

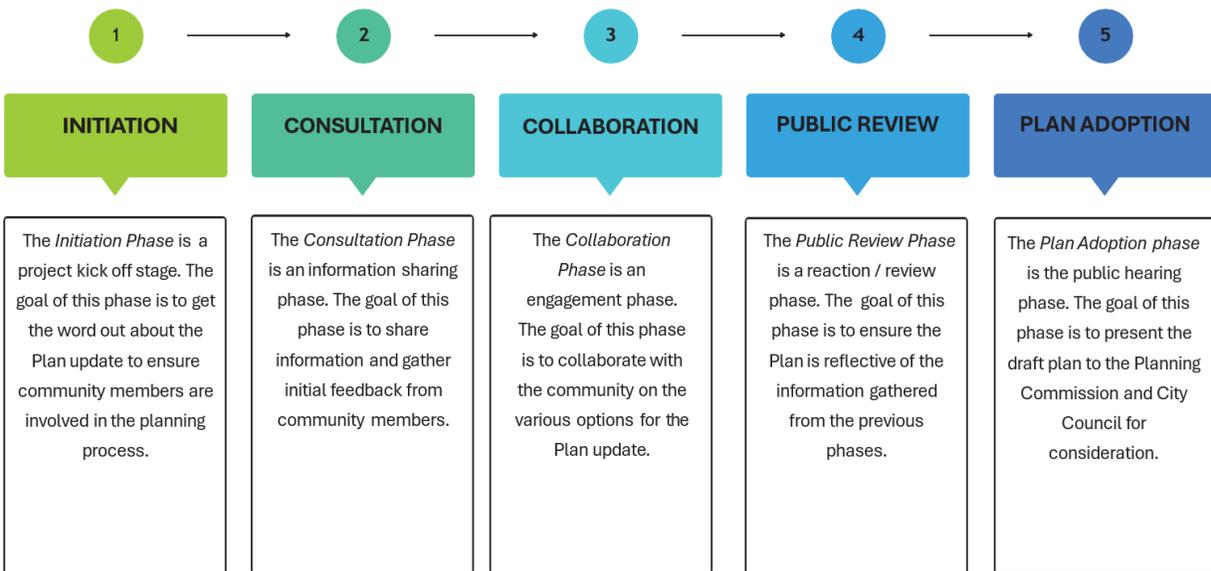
ATTACHMENT A – COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT APPENDIX

During the planning process for the Cotati Santero Way SMART Station Specific Plan, the City engaged several hundred community members in a variety of venues and formats. These included:

- A **Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)** consisting of subject matter experts from various agencies. The TAC’s primary role was to review public input and project deliverables, as well as provide feedback based on their subject matter expertise on the SWSP Update.
- A **Community Advisory Committee (CAC)**, with representation from residents, youth, advocates, businesses, and property owners. The primary role of the CAC was to provide feedback on the development of the Plan Update and served as a conduit between the Plan and the community, ensuring the community’s sentiment is accurately reflected.
- **Canvassing:** Neighborhood canvassing initiatives were organized within the area, to receive input from the residential community, business community, and SMART riders.
- **Surveys:** Two comprehensive surveys were developed and distributed to solicit feedback from the community on their vision for the Plan Area, and identify land use and transportation priorities. To promote language inclusivity, the surveys were made available in both English and Spanish.
- **Workshops:** A series of workshops were conducted, each focusing on specific aspects of the Plan Update.

Community engagement was aligned with project development in the following steps:

1. **Initiation** – Project Kick-Off
2. **Consultation** – Information
3. **Collaboration** – Engagement
4. **Public Review** – Reaction
5. **Plan Adoption** – Public Hearing



Community Events & Project Milestones

A kick-off workshop was held with the Planning Commission in fall 2023. Plan project managers from the City and 4LEAF shortly thereafter held a guest lecture and discussion at an undergraduate planning course at Sonoma State University in October 2023, with an emphasis on the Specific Plan and inviting students to join in upcoming opportunities to participate.

Several regional planning events were held at the Station Depot, including a Regional Housing Fair and Active Transportation Plan Workshop in winter 2023/2024. Consultant team staff were present at both events, with ample conversations engaged and surveys completed. A diverse range of community members primarily attended from nearby neighborhoods in Cotati and Rohnert Park.

The project team held a subsequent workshop with the Planning Commission in August 2024 on project alternatives and major themes for consideration in the Public Review Draft.

The Public Review Draft Plan and EIR was circulated in fall 2024, and input was incorporated into the Final Draft Plan brought forward to the Planning Commission and City Council for adoption in January 2025.

Issues & Opportunities Survey

An initial community survey was launched in late 2023 to inform the existing conditions, issues, and opportunities within the Plan Area. A majority (51%) of respondents live in the neighborhood, with another 31% residing outside of the immediate Plan Area neighborhood but within Cotati.

Single-family homes were the leading response when community members were asked which housing types would be successful in the Plan Area. The minimum required density range of 25-35 units/acre would allow development as is typical of the existing area: attached single-family townhomes, plex-style apartments and live-work units. The next leading responses (41%) supported missing middle housing types like plexes and cottage housing (41%), and senior housing (38%), with less support for other housing types.

With regard to community amenities, a majority of respondents expressed support for trees, landscaping, and sidewalk greenery (85%); parks, recreational green space, and open space (73%); and walking trails (73%); bicycle paths (58%); and lighting (54%). 86% of respondents noted that they wanted to see more restaurants, cafes, and eateries in the Plan Area.

Station Depot Pop-Up Office & Meeting with People of the Plan Area

The lead project consultant (4LEAF) leased the Station Depot from the City at a pivotal stage of the project, from December 2023 to March 2024. The opportunity for the project team to directly engage on site provided valuable insights into community needs and existing conditions. Residents and commuters passing by the Station Depot frequently commented that they didn't realize that the building was there. Activation of a previously vacant community asset informed the project Plan, with the goal of inclusively engaging the broader community in-person to assess opportunities for the Plan Area and co-create a comprehensive, community-led Plan.

The presence of the project team in the neighborhood facilitated an organic canvassing methodology to reach a greater combination of residents, transit-riders, and commuters.

Figure 1: Cotati Station Depot



Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

All Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meetings were held in the Station Depot from January to April 2024. The CAC provided substantial direction on project visioning, land use and circulation alternatives, and local context to inform the assessment of existing conditions and opportunities.

Design & Development Standards

Input from the Community Advisory Committee and the second community survey reflected a preference for retention and flexibility with open space standards, and a more contemporary look and feel for the Plan Area, especially along the East Cotati Avenue corridor. The Specific Plan development standards were shaped with the intent of supplementing the City's existing Objective Design & Development Standards to allow greater flexibility including a wider range of allowed design styles and options on the use of rooftop terraces for the provision of required open space.

Community respondents formed a combined majority (71%) of support for maximum flexibility for development types and intensity, with more varied standards near Cotati Station. A plurality of respondents also expressed support for commercial projects to be centered near Cotati Station.

On the City's approach to regional development standards, a majority of community survey respondents (56%) supported a nuanced approach that implements both regional policy direction and community input to the maximum extent feasible.

Parking & Circulation

Street parking was identified as a key community issue throughout the planning process, and the Plan street standards encourage angled parking to maximize options on Santero Way.

Key strategies around parking were included in the Plan. The top response (36%) supported parking lots behind residential/commercial buildings, compared to 16% support for parking lots at the street. Tuck-under garage parking was another preferred option (27%), with more support than carports/open-design (11%), screened podium parking (7%), or exposed podium parking (1%).

In the first community survey, 80% of respondents supported free street parking over other parking types. The second community survey identified specific street parking options; diagonal, 45° street parking received 33% support, compared to 16% for parallel street parking and 10% for 90° angle street parking.

A supermajority of community survey respondents (74%) supported a combination of parking types and locations to provide flexibility and maximize parking opportunities.

Depot Opportunities

In consideration of the Depot building itself as a major hub for the area, the Plan incorporated options. A strong majority (89%) of community responses supported a café or coffee cart, with additional support (57%) for the City-owned gravel lot adjacent to the Depot be used for a community-serving function such as a food truck park, referencing local successes such as The Block in Petaluma and the Mitote Food Park in Roseland.

Substantial responses indicated a need for public information, including train schedules (45%), and interest in a bookstore (33%) and regular recreation events and classes (32%).

TAC & Stakeholder Engagement

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) supported the development of a Specific Plan and Environmental Impact Report (EIR) informed by subject matter experts with direct knowledge.

Ongoing communications with transit service providers, fire agency representatives, and the City of Rohnert Park clarified available options and initial exploration of the feasibility of track crossings and required emergency evacuation routes with a comprehensive view of public safety standards and long-range transit considerations.

Project support from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) provided the City with certainty around forthcoming compliance with regional Transit-Oriented Communities policy during the refinement of the Final Administrative Guidance released in November 2024 and included as Attachment D.