

Cotati General Plan Update

GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

PRIORITIES AND ISSUES

This summary of priorities and issues provides a means of focusing the attention of the decision-makers and the community on the priorities and issues identified by the community, while balancing the City's future growth with economic development and natural resource needs in the General Plan Update. This report includes the following:

Visioning Workshops: Input received from participants of the four visioning workshops held at the outset of the General Plan update process is summarized. Workshop attendees participated in a range of activities and exercises to gather information on community priorities, values and focus areas for the General Plan update. A narrative summary of the results of these activities is provided later in this section and Appendix A tabulates the comments received during the workshops. Visioning workshop participants input on the City's Land Use and Circulation Maps is depicted on Figure 1.

Planning Commission Workshops: The Planning Commission has held a series of workshops to discuss the topics of each element of the General Plan. Planning Commission priorities and concerns regarding each topic are summarized.

The information provided by the Planning Commission and the input provided during the Visioning process were used to develop the draft Goal, Policy, and Action sets for each of the General Plan topics. The Planning Commission also reviewed the General Plan Land Use Map on February 6, 2012 and suggested modifications, which resulted in the land use map alternatives included with the draft Goal, Policy, and Action sets.

COMMUNITY VISIONING WORKSHOPS

Between March and May 2011, the General Plan Update team held four public visioning workshops to help kick-off the General Plan Update process. City residents and various stakeholders attended workshops at City Hall. The workshops provided an opportunity for the public to offer their thoughts on what they value about their community and the city and what important issues should be addressed in preparing the General Plan.



Each workshop included a presentation by the consultant team that explained the role of the General Plan, an overview of the General Plan Update process, and an opportunity for the workshop participants to ask questions and seek clarification on the process and the role of the community. Workshop participants were asked to complete activities and exercises in order to provide information to the General Plan Update team. Each workshop focused on different themes and topics to be addressed in the General Plan. A summary of each of the four visioning workshops is provided below.

Workshop #1- General Plan Intro and Vision

Participants were given an introduction to the General Plan update process and an overview of the contents and legal requirements for a general plan.

VISION, ASSETS AND CHALLENGES ACTIVITY

Workshop participants were asked a series of questions, and answers were placed on post-it notes, and attached to poster boards throughout the room.

VISION

- What ideas do you have for the future of Cotati?
- What would make your community better?
- What three things would you like to see accomplished by 2030?

ASSETS

- What do you value most about Cotati?
- What makes this a special place to live or work?

CHALLENGES

- What issues are facing the City that need to be addressed in the General Plan?

The most common responses to these questions are listed below (in no particular order).

Vision

- Diversify and improve downtown businesses.
- Improve business climate to support local economy and expand job base.
- Incorporate more community art and cultural activities.
- Increase collaboration with Sonoma State University and provide more activities and resources from SSU students.
- Increase local food production, urban agriculture, and healthy food options.
- Improve bicycle and pedestrian network.
- Protect open space resources, greenbelts, and native habitat.
- Improve citizen outreach and community participation.



Assets

- Small town charm and sense of community (overwhelming majority response).
- Pedestrian and bicycle friendly.
- Downtown area.
- Diverse small local businesses.
- Regional location as the “Hub” of Sonoma County.

Challenges

- Preservation and restoration of natural habitats and environmental resources.
- Improving, attracting, and enhancing local businesses and business opportunities.
- Circulation improvements: traffic, bicycle, and pedestrian networks and facilities.
- City budget constraints.
- Lack of parks and community gathering areas.
- Improving building facades and architecture.

INTERACTIVE MAPPING ACTIVITY

Visioning Workshop participants were divided into groups of four to eight people, and asked to provide notes, comments and input on City-wide maps. Groups were asked to outline areas where new growth and land uses should occur (housing, commercial, parks, open space, agriculture, etc) using color markers; identify areas where existing land uses should change; identify areas where new roadways should be developed; and provide any other thoughts or input that the group developed.

Each group presented their marked-up map to the rest of the workshop participants, and key concepts from each map were discussed and noted. These workshop maps are summarized below, under Mapping Concepts.

Workshop #2- Community Health and Wellness

Participants were provided with an overview of the General Plan update process and an overview of issues related to community health and wellness. Presentations were given by the Bay Area Air Quality Management District and the Sonoma County Department of Public Health.

COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLNESS ACTIVITY

Workshop participants were asked a series of questions, and answers were placed on post-it notes, and attached to poster boards throughout the room.

COMMUNITY HEALTH INDICATORS

- What contributes to a healthy community?

The most common responses to this question are listed below.

- Safe and expansive opportunities for bicycle and pedestrian transportation options (majority response).
- Strong and transparent City services.
- Public safety.
- Affordable housing.

COMMUNITY HEALTH FOCUS AREAS

- What would you change or improve to increase community health and wellness in Cotati?
- What should the General Plan focus on with respect to community health?

The responses to these questions are listed below in the order they were ranked by importance by workshop participants.

- Environmental sustainability
- Public safety
- Graffiti
- Clean air
- Transportation based improvements

HOUSING AND HUMAN SERVICES NEEDS ACTIVITY

Workshop participants were asked to identify housing types needed in Cotati, population segments that may be underserved, barriers to providing affordable housing, and needs related to human services. The top responses to these questions are identified below.

Housing Types

- Affordable housing
- Single family workforce housing
- Affordable multifamily rental housing
- Mixed use (live, work, play) housing
- Higher density housing

Underserved Population Segments

- Low income
- Median income
- Very low income

Barriers to Affordable Housing

- Funding (high construction costs)
- Access to land
- Not enough affordable housing
- Not In My Backyard (NIMBY)

Human Services Needs - City

- Affordable health care
- Language barrier

Human Services Needs - Regional

- Improved transportation
- Cultural diversity awareness, translation

Workshop #3- Land Use

Participants were given an overview of the General Plan update process and an overview of land use “placemaking” concepts.

GENERAL PLAN GUIDING PRINCIPLES ACTIVITY

Participants were asked to identify the top three themes from the list below that should guide the General Plan update. The list was developed based on input received during the previous two visioning workshops.

- Local food production/local agriculture
- Diversify and improve downtown businesses
- Emphasis on culture and the arts
- Maintain rural small-town feel
- Bike and pedestrian connectivity
- Business-friendly climate
- Open space protection
- Citizen participation
- Connection with Sonoma State students
- Integrate planning with SMART
- Protect water quality
- Increase tourism
- Provide a range of housing options



The top four responses to this question are provided below, in the order of importance indicated by workshop participants.

1. Business-friendly climate
2. Maintain rural small-town feel
3. Bike and pedestrian connectivity
4. Diversify and improve downtown businesses (tied with #3 above)

INTERACTIVE MAPPING ACTIVITY

Visioning Workshop participants were divided into groups based on where they lived within the City or the surrounding areas, and asked to provide notes, comments and input on City-wide maps that included the Sphere of Influence and Urban Growth Boundary. Groups were asked to identify key focal points in the community, including parks, local stores, schools, playgrounds, transit stations, community services and major streets. Groups were also asked to identify areas where new community gathering places or focal points should be located. Areas where new land uses or development was needed were also identified.

Each group presented their marked-up map to the rest of the workshop participants, and key concepts from each map were discussed and noted. These workshop maps are discussed in greater detail in Section 3 of this report, and will be used during the development of the Preferred Land Use Map.

Workshop #4- Circulation

Participants were given an overview of the General Plan update process and an overview of the City's circulation network, including facilities for vehicles, transit, bicycles and pedestrians. Existing service levels for these transportation modes was provided, and planned transportation improvements were identified.

TRANSPORTATION PRIORITIES AND PROBLEMS ACTIVITY

Participants were asked to identify the top two transportation issues (e.g., extending bicycle lanes, improving sidewalks, decreasing vehicle congestion, decreasing vehicle speeds, additional transit services, etc.) that should be the top priorities for the General Plan update.

The top four transportation issues, as prioritized by the workshop participants are:

1. Extending/increasing bicycle lanes
2. Improving/expanding sidewalks
3. Reducing vehicle speeds
4. Reducing vehicle congestion

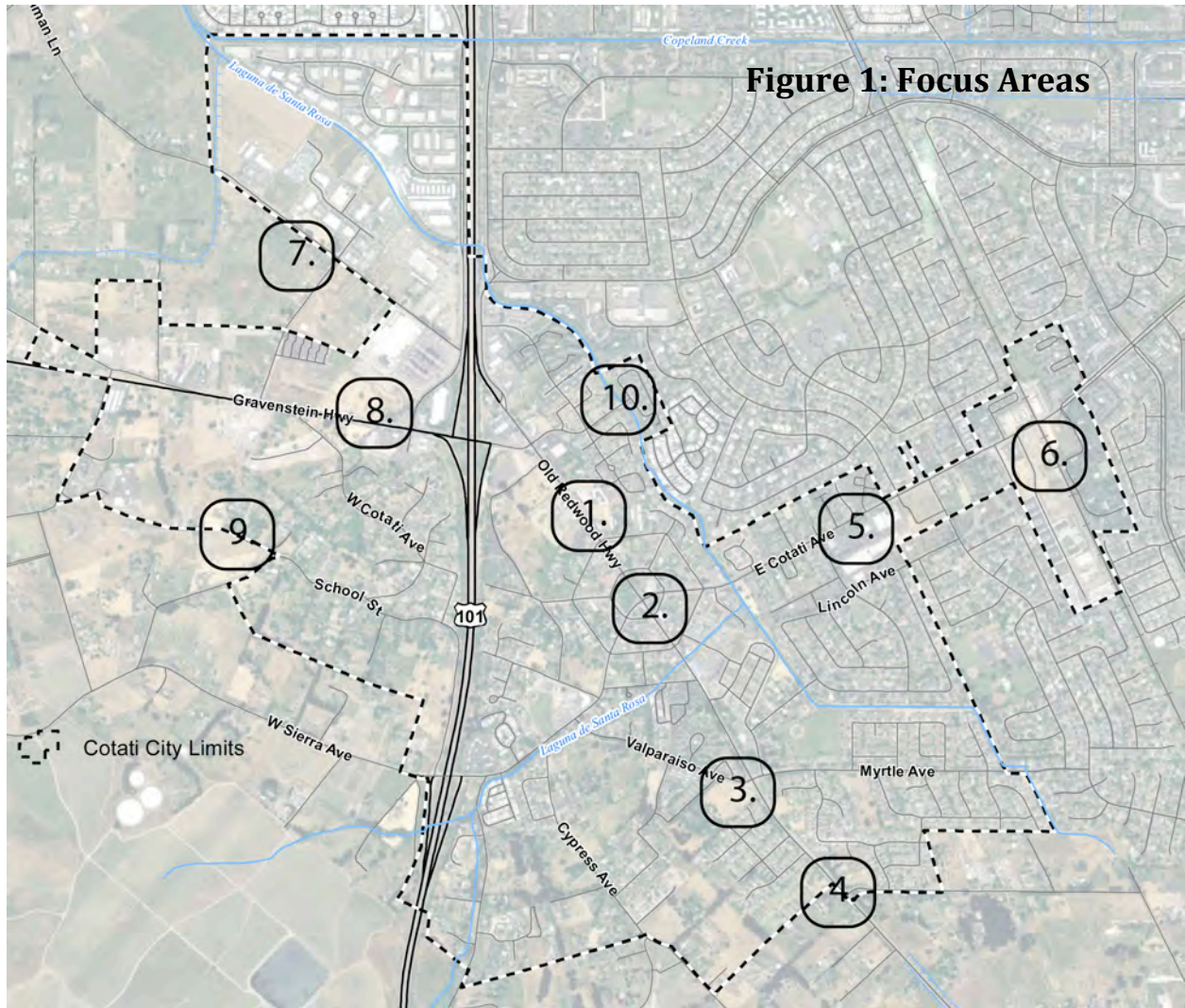
Participants were also asked to identify the two locations (street corridors, intersections, etc.) that have the most critical circulation problems in Cotati. The most common responses are provided below.

- Old Redwood Highway and Highway 116
- Old Redwood Highway and East Cotati Ave.
- East Cotati Ave. corridor

VISIONING WORKSHOPS - MAPPING CONCEPTS

LAND USE

Figure 1 shows focus areas where further discussion and visioning may be appropriate. Comments collected from the Visioning Workshops are summarized below.



Area	Ideas and Vision
<p>1, 2 (general area of the Downtown Specific Plan: Old Redwood Highway from northern City limits to Page Street)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement Downtown Specific Plan • Provide restaurants/retail along Old Redwood Highway, in the Hub, and along Gravenstein Highway • High density residential on parcels set back from Old Redwood Highway • Pedestrian/bicycle connection along East Cotati Avenue/East Sierra Avenue that connects this general area to Santero Way and to West Sierra Avenue

PLANNING COMMISSION: PRIORITIES SUMMARY

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian connection from southern end of the Hub to Valparaiso Avenue • Part of a Focus Area for continued urban renewal, commercial growth, and residential opportunities (see Figure 3-2)
2 (Downtown Hub/La Plaza Park)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement Downtown Specific Plan • Central hub that is the primary and largest existing destination in Cotati • Provide connectivity to other existing and future destinations
3 (General area around Valparaiso Ave/Old Redwood Highway/Myrtle Ave)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial or mixed use along both sides of Old Redwood Highway extending from Hub south to Valparaiso/Myrtle Avenues • Community center/future gathering and destination area located at 100 Valparaiso Avenue • New residential growth on both sides of Old Redwood Highway • Pedestrian/bicycle connectivity to East Sierra Avenue and Hub
4 (Old Redwood Highway/Eucalyptus Ave area)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southern gateway to City • Future office development with small-scale commercial surrounded by residential uses (Visioning Workshop #1) • New residential on both sides of Old Red (Visioning Workshop #3)
5 (East Cotati Ave/Rancho Cotate Shopping Center)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Oliver’s Market / Rancho Cotate Shopping Center is an existing destination that should be enhanced and maintained • High density residential uses are appropriate in this area
6 (Santero Way area)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMART Station/emphasize this area as a future community focal point • Prioritize improved bicycle/pedestrian/transit connection to downtown Hub area and other destinations in Cotati • Business growth and development in this area • New high density residential uses are appropriate in this area, both along Santero Way and on the north side of East Cotati Avenue • Part of a Focus Area for continued urban renewal, commercial growth, and residential opportunities (see Figure 3-2)
7 (Northwest Cotati along Helman Way)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus job-generating uses in this area • Potential for industrial use and expansion • New commercial uses
8 (Northwest Cotati along Gravenstein Highway)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial uses along Gravenstein Highway • Opportunities for new high residential development north of Gravenstein Highway behind commercial uses • Job growth on both sides of Gravenstein Highway • New low density residential on south side of Gravenstein Highway
9 (Thomas Page Elementary School/southwest Cotati)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize a safe bicycle/pedestrian route from eastern Cotati to Thomas Page Elementary School • Keep area low density and rural
10 (Laguna de Santa Rosa corridor throughout Cotati)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restore natural habitat, ensure high-quality riparian ecology • Focus on high water quality throughout the watershed • Potential for a bicycle/pedestrian route traversing Cotati and

and greater Planning Area)	extending along the Laguna through the Planning Area
<p>11 (Open space south and west of Cotati: see Figure 3-1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain rural character, agricultural uses, and open space beyond the Urban Growth Boundary • Greenbelt along Urban Growth Boundary – can provide a permanent open space buffer around Cotati and include a walking/bicycle path)

TRANSPORTATION

Following are the primary transportation concepts identified at Visioning Workshop #4:

- Safety improvements along Gravenstein Highway at intersections near Thomas Page Elementary School;
- Safety improvements at East Cotati Avenue and Old Redwood Highway;
- Safety improvements at East Cotati Avenue and the railroad crossing near Santero Way;
- Bicycle lanes along East Cotati Avenue, segments of Old Redwood Highway, and along Gravenstein Highway;
- Pedestrian improvements along East Cotati Avenue and Gravenstein Highway; and
- Safe route to Thomas Page Elementary School for residents on both sides of Highway 101.

PLANNING COMMISSION WORKSHOPS

From July 2011 through February 2012, a series of meetings was held with the Planning Commission in order to identify priorities and issues to be addressed in the General Plan Update. This series of “steering” meetings with the Planning Commission addressed each of the elements, or broad topics, that will be included in the General Plan Update. For each topic, the Planning Commission reviewed the input provided during the Visioning process, the relevant chapters of the Background Report, and the 1998 General Plan goals, policies, and actions related to the topic. The Planning Commission identified the priority issues for the General Plan Update to address and also identified where the 1998 General Plan should be kept, replaced, or augmented.

The priority issues and other concerns identified by the Planning Commission are summarized for each of the following topics:

- Circulation
- Community Services and Facilities
- Community Health and Wellness
- Community Character
- Conservation
- Economic Vitality
- Housing
- Land Use
- Noise
- Open Space
- Safety

Circulation

At its October 17, 2011 meeting, the Planning Commission identified the following as the top priorities for transportation and circulation:

- Walkable Cotati
- Safe routes to schools, with emphasis on route to Thomas Page School
- Old Redwood Highway improvements, including improvements north of the hub
- Address gaps/connectivity in bicycle and pedestrian network

Additional transportation and circulation concerns and issues identified by the Planning Commission included:

- Public transit
- Improving our public transit stops (provide covered stops) and ensuring place to sit while waiting for paratransit
- Local signage for community, how to understand and communicate ways of connecting
- Traffic speed on E. Cotati near Rohnert Park border (safe for all modes and reinforce citing)
- Provide clear statement for the purpose of arterial roadways in Cotati. Are they intended to create an environment good for local businesses, or to move vehicles through town as quickly as possible?

Community Character

At its December 5, 2011 meeting, the Planning Commission identified the following as the top community character priorities:

- Comprehensively update the City's sign code and improve enforcement of the code
- Increase collaboration with SSU on community events
- Develop and implement a landscape program
- Art and murals
- Community character and architectural design, using the Downtown Specific Plan as a model for the downtown

Additional community character concerns and issues included:

- Important to work with citizens and encourage more volunteerism within the community (sign re-painting suggestion)
- Community garden
- Outdoor dining
- More community character displayed in the downtown corridor
- A little quirkiness is good
- Varied architecture
- Outdoor gathering areas - random little parks or other spaces with outside seating

Note: Community character is addressed under the Land Use Goals, Objectives, Priorities, and Actions set

Community Facilities and Services

At its October 3, 2011 meeting, the Planning Commission identified the following as the top priorities for public facilities:

- Keep Thomas Page school open
- Recreation – need a recreation department and higher quality, if not quantity, of parks on west side
- Water quality and urban stormwater management provisions
- Relationship and connections with SSU

Additional public facilities concerns and issues identified by the Planning Commission included:

- Need a public safety plan to address emergency preparedness, including safe (earthquakeproof) public facilities
- Support and expand “safe routes to schools”
- Strengthen resilience of infrastructure
- Underuse of the Cotati room
- Sewage treatment
- Stormwater management for hillside development
- Partner with RAFFPD, support them in Station #1 building issues
- Need public spaces for community gatherings
- Address capacity of Laguna system as well as overall stormwater system

Community Health and Wellness

At its November 14, 2011 meeting, the Planning Commission identified the following as the top three priorities for community health and wellness:

- Improve park and recreation facilities and services, including re-establishment of the City's Parks and Recreation Department
- Prioritize healthy lifestyles by increasing trails and pedestrian connectivity
- Encourage healthy food outlets and maintain fast-food ordinance
- Revitalize City facilities and increase public access to City facilities for activities and social events

Additional community health and wellness concerns and issues identified by the Planning Commission included:

- Increase partnerships with Rohnert Park and SSU for community activities and programs
- Increase community outreach to educate the public on healthy lifestyle amenities that exist within the City
- Increasing access to and understanding of a wide variety of healthy foods
- School gardens and better lunch options for the school district
- Maintain and enhance the farmer's market
- Social fabric of the community, places to gather, and the recreation department
- Encourage healthier food outlets, including full service market and farmers' market
- Completing the safe routes to schools for Thomas Page
- Basic first aid training and emergency preparedness

Conservation

At its August 15, 2011 meeting, the Planning Commission identified the following as the top conservation priorities:

- Cotati Creek needs an active plan for restoration and protection
- Water quality
- Habitat restoration and conservation, with a focus on Laguna de Santa Rosa and Cotati Creek
- Encourage historical or cultural recognition/designation for buildings that are historically important

Additional conservation concerns and issues identified by the Planning Commission included:

- Water conservation program
- Move from a "drain it and pave it" to a "slow it and spread it philosophy"
- Make resources accessible and provide for human interaction with nature
- Maintain sensitivity when working with local tribes
- Include Old Redwood Highway as a historic route
- Murals showcasing Cotati's history
- Encourage cultural events, which are a resource to the City

Economic Vitality

At the Planning Commission's January 23, 2012 meeting, the following were the top-identified economic vitality priorities:

- Exploit and utilize the City's central location within Sonoma County to attract tourist industry
- Promote and encourage hotel and lodging businesses
- Improve and streamline permitting process
- Improve City branding to distinguish Cotati, both in terms of location and small-town niche, in order to attract new businesses

Additional economic vitality concerns and issues identified by the Planning Commission included:

- Develop the Highway 116 gateway with expanded commercial/retail infill uses
- Attract retail uses to the Redwood Highway corridor and Grapevine Center
- Attract tenants to vacant industrial areas for job growth
- Increase collaboration between local businesses, the Chamber of Commerce, and City government
- Target and support local and regional businesses
- Emphasize business clusters to promote complimentary businesses in close proximity to one another by increasing flexibility in zoning code
- Retention of existing businesses
- Understanding Cotati's SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats)
- Smart City services, such as mapping efforts, made available to businesses to use
- Implement Downtown Specific Plan
- Provide funds for transportation and pedestrian facilities
- Encourage white collar employment

Housing

At its July 18, 2011 meeting, the Planning Commission identified the following as the top three housing priorities:

- Seniors
- Very low income housing
- Transitional/supportive/homeless housing

Additional housing concerns and issues identified by the Planning Commission included:

- Availability of housing for larger households
- Location of affordable housing relative to transportation
- Proximity to services
- Northern gateway housing
- Fees for granny units and smaller units that do not take into account unit size are a barrier to lower income units

Land Use

At its December 5, 2011 meeting, the Planning Commission identified the following as the top land use priorities:

- Prioritize infill development and reuse of existing sites within the urban areas of the City
- Limit annexations and the development of vacant lands outside of City core
- Urban Growth Boundary and SOI should remain in open space, agricultural and large-lot rural residential uses
- Improve and streamline process for issuance of use permits and permits for building improvements
- Address mixed use, in terms of compatibility and ensuring that requirements are not onerous
- Create effective neighborhoods and gathering areas, encouraging community and neighbor interaction
- Ensure that land use designations and requirements are business friendly and allow for a diversity of business types

Additional land use concerns and issues included:

- Simplify the permitting process
- Historic preservation guidelines for redevelopment
- Prioritize a business-friendly climate, help with communication between staff and business owners
- Modify and enforce the sign ordinance
- Do not want codes to be overly prescriptive
- Maintain adequate areas designated for commercial/retail uses throughout the City
- Reduce the emphasis on mixed use development outside of the downtown core
- Land use requirements need to be business friendly
- Allow retail in residential areas when consistent with the surrounding area
- If the DSP and the Santero Way SP require Mixed Use, it should be reflected on the General Plan map
- Simplify General Plan designations and build a better relationship between the General Plan and the Zoning Code
- Increase areas for public use and social gathering
- Ensure commercial development is consistent with surrounding land uses
- Incentive and streamline reuse of vacant commercial buildings

Noise

At its October 17, 2011 meeting, the Planning Commission identified the following as the top priorities related to noise:

- Late night noise (between 2:00 am and 6:00 am) and downtown bar noise
- Enforce noise restrictions for loud vehicles and motorcycles
- Address noise impacts and mitigation when allowing mixed use developments in the downtown
- Emphasize enforcement of existing noise standards and hours for noise-intensive activities

Additional noise concerns and issues identified by the Planning Commission included:

- Vehicles (non-muffled/impulse noises) on Old Redwood Highway and E. Cotati Avenue
- Use newest technology for noise attenuation
- Highway 101 noise
- Curfews on leaf blowers/mowers

Open Space

At its August 15, 2011 meeting, the Planning Commission identified the following as the top three open space priorities:

- Use watershed boundaries as planning boundary
- Planning boundary should match habitat and resources
- Focus open space around natural resources

Additional open space concerns and issues identified by the Planning Commission included:

- Encouraging agriculture as a good community separator
- Designate entire Laguna channel and Cotati Creek as Open Space
- Provide a clear definition of open space in the General Plan
- Encourage increased accessibility of open space
- Designate County Yard as open space

Safety

At its October 3, 2011 meeting, the Planning Commission identified the following as the top priorities for safety:

- Emergency preparedness plan
- Provide health and emergency first-aid classes
- Fire prevention
- Hazardous waste removal and remediation
- Update safety provisions

Appendix A: Visioning Workshop Results Data

This page left intentionally blank

Visioning Workshop #1: Vision

Vision

A green belt around Cotati
Add cultural center
Aggressive recruiting of destination retail (other than Lowes)
Attention paid to heightened infrastructure encouraging community gathering
Attention paid to local economy, alternative currency, time bank, etc.
Become more "college town" friendly
Better agricultural practices
Better public trans- smaller buses in town
Better roads
Biking as dominant form of transportation
Business friendly environment- make less difficult for business to set roots
Clean water for wildlife and people
Collaboration between Sonoma State and City
Complete Downtown SP and extend DSP past Olivers
Continue downtown redevelopment and add downtown park
Continue small community atmosphere
Continued expansion of bike and ped ROWs
Cotati will be a leader in using local services and agriculture
Create friendly zone for light industrial on west side
Create local jobs
Diversify downtown businesses
Don't force green on new business. Require new business to present their own green efforts/ideas
Easy walking and bike connectivity
Everyone respects water quality and quantity
Expand econ base while maintaining small town vibe
Farmers Markets, in summer only
Fiscal self sufficiency
Fix traffic flow around center of town

Focus on "Triple Bottom Line": Env Sustainability, Econ Success, Social justice
Give the free market a chance to decide its future
Green construction and clean energy production
Greenway along Laguna
Healthy local alternatives to fresh food
Healthy, walkable connectivity btwn school and SMART and core Cotati and surrounding area
High end hotel in town
Implementation of AGGRESSIVE growth and redev plan for entry into town
Improved housing for students
Improved landscape
Increase citizen involvement and participation
Increase downtown shopping
Increase urban gardening

Increased focus on youth sports, more options for children

Integrate the school (SSU) with the downtown area by some form of transportation

Integrated agriculture within City fabric (more links, overlapping)

Keep it Weird!!

Keep small town

Less suburbia

Local sources of energy to replace foreign oil

Local sustainability: better bike routes, community farms

Lower taxes to increase revenues

Maintain unique identity of Cotati

Make downtown a destination that serves Sonoma State with quality retail and entertainment

More appreciation for college students

More business growth

More City-wide recreation opportunities for SSU students

More community participation

More emphasis on staying healthy: walking, biking, farmers markets

More integration with businesses and homes, zoning that allows and encourages home-based business

More involvement with Sonoma State students

More local food production

More outreach to include citizens. Saturday meetings that include day care.

More small unit housing with transportation resources

New or refurbished shops, restaurants and entertainment

Opening city to arts and entertainment world: theater, music, sculpture

Ped and bike paths that are linked

Professional office park in south and southwest Cotati

Promotion of downtown feel and pedestrian monuments within Cotati

Protect UGB and open space around town

Protect urban growth boundary and open space for wildlife habitat, water recharge and recreational use

Put unemployed Cotatians to work within the City Works Dept.- OK to reduce City worker pay to accommodate.

Rebrand Cotati as City of Art, not an "Old Hippie Town"

Redesign DSP

Reduced GHG emissions

Repeal the DSP

Replace creek channels with natural flow and native vegetation

Robust local food supply

Route traffic around La Plaza Park (Hexabout)

Small town promoting cooperation btwn locals, college students, young and old

SMART train

Stop planning for 2030, allow ad hoc growth

Stop urban sprawl upwards

Student involvement in housing, ag, and conservation

Successful integration with SMART

Support alternative transit: bike, walk, bus, train

That everything is community oriented and the community actually participates

To be known as the City of Art

Tree canopy shading water over Lopina and Cotati Creeks

Valuing legend DSR connections with businesses and Sonoma State

Walking trails throughout City. Follow waterways, connect neighborhoods, connect w/
nature, hike in your own town.

Widen bike lanes to spur more people to ride bikes

Working with SSU

Year round, or extended season, for farmers market

Visioning Workshop #1: Assets

Assets

Traffic growth and SSU student impact
Small town quality
Local events
Friendly and welcoming vibe
Small town, small community, rural feel
Small enough to be a real community
Small town with rural-ish areas
Beautiful tree lined streets
Mix of rural and suburban
Community
Flexibility with running of City- ability to adapt to changing conditions
Distinctive character
Olivers Market
SMART rail
The field of sheep and protected open space is centered in town by City Hall
Spirit of volunteerism
Small town feel- easy to participate in City activities and functions
Know many neighbors
City center
Easy to walk and bicycle to almost everything I need to do
The closest grocery store to most of the housing near SSU (Olivers)
Sense of community
Walking near or underneath trees- special place
Proximity to SSU campus
Value small town community
Value slightly "bohemian" nature of community- Cotati is "laid back", diverse and reflects its history
Hexagon park and genuine downtown area- gems in the rough
Old untouched charm
Small town element and charm- it's not faded out by new development
Small town feel and local charm
History, statues, location (hills and open space), friendly small town feel, downtown Cotati
Small town feel and local pride
Value the rustic look and feel the City portrays
Small town/community feel makes Cotati special place to live and work
Everything about the town is environmentally friendly
Fun, lively, friendly downtown
Centrally located and accessible, close to SSU
Has a downtown
Small town community
A city that welcomes creativity

It's unique

Ability for community to be tightly connected- because it's small

I value the space provided for bike and pedestrian use

Unique businesses to visit

Access to community gardens

Location in Sonoma County in relation to other locals- We are the Hub

Location

Weather

Small town and rural areas

Small business make it a special place to live

Small town atmosphere

Familiar with people and businesses and stores

La Plaza Park

Lowe's

Small town feel of the City

Community- small town feel

The availability of local food- farmer's market and Olivers

Small town feel and the influence of sustainability and buying local and organic

Strength of local business

College community

Recreational activities

People seem active, friendly, helpful and genuinely thoughtful

Small town feel

Easy to walk to many places

Value City's slow pace, it's outdoor living downtown and its youth

Slow changing

Special social environment

Gateway to wine country

Proximity to SSU, rail and freeway

Bedroom community

I see people I know when I walk through downtown

Diverse restaurants

Hub of Sonoma County

Community gatherings for events

Small town agricultural community

Close to big cities, yet far enough removed to not feel suffocated by the city

Open space- country feel

Rural small town blend

Local businesses locally owned

Visioning Workshop #1: Challenges

Challenges

Small elder care center

It is a blank canvas ready to be filled

Too many bars and associated noise

Promote urban(is) gardening/farming for: healthy lifestyle, local food, promote open space, educational

To continue to use local, organic agriculture and sustainable services

More attention to riparian habitat, particularly in downtown area. Native vegetation, not concrete.

Land and buildings need improvement

Keeping the City clean and beautiful

Making town more environmentally friendly: going green, focus on healthy habits (biking, walking, buying local, etc)

Downtown has zero architecturally pleasing buildings

Water: conservation, delivery costs, making sure there is enough for development before approval

Adequate water supply

Not growing beyond city limits before full buildout

Not expanding SOI

Through traffic

Rural character

Building local businesses

Lack of legacy buildings to be proud of

Sidewalks need to be built and repaired

Preserving large trees

Don't disturb parking for business

Lack of outdoor meeting/gathering areas

Relevancy: Cotati seems to hold on to "we are different" notion that may be ignored or bypassed by other communities

Develop and image that is not contrarian just for contrarian sake

More ethnic and cultural diversity

Emphasis in circulation element on maintaining slow speed limits and encouraging car-free travel

Connectivity for bikes and pedestrians: Laguna to

Sebastopol and future SMART rail stop.

Activities are not in Spanish

Espanol por favor

Land use at corner of 116 and Redwood Highway

More communication between Sonoma St. and City

Lack of integrated downtown, north-to-south in terms of pedestrian flow

Walkable community

Traffic

Budget problems

Pleasing everyone

Width and quality of bike lanes are hazards to cyclist safety
Maintain small town charm in face of economic downturn
and highly increased future development in Rohnert Part.
Reinvent blighted areas in downtown/vicinity of park
Protect green belt surrounding Cotati as much as possible
Role of university in social and economic life of the City
Relationship between SSU and Cotati- how will the town
support students (jobs, housing, community)
Cotati is business hostile and regulated to death
No money
Increase tourism
Need hotel
Lack of money
Old school thinking
Parks
Not enough park space
A balance between nature conservation and agriculture
Restoration of natural habitats, floodplains and creeks
Having a strong disaster response plan
Lack of preparedness for dislocation in terms of economy,
energy, climate, etc.
Bedroom community
Caters to mediocre
Nothing special as a draw other than university
Entrance to City core looks almost 3rd world
How to make the City more attractive to locally owned
businesses that provide living wage jobs
Small manufacturing
Bring in business- make the process easier and provide
more help from the City.
Filling our "empty shells" with new business

Balancing regulations with business attraction and retention
Preserving small town vibe with a growing population
Environmental degradation
Relationship between City and college students
Preserving local business
The State and nation are in a financial crisis. Should we
continue when we are unsure of our future?
Improved roads
Re-instate Rec Dept.
There are lots of roads that need to be fixed
Hindering business growth: Not allowing auto upholstery
shop on Old Red, but allowing auto repair instead.
Not helping business owners rent their space
Having business succeed in bad economy
Economic development
Build cash reserves

Address the deteriorating infrastructure
Avoid bankruptcy and dis-incorporation
We want services and infrastructure but don't want to pay
for them

Visioning Workshop #2: What Does Community Health Mean?

Essential City services

Healthy General Fund reserves

Emergency preparedness and emergency drills

Televising City meetings

Transparency in City Hall

Drivable community

Community health is intrusive - people have rights and free will

Government should not make health decisions for a community or any individual

Developing a built environment that provides opportunities for active transportation - walking, bicycling

Provide children and parents the ability to walk and bike safely to school

Educate the public through schools and in the community about health and environmental benefits of safe walking and bicycling practices

Include a General Plan language for Safe Routes to Schools programs - both infrastructure and non-infrastructure

Direct public works to make improvements to the built environment and to educate public about taking advantage of such improvements

Improve community health with year-round farmers markets

Freedom to make my own decisions and not be told what to do by marxists

a place where people can walk and bike to the services they need

Making Cotati a safe place for our citizens

Events that focus on sense of community and health

Accessible place to be physically active, parks, sidewalks, bike lanes

Schools with walk/bike routes

Limit concentration of alcohol and tobacco outlets

Affordable housing

Good air and water quality

Community gardens

Healthy good outlets

Take into account input from tax-paying citizens

Better roads

Clear, clean water

Mosquito abatement

Better walkways

Mowed weeds

Holistic conception of healthy mind, body, and spirit

Triple bottom line - economic sustainability, environmental sustainability, social justice

Community resiliency - emergency and disaster preparedness

Access to housing so I can live and work in my city

Access to healthcare services in the community

Public safety

Visioning Workshop #2: Community Health Priorities

Public Safety	3
Environmental Sustainability	3
Transportation Based Improvements	1
Graffiti	3
Clean Air	2

(First choices - 3 pts, 2nd choices - 2 pts, 3rd choices - 1 pt)

Community Health Priorities in Order of Importance (Hi to Low)

Environmental Sustainability
Public Safety
Graffiti
Clean Air
Transportation Based Improvements

Visioning Workshop #2: Housing and Human Service Needs

Housing Types

Affordable	3
"Healthy" multifamily housing (low VOCs, low pollen landscaping, etc.)	1
Single family workforce housing - permanently affordable	3
Senior housing	1
Affordable multifamily rental housing	2
Ecovillages (varied income levels)	1
Co-housing communities (varied income levels)	1
Single family workforce housing - permanently affordable	1
Mixed use (live, work, play)	2
Higher density	2
Rehabilitate foreclosures for low income housing	1
Mixed income housing (ecovillages, co-housing, neighborhoods)	1
Homeless	1
Apartments downtown near public transit and services	1

Population Segments

Low income	5
Moderate	1
Median	2
Very low income	2
Market rate	1
Workforce housing	1
Single parents	1
Students	1

Barriers to Affordable Housing

Not enough affordable housing	2
Access to land	2
Funding (high construction costs)	3
Concessions/Inclusionary Zoning	1
Cost	1
NIMBY	2
Financial management classes for lower income	1
Developer resistance to providing affordable housing	1
Community resistance	1
Developer greed	1

City Human Services

Affordable health care	3
Accessibility	1
Language barrier (translation, spanish)	3
Public transportation	1
Jobs	1
Employment referral	1
Health care	1
Affordable exercise facilities	1
Affordable dental care	1
More/better bike paths	1
Bike/Ped safety for disabled (wheelchair-accessible paths/sidewlaks)	1

Regional Human Services

Improved transportation	6
Education	1
Language barrier (including diversity awareness/education for service p	2
County building permit process	1
Reduce permit fees for non-profit affordable housing developers	1
Affordable health and dental care	1
Affordable legal/mediation services	1

Visioning Workshop #3: General Plan Guiding Principles

Priority Principles Voting Results

Local food production/Local agriculture	5
Diversify and improve downtown businesses	10
Emphasis on culture and the arts	4
Maintain rural small-town feel	12
Bike and pedestrian connectivity	10
Business-friendly Climate	13
Open space protection	7
Citizen participation	6
Connection with Sonoma State and students	3
Integrate planning with SMART	2
Protect water quality	6
Increase tourism	2
Provide a range of housing options	1

Additional Principles

5-day turnaround for permit applications	
Create viable destination for SSU students	
Famil friendly	
Social justice - protect public health through land use (locate tobacco, alcohol retailers appropriately and not at high densities)	2
Protect Laguna de Santa Rosa	
Protect local groundwater levels	
Improve overall health of Cotati and its citizens, air, water, noise, light pollution	
Consider adopting complete streets policy	
Address elder care issues comprehensively and creatively	
Protect city land use values from deteriorating due to neighboring community growth	
Include entire community in the process - provide day care and have information available in spanish	
Promote cultural and social diversity	

Visioning Workshop #4: Transportation Priorities

Additional transit service

ADA improvements

Public transit more efficient and smaller buses running more often, revamp routes

Improve transit service - currently there is service to SSU but not from SSU

Expanding bike lanes

Linking up with regional bike trails

Extending/improving bike lanes

Bike safety

Bicycle lanes

Decrease vehicle congestion

Extending and connecting LOS A+B bike options - should be able to get anywhere within 5 miles safely and comfortably

Extending bicycle lanes

Linking up with regional bike trails

Traffic flow improvements - using roundabouts instead of 4-way stop signs

Decrease vehicle congestion

Extend bike lanes

Decrease vehicle congestion

Extend bike lanes

Extending bicycle lanes

Increasing bicycle lanes

Extending bicycle lanes

Better freeway access - Railroad and Sierra Ave

Decrease vehicle congestion

Get rid of 4-way stop signs

Consistent bicycle street treatment

Extending bike lanes

Bike lane to SMART

Increase local transit services and amenities and bus stops

Improving perception of bicycle and pedestrian safety

Decrease vehicle speed

Address speed on West Sierra

Decreasing vehicle speeds

Decreasing vehicle speeds on West Sierra Ave

Decreased speeds on Old Redwood

Safety at Hwy 116/Madrone - major accidents and people killed there

Breaking down the road block at Arthur Street and E. Cotati the residents installed years ago

More parking

Improving sidewalks

Improving sidewalks

Improving sidewalks

Improving walkability

Improving sidewalks

Pedestrians: signal change at Old Redwood Hwy/E. Cotati/W. Sierra is VERY slow for pedestrians

More sidewalks

Improving sidewalks

Lack of sidewalks in older neighborhoods - i.e., Page Street

Visioning Workshop #4: Transportation Problems

West Sierra & Valparaiso - turning left to 101 - can get stuck in line of traffic

Additional freeway on-ramp and off-ramp at W, Sierra and US Hwy 101

ADA improvements - many crosswalks have ADA access on one side of street but not the other; lamp posts in sidewalks, etc.

Safe Route to Thomas Page School so children can safely walk/bicycle instead of parents driving every day

Walkability on all streets - what happened to walkable Cotati

Way-finding signs for bicycle routes (could direct tourists to local businesses as well)

East Cotati - traffic is too much, too fast

East Cotati Ave

East Cotati/Old Redwood signal timing

Left turn from Old Redwood Hwy to E. Cotati Ave

Pedestrian flow crossing 116 along Old Redwood Hwy

Intersection of E. Cotati and La Salle

Old Redwood - HUB - 101 congestion, suicide lane, high speeds, need an intersection

Bike/ped circulation at Old Redwood/Hwy 101 interchange

New center divide/island at Old Redwood Hwy and N. 101 entrance - street lines

Circulation problems - W. Sierra + W. School St.

Gravenstein Hwy + W. School Street

Old Redwood Hwy, especially in early evening

Bicycle lanes, safety going north on Old Redwood Hwy from Valparaiso to La Plaza

Making left turn south on Old Redwood Hwy (between George St & Walgreens)

South on Old Redwood towards E. Sierra - turning lane gets blocked up

Hwy 116- Dangerous intersections need improvement

The pedestrian barrier on E. Cotati Ave that keeps getting hit

Access/left turn east bound 116 into Crossroads- new island project- creating traffic- non emergency access

Old Redwood and 116

Old Redwood and 116 (intersection at Walgreens)

Hwy 116 east/west

Old Redwood and 116

116 at Madrone- autos and peds

Hwy 116 under Hwy 101

For bikes, railroad crossing on East Cotati Ave is extremely dangerous

Railroad crossing at E. Cotati Ave: future transit site, no ped crossing, rough for bicycles (need to dismount)

Old Redwood Hwy between Hub and 116 needs to be "beautified"

Old Red

Old Redwood Hwy and Railroad Ave.

Through traffic on Old Red- back up- and cutting through on residential streets

Biking along Old Redwood Highway north of Hub and onto 116

Old Redwood Highway

Old Redwood near Page St: no bike lane thru, heavy congestion at 5pm, bridge pavement causes excessive noise

Hub to Old Redwood

Old Redwood Hwy and E. Cotati Ave at the Hub