NOTICE OF PREPARATION of an Environmental Impact Report for the Rohnert Park 2040 General Plan Update

Date:	February 26, 2021
To:	State Clearinghouse Responsible Agencies Trustee Agencies
NOP Comment Period:	Written comments must be submitted to the City's Development Services Department no later than **March 29, 2021 by 5:00 p.m.**
Project Location:	City of Rohnert Park Planning Area (citywide, sphere of influence, urban growth boundary) – see Figure 1 (attached)
Lead Agency Contact Person:	Jeffrey Beiswenger Planning Manager 130 Avram Avenue Rohnert Park, CA 94928 Telephone: (707) 588-2253 Email: JBeiswenger@rpcity.org

INTRODUCTION

This Notice of Preparation (NOP) has been issued to notify interested parties of the preparation of an environmental impact report (EIR) for the Rohnert Park 2040 General Plan (General Plan update). The City will be the lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and will prepare a programmatic Environmental Impact Report (Program EIR) to evaluate the environmental effects associated with the General Plan update.

This NOP and background documents associated with the General Plan update (the "project" under CEQA) are available for review on the City's General Plan Update webpage at: http://www.envisionrp.com/. This NOP has been issued to provide an opportunity for responsible and trustee agencies to submit comments on the scope of the EIR, relative to the project description. Agencies should comment on such information as it relates to their statutory responsibilities in connection with the proposed project.

The City has determined that the proposed project may have a significant effect on the environment; therefore, an EIR is being prepared. The EIR is intended to be a program-level document that will analyze the effects of the proposed 2040 General Plan. Program EIRs generally analyze broad environmental effects of the program, with the acknowledgment that site-specific environmental review may be required for future actions (14 CCR 15168(a)). The purpose of a Program EIR is to allow the lead agency to consider broad policy alternatives and program-wide mitigation measures at an early time when the agency has greater flexibility to deal with basic problems or cumulative impacts. Because no specific development projects are being proposed as part of the updates to the General Plan, the analysis will not be parcel-specific. Rather, the analysis will focus on the reasonably foreseeable direct and indirect physical

environmental effects that could result from the updates to the General Plan, including proposed land use designation changes evaluated for the thirteen (13) focus areas described below. The analysis will compare the net change of impacts as a result of the 2040 General Plan compared to 2021 existing conditions.

PROJECT BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

The objective of a General Plan is to provide the City with a roadmap for the future. The City's existing General Plan was completed in 2000 and guided the changes occurring in Rohnert Park over the last 20 years. The 2040 General Plan update will provide the context to effectively plan and manage Rohnert Park based on an updated set of goals, policies, and implementation programs that reflect the values and aspirations for the future expressed by the community. Additionally, the update will equip Rohnert Park with a policy framework to responsibly manage future projects and have the capacity to accommodate the growth and development anticipated to occur in the City of Rohnert Park for the next 20 years.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The 2040 General Plan update addresses the current needs and preferences of the community. The General Plan Planning Area, which reflects the geographic area covered by the General Plan update, is shown on **Figure 1**. The Planning Area encompasses all lands within the current city limits plus lands within the City's adopted Sphere of Influence and Urban Growth Boundary.

The 2040 General Plan will be Rohnert Park's updated long-term framework for future growth and development. The 2040 General Plan represents the community's view of its future and contains the goals and polices upon which the City Council and Planning Commission will base their land use and resource decisions in the future. To provide a contemporary plan that will guide the community to the year 2040, the General Plan is being updated to reflect changes in the community, new issues and opportunities (as identified from community input), changes in State law (such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions), and new trends (autonomous cars, impacts of online shopping, and so forth). The Rohnert Park 2040 General Plan update program serves several purposes:

- Provide the public opportunities for meaningful participation in the planning and decision-making process;
- Provide a description of current conditions within the city and trends influencing the future of the city;
- Identify planning issues, opportunities, and challenges that should be addressed in the 2040 General Plan;
- Explore land use and policy alternatives;
- Ensure that the General Plan is current, internally consistent, and easy to use;
- Provide guidance in the planning and evaluation of future land and resource decisions; and
- Provide a vision and framework for the future growth of Rohnert Park.

The 2040 General Plan update identifies and prioritizes opportunities to preserve the character of the community, conserve natural resources, and direct land use policies that enable sustainable growth and employment opportunities in Rohnert Park.

As part of the alternatives process for the General Plan update, there were 13 focus areas evaluated for change in land use type and development intensity that may result in environmental impacts. These focus areas are as follows and are depicted in the project location map attached to this notice:

- Northwest Specific Plan Area
- Wilfred-Dowdell Specific Plan Area
- Stadium Lands Planned Development
- Rohnert Park Expressway Shopping Centers
- Central Rohnert Park Priority Development Area
- Southwest Boulevard Shopping Center
- Former Gold Ridge Elementary School Site
- Northeast Specific Plan Area
- University District Specific Plan
- Canon Manor
- Southeast Specific Plan
- Sonoma Mountain Village Planned Development
- Other infill opportunity areas

It is anticipated that these potential changes in land use and intensity or density would be a primary change in the General Plan that may result in environmental impacts.

PROBABLE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS AND SCOPE OF THE EIR

The EIR for the proposed project will focus on the resource areas/issues applicable to this project. The EIR will evaluate the potentially significant environmental impacts of the proposed project and will evaluate whether there are feasible mitigation measures that may lessen or avoid such impacts. As the proposed project does not include any specific construction or development, but rather the potential for land use changes or development to be constructed in the future, the impact analysis will be programmatic and cumulative in nature. The EIR will also identify and evaluate alternatives to the proposed project. The EIR will evaluate potentially significant environmental effects related to the following environmental issues:

- Aesthetics (Visual Resources)
- Agricultural and Forest Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural and Tribal Resources
- Energy
- Geology/Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards/Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology/Water Quality
- Land Use/Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population/Housing
- Public Services/Recreation
- Transportation/Traffic
- Utilities/Service Systems
- Wildfire

NOP Comment Period: In accordance with the time limits identified in state law, your response to this NOP must be submitted to the City at the earliest possible date, but **not later than 5:00 p.m. on March 29, 2021** (31 days following the date this notice was first posted). Please submit written comments to the Rohnert Park Development Services Department (including the contact person's full name and address) to:

Jeffrey Beiswenger, AICP
City of Rohnert Park: Development Services Department
130 Avram Avenue
Rohnert Park, CA 94928
Email: JBeiswenger@rpcity.org

Scoping Meeting: A virtual scoping meeting will be conducted as part of the regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting on March 11, 2021 beginning at 6:00 pm. This meeting is being conducted utilizing teleconferencing and electronic means consistent with State of California Executive Order N-29-20 dated March 17, 2020, regarding the COVID-19 pandemic; and in accordance with Executive Order N-29-20, the public can observe the meeting on Cable Channel 26 or by visiting meeting central on our website https://www.rpcity.org/city_hall/city_council/meeting_central. The agenda for this meeting will be posted on or about March 5, 2021.

How to submit a public comment for the Scoping meeting:

Members of the public may provide public comment by sending comments to the Recording Secretary by email at planning@rpcity.org. Comments are requested by 3:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting, but can be emailed until the close of the Agenda Item for which the comment is submitted. Email comments must identify the Agenda Item Number in the subject line of the email and should be a maximum of 350 words, which corresponds to approximately 3 minutes of speaking time. The comments will be read for the record, with a maximum allowance of 30 minutes of total public comments, subject to the Chair's discretion. If a comment is received after the agenda item is heard but before the close of the meeting, the comment will still be included as a part of the record of the meeting but will not be read for the record or considered in connection with the agenda item.

This NOP, Draft Alternatives Report, and background documents are available for review on the City's **General Plan Update** webpage at: http://www.envisionrp.com/
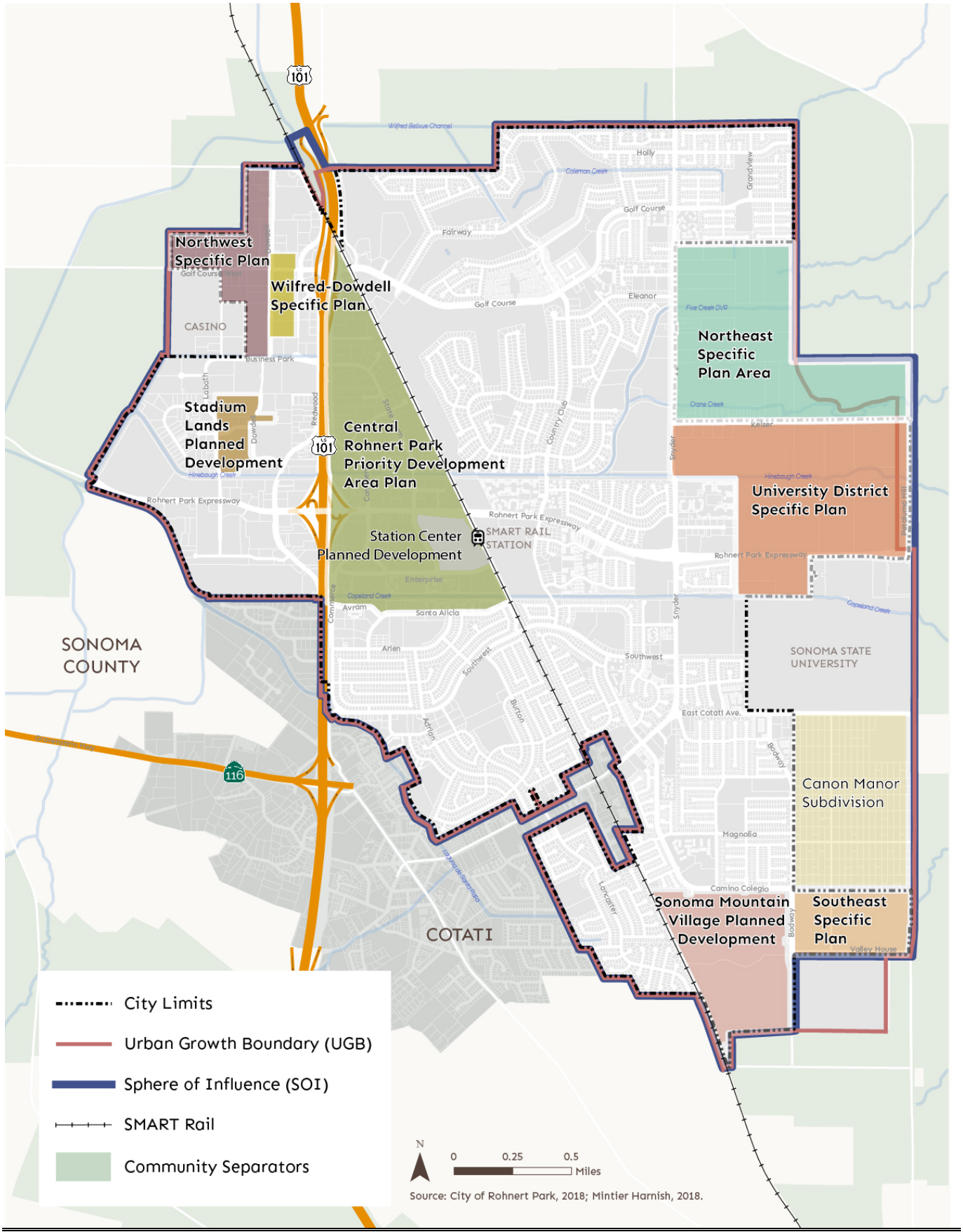
Figure 1 – Project Location Map