

**Russian River Redevelopment Project  
Strategic Plan  
Subtask 1.2: PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN**

***DRAFT***

**August 2006**

***“Written procedures to provide effective, early,  
and continuous public participation  
in the development of the Russian River Redevelopment Project  
Strategic Plan”***

## OVERVIEW

The following is the Public Involvement Plan (PIP). The purpose of the plan is to outline the steps that the PSA, Sonoma County Staff, and the Russian River Development Oversight Committee (RRROC) Strategic Planning Subcommittee (SPS) will take in the development of the strategic plan for the project. The plan establishes strategies that address community needs and presents a high quality program that will identify, educate, inform, and engage the citizens and stakeholders throughout the process.

Ensuring that a broad base of public and stakeholder involvement opportunities occur at all levels is very important. The process will take a pro-active approach to soliciting citizen and stakeholder comments early and often in the preparation of the plan. The purpose of the PIP is to explain the steps that will be taken to ensure citizen and stakeholder involvement.



This fundamental principle that provides the underlying foundation for the PIP is to ensure a “we’re all in this together” atmosphere that will promote understanding and quality input. Stakeholders, landowners, and residents must sense that their involvement is genuinely desired and that the time they spend is worthwhile. This is particularly important for drawing in very diverse groups or those that are skeptical or timid about participating.

In addition to communicating with and engaging those residents and business owners from the Redevelopment Project Area, those who live in close proximity and within the region that depend on the Redevelopment Project area for services and employment must be encouraged to participate in the planning process.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

### **Sonoma County Staff**

The Project Manager will serve as the key contact person for the process. The Project Manager will be responsible for coordinating all activities.

## **SPS**

The SPS will serve as the review committee for the development of the strategic plan. The SPS is comprised of members of the RRROC and public with the expertise and local knowledge to assist in the development of the plan. The SPS will meet with the consulting team and staff throughout the process to provide process feedback and direction. The SPS will be responsible for reviewing and commenting on all draft products as well as providing guidance in the public involvement activities throughout the process.

## **PSA, Inc.**

PSA, Inc. is responsible for completing the agreed upon scope of work and maintaining the schedule. In relationship to the public and stakeholder involvement process, PSA will work with the Project Manager and SPS to identify key stakeholders and implement the PIP. PSA will be responsible for organizing, conducting, and documenting stakeholder interviews, preparing for and implementing community workshops, and making presentations regarding the project's status.

PSA will also be responsible for all of the technical work on the project and developing draft and final documents.

# **INVOLVEMENT TECHNIQUES**

This section of the PIP presents the public involvement techniques that will be utilized during the planning process. These involvement techniques are in addition to the formal committee structure described above. The input techniques are intended to support the technical work program. Elements of this process will include preparing for and leading public events, conducting agency interviews to better understand critical issues and potential solutions, presentations to stakeholder groups, and in-person meetings to better obtain feedback.

## **A. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES**

### ***Stakeholder Interviews***

PSA, working with Staff and the SPS, will develop a list of stakeholders to be interviewed during the first phase of public involvement. The purpose of the interviews is to identify issues and trends and gain a historical perspective of the area. Each of the interviews will be summarized and common issues and divergent viewpoints compiled.

### ***Key Staff Planning Session***

PSA will meet with key staff representatives including but not limited to the Community Development Commission, Economic Development Board, Sheriff's

Office, Permit and Resource Management, and Transportation and Public Works Departments. The purpose of the meeting will be to augment the existing condition report and uncover staff's perspective on the project area's opportunities and constraints.

### ***External Image Scan***

During this phase, a Strategic Issues Paper will be developed to include an External Image Scan. This scan consists of PSA contacting Chambers of Commerce (organization presidents and executive directors), Tourism Bureaus, and/or Visitors and Convention Bureaus in Bay Area and northern California communities to gather perceptions about the planning area.

### ***Community-Wide Public Involvement Kick-off Event***

The project will be introduced to area citizens through a workshop format. A presentation will be made about the strategic planning process with an educational component about the Redevelopment Project. Participants will also brainstorm issues, community values, and create vision components. The area's image will also be discussed and the results of the External Image Scan presented.

### ***Local "Drop-By" Sessions***

PSA will "set up shop" at three locations during the day for approximately two hours intervals (coffee and doughnuts, brown bag lunches are often effective draws) to allow residents and stakeholder to drop-by and talk about some of the specific issues that may be unique to a specific area within the Redevelopment Project. Locations would be selected in Monte Rio, Guerneville, and Rio Nido.

### ***Hispanic Community Outreach***

A translated discussion forum with the Hispanic community will be organized and conducted early in the process to identify issues and desired future improvements for the area. This event will be organized and coordinated with local churches and school system English as Second Language Program.

### ***Focus Groups***

Four Focus Groups will be held after the Kick-off Event. Approximately 10-15 people will be invited to attend each Focus Group. A series of questions will be developed by PSA with input from staff and the SPS and asked of each group. Potential groups could include business people, environmental interests, youth, and service providers. The Focus Group purpose is to understand issues and identify potential solutions from various common perspectives. A report of each session will be developed as well as an overall summary report that identifies convergent (similar) and divergent (dissimilar) viewpoints.

### ***Reporting the Results***

Rounding out the multiple-day public involvement blitz will be a public workshop to present the week's results including the draft Vision Statement and Core Values. Participants will have the opportunity to provide feedback, select their desired Vision Statement, and fine-tune and prioritize the Core Values.

### ***RRROC Briefing***

A briefing report of the results to date will be presented to the RRROC to ensure awareness of the information and trends developed during the project's first three phases.

### ***Joint SPS/RRROC Meeting/Strategic Planning Session***

PSA will lead a SPS planning session to discuss, refine, and adopt the Evaluation Criteria. Using the 23 goals and objectives outlined in the Redevelopment Plan as a guide and within the parameters of the vision and values identified, strategies that will be formed that identify what steps will be necessary to reach the goals and objectives. Projects already identified will be discussed in addition to developing new projects.

### ***Solutions Forum***

PSA, working with staff and the SPS, will organize and facilitate a Solutions Forum to discuss and debate the potential strategies for the Redevelopment Project to ensure long-term sustainability. The Solutions Forum will be widely publicized and anyone attending previous project events would be invited to attend. A critical component of this dialogue is an understanding and full discussion of the implications of potential strategies. Participants will also discuss, identify, and prioritize "Performance Indicators" that will allow measurement of the strategic plan's successful implementation. This event is intended to be quite large with as many citizens and organizations represented as possible. A Solutions Forum Summary Report will be generated and submitted to the SPS.

### ***Joint SPS and RRROC Meeting***

PSA will meet with staff, SPS, and RRROC to review, discuss, and make final changes to the Draft Strategic Plan. The RRROC will recommend the draft strategic plan for Board/Commission adoption.

### ***Public Hearing Adoption Process***

PSA will present the Strategic Plan to the Board of Supervisors for adoption.

## **B. COMMUNICATIONS**

The following techniques will be employed, either individually or cumulatively, to notify the public. The goal of the public notification program is to inform about and ensure that people are aware of the opportunities to participate in the process. A variety of techniques will be used to solicit input into the process.

The media (i.e., three local newspapers) will be used to carry public notices, news releases, public service announcements, and news items.

Consulting team will work closely with the SPS to ensure that citizens, stakeholders, and officials are kept informed. Public notification techniques that will be used at various times during the study include:

- Invitational and/or information letters
- News releases to the media including the Sonoma West Times and News, Russian River Monthly, Russian River Times
- Flyers distributed through the SPS and made available at key community activity centers
- Use of community bulletin boards
- SPS and other stakeholders will be asked to distribute flyers and personally invite friends, neighbors, and colleagues
- Governmental entities' newsletters
- Public service announcements
- Web Page information and announcements using the Chambers of Commerce and Sonoma County Websites when possible
- Direct e-mail to the following in order to obtain input or provide project information:
  - ✓ Local elected and appointed officials
  - ✓ Individuals who request to be placed on the mailing list
  - ✓ Public and private groups, stakeholder groups, organizations, agencies, or businesses that request to be added to the study database

PSA and the SPS will be responsible for press releases submitted to newspapers encouraging news articles to be written about the process and announcing public events. Press releases will be sent a minimum of two weeks prior to public events.