

Community Development: Planning and Economic Development Monthly Activity Report

Emi Thériault, Community Development Director

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- Fiscal Year to date (through 03-01-2025) Number of applications received.....55*
- Applications processed.....40*
- Reviewed Developer Deposit Accounts and met with Building and Engineering to discuss projects to combine deposit account invoicing.

*April figures shown.

Meeting attendance

- Regular Council meetings
- Public Art Committee Meeting, Design Review Board/Tree Committee meeting, Planning Commission meeting
- Budget Committee
- Application meetings with applicants and with internal development review technical committee (DRT),
- Interagency collaborative meetings e.g. Sonoma County transportation Authority's Climate Director's meeting, Sonoma County Economic Development Group meeting
- Met with other departments to discuss Planning related matters requiring interdepartmental coordination e.g. met with Building to discuss Development status updates and deposit accounting.
- Provided environmental review for over 9 projects.
- Submitted Notice of Exemption

Advance Planning - Initiatives

1. *Sustainable Transportation Grant* –
 - a. Staff met and communicated with the project consultant, Fehr & Peers weekly.
 - b. Provided support for well attended May 22nd Community Workshop at the Sebastopol Center for the Arts.
2. *Housing:*
 - a. Provided overviews of Housing Element implementation initiatives to Planning Commission and a related update to Design Review Commission.
 - b. Created a Planning Commission Subcommittee to move outstanding Housing Element implementation items forward; the team will be working with the Napa Sonoma Collaborative to help expedite forward movement of the backlog of initiatives the department has been working on since December.
3. *Public Works Support*
 - a. *Ives Park and Calder Creek*
 - i. Discussed CIP and reviewed staff report/environmental review for the update.
 - ii. Discussed shared Budget interests including Planning's oversight of special revenue funds (from in-lieu funds, grant funds, and impact fees used by Public Works to support CIP projects).

Economic Development

1. Met with Rite Aid floor manager to discuss status of continuity of business operations a second time. They confirmed they may be closing the store. Staff has since learned that the property owner has been working separately with Grocery Outlet on a potential sale of the property. Location of the grocery store at the site would require a Use Permit due to the location of the site within boundaries of the downtown district subject to the Formula Business Ordinance; this information has been conveyed to the buyer.
2. Barlow Hotel project – Staff met with the developer on follow up to the Hotel Project approvals and related conditions. Emi prepared the CEQA Notice of Exemption and filed it with the County of Sonoma Recorder's office.

3. Emi contacted the Chamber of Commerce to request a meeting and to help move forward a potential lunch event (possibly a series of training sessions) supported by the NorCal Small Business Development Center.
4. Performed outreach to several downtown businesses to encourage participation in the STG (Downtown Transportation study) process and including promoting attendance at the May 22nd Community Workshop.

Department Staffing

Initial discussions with Associate Planner candidates indicated some concern regarding available salary levels and lack of hybrid/flex schedules. However, other candidates have continued to indicate interest and we have an accepted offer on the table. The interested candidate is undergoing background checks but may not be available for several weeks. We are exploring temporary planning services in the interim.

Conducted follow up interviews for the Permit Technician (supersedes Planning Technician) position and identified a candidate. An offer was made and accepted for the Permit Tech position and the background check is currently being conducted. This continues to be a high priority for the department to avoid continued shortfalls in staffing and related impacts on department levels of service.