

# Rosemead defines itself as small town in the big city

By Rebecca Kimitch, Staff Writer

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ROSEMEAD - By the year 2020, Rosemead will be recognized across the region as a small town in the heart of a metropolis, with tree-lined streets, a welcoming downtown and a multicultural population that embraces diversity.

Or so the City Council hopes.

The council recently approved a strategic plan for the next two years that attempts to put the city on a course toward the above description.

The to-do list is ambitious: landscape medians and plant trees along sidewalks; demolish dilapidated vacant buildings; develop new neighborhood parks; remove graffiti; expand community classes and develop a community computer lab; create a civic center at City Hall and the surrounding city facilities.

"Are we going to accomplish everything in two years? I doubt it. But most things, I think so," said Councilman Steven Ly.

City Manager Jeffrey Allred calls the strategic plan a road map laying out the city's activities over the next two years.

The plan was developed after receiving input from more than 700 residents, through a mailed survey, and multiple community meetings, Allred said.

"The exciting part of it is that it was produced from citizen input and that it was adopted unanimously by the council. Everyone is on board," Allred said.

"I was delighted with the public comments we got about why people like the city, and I think we can capitalize on those things," added Mayor Maggie Clark.

The survey concluded that residents are proud of Rosemead because of its small-town feel and its diversity.

Ly says this pride is what makes Rosemead stand apart.

"I have lived in Rosemead my whole life. I grew up here, left for college, and then came back."

Councilwoman Sandra Armenta did the same.

"This is what is unique about Rosemead. We want to come back to our roots. We like what Rosemead stands for," she said.

The strategic plan aims to continue the city's tradition, while making Rosemead more aesthetically pleasing, adding community events, improving security.

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In addition to infrastructure improvements, the strategic plan calls for several policy changes.

The city will reinstate the power of eminent domain for commercial properties.

City officials say they need the power as a negotiating tool to redevelop blighted areas of the city.

"We are just reinstating it, it doesn't mean we are ever going to use it," Clark said.

To promote redevelopment, the plan calls for facilitating commercial development of the former auto auction site on Garvey Avenue, processing building approvals for a Fresh and Easy project on Valley and Rosemead boulevards, and explore potential uses for the Glendon Hotel site.

The strategic plan also calls for "facilitating the elimination or avoidance of undesirable business uses along the city's primary commercial corridors."

Ly said this provision is directed at a controversial poultry slaughterhouse and retail store on Garvey Avenue. He said it could also be used to guide future regulations on medical marijuana dispensaries and strip clubs.

"We want Rosemead to be small town America - adult businesses, marijuana dispensaries may not fit within that framework," Ly said.

Though ambitious, Allred, Clark and Ly all said the strategic plan's to-do list can be implemented.

They point to redevelopment money, federal stimulus and Measure R funds.

"I don't envision us going out and spending our reserves for these things," Ly said.

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