda.

Staff recommends that the Commission receive a brief presentation from the consultant, open the public hearing, receive any comments from the public, close the public hearing, and then direct the comments to the consultant. Any comments received will be incorporated into the DEIR. No other formal action or decision making will be required of the Commission.

**Attachment:** Notice of Preparation



# Notice of Preparation Sebastopol General Plan Update Draft Program Environmental Impact Report

**Date:** March 1, 2016

**To:** State Clearinghouse  
State Responsible Agencies  
State Trustee Agencies  
Other Public Agencies  
Organizations and Interested Persons

**Lead Agency:** City of Sebastopol Planning Department  
Kenyon Webster, Planning Director  
Planning Department  
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## Summary

The City of Sebastopol (City) will serve as Lead Agency in the preparation of a programmatic Environmental Impact Report (Program EIR) addressing the comprehensive update to the City's General Plan. This programmatic EIR will address the environmental impacts associated with the adoption and implementation of the Sebastopol General Plan (Sebastopol General Plan, or General Plan). Information regarding the project description, project location, public outreach process, and topics to be addressed in the Draft EIR is provided below. Additional information, including background documents and the preliminary Draft Sebastopol General Plan, is available at: [www.sebastopol.generalplan.org](http://www.sebastopol.generalplan.org)

## Submitting Comments

Public agencies and interested parties are invited to submit comments in writing as to the scope and content of the EIR. Public agencies submitting comments are encouraged to identify a contact person and any key agency concerns regarding the proposed project. The City needs to know the views of your agency as to the scope and content of the environmental information that is germane to your agency's statutory responsibilities in connection to the proposed project. Public and agency comments will be received over a 30-day period, **ending on March 31, 2016**. All comments must be received prior to 5:00 p.m. on March 31, 2016. In the event that no response

Excepting the Housing Element, the City's current General Plan was adopted in 1994 and includes the following elements:

- Land Use
- Transportation
- Conservation, Parks and Open Space
- Housing
- Community Identity
- Economic Vitality
- Safety

The City has limited developable areas and a history of few annexations since the current General Plan was adopted. The City has a voter-approved Urban Growth Boundary and a Growth Management Program, both of which are intended to preserve the small-town character of the town, discourage sprawl, and preserve open space, agriculture and environmental resources on the town's perimeter.

### **Study Area**

There are three key boundary lines addressed by the General Plan. These include the city limits, the Sphere of Influence (SOI), and the Urban Growth Boundary, as shown on Figure 2.

**City Limits:** Includes the area within the City's corporate boundary, over which the City exercises land use authority and provides public services.

**Sphere of Influence (SOI):** The probable physical boundary and service area of the City, as adopted by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO). The SOI includes both incorporated and unincorporated areas within which Sebastopol will have the primary responsibility for the provision of public facilities and services. Lands within the SOI but outside existing city limits may be considered for development after annexation.

Until that time, the area within the SOI is under the jurisdiction of Sonoma County and its General Plan; however, City policies will influence the County's considerations of development proposals for lands within the SOI.

**Urban Growth Boundary (UGB):** The City's 1994 General Plan established an Urban Growth Boundary (UGB). The Urban Growth Boundary is a line beyond which development will not be allowed, except for public parks and public schools. Measure O, approved by Sebastopol voters in November 1996, amended the 1994 General Plan to reaffirm the City's UGB and amend the 1994 General Plan to keep the UGB in effect until December 31, 2016. The UGB is shown on Figure 2. Measure O also amended the 1994 General Plan to prohibit extension of City services outside the UGB, except under specific extraordinary circumstances.

- The **Noise Element** establishes standards and policies to protect the community from the harmful and annoying effects of exposure to excessive noise levels. This element includes strategies to reduce land use conflicts that may result in exposure to unacceptable noise levels.
- The **Community Character Element** focuses on the ways in which Sebastopol's buildings, streets, and open spaces work together to define the City's sense of place. The purpose of this Element is to provide an overall policy framework for the continued design improvement and evolution of the City.
- The **Safety Element** establishes policies and programs to protect the community from risk associated with geologic, flood, and fire hazards, as well as setting standards for emergency preparedness.
- The **Economic Vitality Element** seeks to sustain and diversify the city's economy, recognizing the importance of supporting existing and local businesses while broadening and expanding the employment base and economic opportunities within the city. Long-term fiscal sustainability will be supported by economic growth from increasing the range of business, commercial services, and high-quality jobs in the city. Providing a broader economic base is intended to improve the city's economic vitality while increasing access for residents to local goods and services and local employment opportunities.
- The **Community Health and Wellness Element** addresses a wide range of community health topics, including access to healthy foods, substance abuse, access to medical care, and maintaining healthy lifestyles.

### **Goals, Policies, and Actions**

Each element of the Sebastopol General Plan contains a series of goals, policies, and actions. The goals, policies, and actions provide guidance to the City on how to direct change, manage growth, and manage resources over the 20-year life of the General Plan. The following provides a description of each and explains the relationship of each:

- A **goal** is a description of the general desired result that the City seeks to create through the implementation of the General Plan.
- A **policy** is a specific statement that guides decision-making as the City works to achieve its goals and objectives. Once adopted, policies represent statements of City regulations. The General Plan's policies set out the standards that will be used by City staff, the Planning Commission, and the City Council in their review of land development projects, resource protection activities, infrastructure improvements, and other City actions. Policies are on-going and require no specific action on behalf of the City.
- An **action** is an implementation measure, procedure, technique, or specific program to be undertaken by the City to help achieve a specified goal or implement an adopted policy. The City must take additional steps to implement each action item in the General Plan. An action item is something that can and will be completed.

intended to implement the Downtown Plan and enhance the vitality and character of Sebastopol's historic commercial area. Housing is encouraged on upper stories.

**Office/Light Industrial:** This designation synthesizes Office and Light Industrial classifications and is intended to promote well planned, integrated business parks, which will serve as major employment center within the community. The Office/Light Industrial designations only applies to sites of three (3) acres or larger and must be implemented through the PC-Planned Community zoning process. Land uses within business parks shall be limited to non-polluting, "clean" industries and businesses with primary permitted uses including corporate and administrative offices and research development uses. Ancillary uses shall be permitted under this designation, which may include warehousing and distribution, exercise facilities, child care uses, and food service uses which provides support services to primary uses. FAR shall not exceed 1.5.

**Light Industrial:** This designation provides for a wide variety of commercial, wholesale, service, and processing uses which do not generate excessive adverse environmental impacts. Other uses permitted in this designation include office ancillary to industrial uses; warehousing and agricultural products sales and services; auto sales and repair; food and drink processing; construction yards; research and development, laboratories, light manufacturing; and similar uses. Residential uses are permitted as a secondary use to the primary light industrial uses permitted in this land use designation at the High Density Residential density of 12.1 to 25 units per acre. Maximum FAR shall not exceed 0.75 (not including the residential use).

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

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

**Community Facilities:** This designation includes public buildings and facilities, utility facilities and related easements, public libraries, city offices, fire and police stations, and school sites. Maximum FAR shall not exceed 2.0.

## **Online Surveys and Polls**

City staff and the consultant team developed an online survey to gather additional information from the public related to the General Plan Update. The online survey was available through the General Plan Update website, and was developed to pose similar questions to those posed at the visioning workshops, and to gather additional details regarding City service levels, residential homeownership, employment locations, and economic development priorities. The survey included 21 specific questions, and was completed or partially completed by approximately 700 people. Detailed survey results and responses are contained in Appendix C of the Issues and Opportunities Report, which is available for review online at: [www.sebastopol.generalplan.org](http://www.sebastopol.generalplan.org).

## **General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC)**

The City Council appointed a 16-member General Plan Advisory Committee (GPAC), which consisted of members from the Planning Commission, local business owners, residents, and the community at-large. The GPAC collaborated with City staff and the General Plan Update consultant team throughout the development of the General Plan. The GPAC met 12 times between July 2014 and December 2015, to identify key issues and challenges that Sebastopol faces over the next 20-30 years, and to develop the comprehensive set of goals, policies, and actions contained in the General Plan. Each GPAC meeting was open to the public, and numerous members of the public and other local interested agencies attended the meetings and provided detailed input to the GPAC.

## **City Council and Planning Commission Workshops**

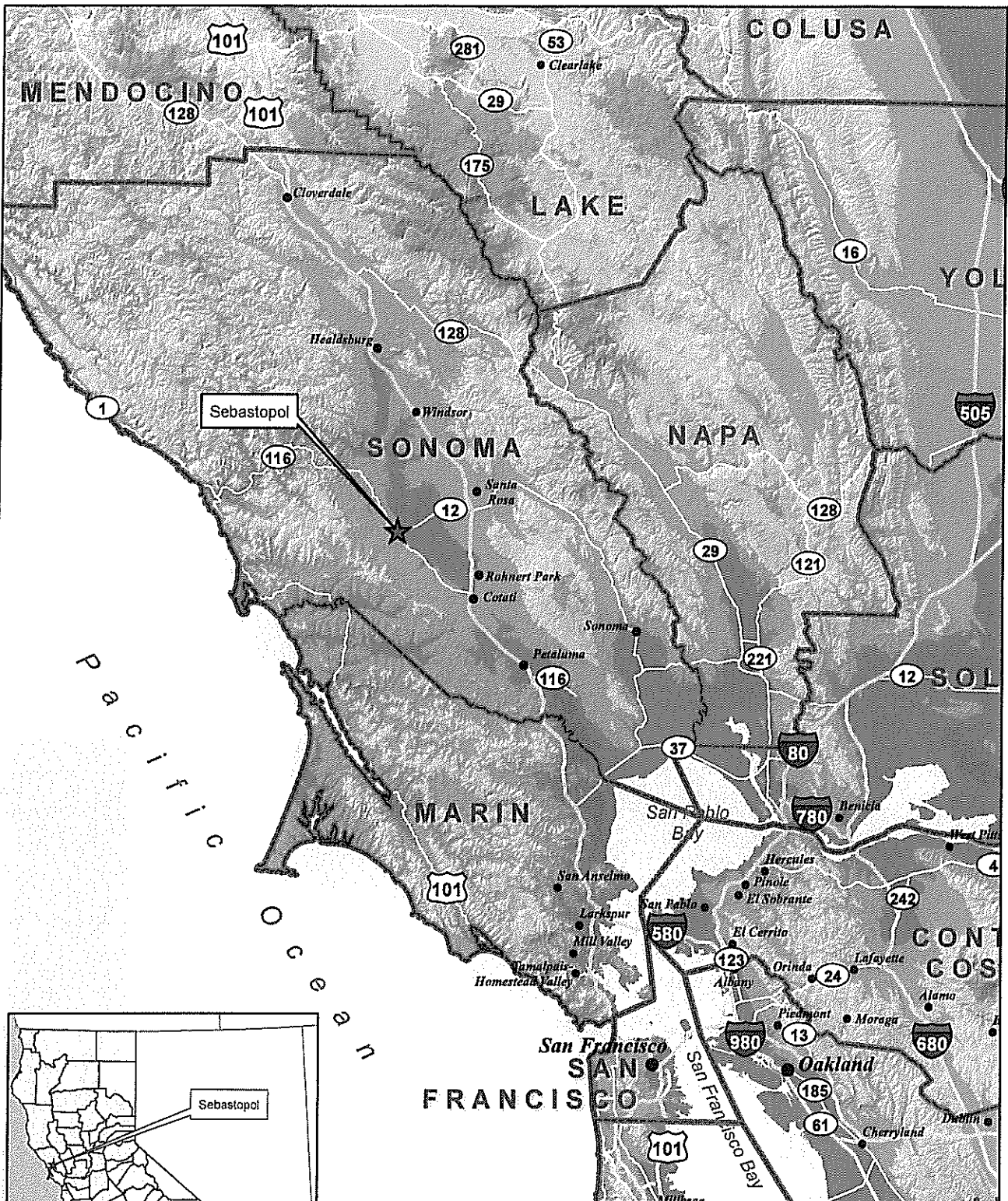
The City Council and Planning Commission has held, and continues to hold, public workshops and hearings to review and consider the goals and policies of the existing General Plan, review input from the Visioning Workshops, receive information relevant to the specific topics addressed at the GPAC meetings, and provide specific direction and guidance to staff and the consultant team regarding how goals should be achieved and how to address current issues in the General Plan Update.

## **Program EIR Analysis**

The City, as the Lead Agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), will prepare a Program Environmental Impact Report for the Sebastopol General Plan. The City's General Plan will be comprehensive in scope. The EIR will be prepared in accordance with CEQA, implementing the CEQA Guidelines (Guidelines), relevant case law, and City procedures. The Sebastopol General Plan is considered a "project" under CEQA, and is therefore subject to CEQA review. As a policy document, the General Plan provides guidance and sets standards for several areas of mandatory environmental review for later "projects" that would be undertaken by local government and the private sector.

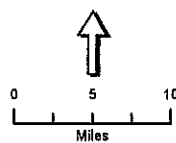
The EIR will analyze potentially significant impacts associated with adoption and implementation of the Sebastopol General Plan. In particular, the EIR will focus on areas of planned land use changes in the city. Figure 2 shows the Draft Land Use Map for the Sebastopol General Plan.

Pursuant to Section 15063(a) of the CEQA Guidelines, no Initial Study will be prepared for the proposed project. The EIR will evaluate the full range of environmental issues contemplated under CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines. At this time, the City anticipates that EIR sections will be organized in the following manner:



**NOTICE OF PREPARATION  
SEBASTOPOL GENERAL PLAN UPDATE EIR**

Figure 1: Project Location



1:750,000

Sources: CalAtlas. Map date: February 5, 2016.

**NOTICE OF PREPARATION  
SEBASTOPOL GENERAL PLAN  
UPDATE EIR**

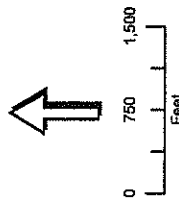
**Figure 2: Proposed Land Use Map  
and Planning Boundaries**

**Land Use Designation**

- VDR - Very Low Density Residential
- LDR - Low Density Residential
- MDR - Medium Density Residential
- HDR - High Density Residential
- CD - Downtown Core
- CO - Commercial Office
- LI - Light Industrial
- OLI - Office/Light Industrial
- CF - Community Facility
- OS - Open Space
- PA - Park

**Planning Areas**

- City Limits
- Existing UGB
- Existing SOI
- Proposed UGB



Dr. Nove Planning Group  
A Land Use Planning, Design, and Environmental Firm



Data Source: Sales Parcels, 1:10,000 Scale of Santa Rosa GIS, Sonoma County GIS, LESA, Watershed Hydrography Data Set. Map date: February 8, 2016. Diagram Name: Sebat\_NOP\_Fig2\_UGB1\_10208