



March 10, 2025

Board of Forestry and Fire Protection
715 P Street / P.O. Box 944246
Sacramento, CA 94244-2460

Subject: Submittal of the City of Santa Rosa General Plan Safety Element

Dear Chair and Members of the Board of Forestry:

The City of Santa Rosa appreciates the Board of Forestry's review of its General Plan Safety Element that has been prepared in accordance with Government Code (Gov. Code) 65302.

In reviewing the Safety Element, CAL FIRE determined that the City's Safety Element complies with all requirements in Gov. Code 65302, with the exception of the requirement to evaluate the capacity, safety, and viability of evacuation routes and locations under a range of emergency scenarios. This analysis is being prepared as part of the City's Annex to the Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (MJHMP), which will be adopted in 2026. Following adoption of the MJHMP, the General Plan Safety Element will be amended, as necessary, to include this information. The City continues to work with all neighborhoods in the City, and jurisdictional partners within the County, to facilitate timely and effective evacuation. A further description of these efforts are described in the draft Safety Element, and read as follows:

"The City has established designated evacuation zones to facilitate organized and efficient evacuations during large-scale emergencies. Residents can identify their specific zones using the interactive Evacuation Zone Look-Up Tool, enabling them to respond promptly to evacuation orders. Santa Rosa evacuation zones are coordinated with the Sonoma County system, ensuring consistency across the region. Residents can cross-reference their zones using the Sonoma County Evacuation Map, which provides interactive features to look up evacuation status and road closures ([Sonoma County Evacuation Zone Map](#)), and the City has developed enhanced evacuation zone and road closure maps. During active wildfires, the City coordinates and communicates directly with the Sonoma County Department of Emergency Management ensuring effective and efficient evacuation throughout the county and city."

"The City is collaborating with Sonoma County on the 2026 Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (MJHMP) to assess and enhance evacuation capabilities. This plan will evaluate current strategies, identify infrastructure improvements, and integrate best practices for various evacuation scenarios, including wildfires,

earthquakes, and floods. As part of the City's annex to the MJHMP, Santa Rosa will conduct a detailed evacuation analysis. This study will evaluate current evacuation strategies, identify potential improvements, and integrate best practices to ensure the safety and well-being of the community during emergencies.”

To conduct the evacuation analysis as required by Government Code 65302.15, the City now has the benefit of the recently released Fire Hazard Severity Zone map for Santa Rosa, which was received on February 24, 2025. The evacuation analysis will be conducted as stated in Safety Element Action 5-5.17:

Action 5-5.17: Identify and analyze the capacity, viability, and safety of evacuation routes and evacuation locations throughout the City under a range of emergency scenarios and incorporate the results, as necessary, into the Safety Element of the General Plan. This analysis will be completed as part of the City’s Annex to the Sonoma County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan in 2026.

The City began the General Plan Update process several years ago. The General Plan Update 2050 outlines numerous goals, policies, and actions aimed at enhancing public safety. Given the importance of these measures, the City is committed to adopting the Plan promptly to implement necessary protections. Key protective measures needed to safeguard our community include:

Action 5-3.12: Require properties in the WUIFA (Wildland Urban Interface Fire Areas) to adhere to the City’s Hazardous Vegetation and Fuel Reduction Ordinance, and all properties in the WIUFA and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone to comply with California Fire Safe Regulations (Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations).

Policy 5-3.3: Promote new development in areas of the community that have lower risk of wildfire hazards (outside of the WUIFA).

Action 5-3.14: Establish a maintenance and monitoring program to track the effectiveness and long-term financial capabilities of Community Wildfire Protection Plan fuel-treatment activities, such as community fire breaks, and wildfire roadway (public/private) clearance.

Action 5-3.20: Identify at-risk populations and developments in the WUIFA and ensure that emergency management planning and training include efforts to increase resilience in these areas.

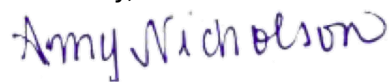
Action 5-5.6: Participate in emergency response exercises in the Operational Area that involve key hazards of concern for the city.

It should be noted that an ordinance to adopt the recently released Fire Hazard Severity Zone map for Santa Rosa is scheduled to be introduced at the City Council meeting on

March 18, 2025, with the second reading scheduled for April 1, 2025. The ordinance would then be in effect beginning May 2, 2025. Following adoption by the Council, the City will move forward with a process to revise the City's WUIFA map which will be adopted by separate ordinance and added to the Safety Element of the General Plan.

Thank you for your review of the City of Santa Rosa's Safety Element at this critical juncture.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Amy Nicholson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Amy Nicholson, Supervising Planner – Advance Planning