

From: [Mischa Hedges](#)
To: [CityCouncilListPublic](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Daylight Santa Rosa & Matanzas creek! (Re: Agenda Item #15.1 — City Hall Property Exchange Agreement)
Date: Friday, August 14, 2026 7:53:21 AM

To: Mayor Mark Stapp and Members of the Santa Rosa City Council Re: Agenda Item #15.1 — City Hall Property Exchange Agreement (August 18, 2026)

Dear Mayor Stapp and Councilmembers,

I'm writing about Tuesday's vote on the proposed exchange of the City Hall campus for 520 3rd Street. I understand the need to shift responsibility for this property, and the need for denser downtown housing and economic development in our city.

But what exists here is a HUGE opportunity to build in requirements for daylighting, rejuvenating and highlighting the confluence of Santa Rosa Creek & Matanzas Creeks in the design of this future project. I believe this should be a requirement of the property changing hands, and reflect a design-forward approach for restoring and embracing this natural feature of our city - for generations to enjoy.

People visit our area for its natural beauty and recreation, and the vibrancy of our downtown would be enhanced by INCLUDING it in the town's designed environment.

I run and bike on the Prince Memorial Greenway every week, and have often reflected on what an amazing, underused, underappreciated resource this is, and how wonderful it would be to connect some of the public access to the creek / parks / downtown.

I'd ask you to consider a few concrete things before or as part of Tuesday's vote:

1.

Make creek daylighting a binding condition of the exchange. If the city is retaining land specifically to protect the ability to restore the creek, that intent should be written into the exchange terms or the surplus land findings now, not left to hope for in a future Development Agreement. Grant funds, especially those from Prop 4, rather than city funds could be used for multibenefit projects just like this.

2.

Make the creek part of the design process. The Prince Memorial Greenway is a wonderful resource, but it feels very disconnected from the city / downtown, and can feel unsafe as a result, so it is often underutilized. My wife and some of our friends "won't walk there alone." Any creekside development tied to this site

should be required to face the water (e.g. sidewalks, storefronts, patios, stoops) not treat it as an afterthought, to make it a safe, welcoming place. It could be a spectacular part of our town that draws people here.

3.

Think about the whole project of highlighting our creeks. The adjacent property also sits on the culverted section of the creeks. This is a great opportunity to start thinking about how to restore that area, too, as part of a master plan for daylighting the creek. Imagine the legacy that could be created and left for future Santa Rosans!

4.

Make this easier for the developer, not harder. I'd support the city offering something in return for the developer having to meet these requirements — additional height, for instance, to preserve the project's overall economics. A creek-centered downtown is good for a developer's asset value.

5.

Give the public a chance to weigh in on what 'creek' centered' means to them.

Thanks so much for your consideration.

Best,

Mischa Hedges
Santa Rosa Resident & Business Owner

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Mischa Hedges (He/Him/His)

Founder & Executive Producer | [TrimTab Media](#)

mobile phone: [\(415\) 335-9137](tel:4153359137)

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To: [CityCouncilListPublic](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Daylight Santa Rosa & Matanzas creek! (Re: Agenda Item #15.1 — City Hall Property Exchange Agreement)
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From: [Bill Montgomery](#)
To: [_CityCouncilListPublic](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Deal to trade property
Date: Friday, August 14, 2026 5:06:09 PM

I understand there is a deal on the Council agenda to trade City land along the Creek to a private developer! I understand, and I have heard little about this, but it seems to have little protection for Santa Rosa Creek! Please make sure such protections are included! As a Friend of Prince Memorial Greenway, I want to be sure for the components to the creek are possible! The City has reputation for failing to protect natural and historic areas! Thanks,

Bill Montgomery
2170 San Antonio Dr
Santa Rosa, Ca 95405
Sent from my iPhone

From: [Adrian Covert](#)
To: [_CityCouncilListPublic](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda item 15.1 Property Exchange Agreement Letter
Date: Saturday, August 15, 2026 9:37:17 PM
Attachments: [08.14 Exchange.pdf](#)

Greetings Mayor Stapp and Councilmembers,

Please see the attached letter from Santa Rosa YIMBY in support of agenda item 15.1, property exchange agreement.

Sincerely,

Adrian Covert



August 14, 2026

The Honorable Mark Stapp
Mayor, City of Santa Rosa
100 Santa Rosa Ave
Santa Rosa, CA 95404

Re: Agenda item 15.1, Property Exchange Agreement (SUPPORT)

Dear Mayor Stapp and Councilmembers,

On behalf of Santa Rosa YIMBY, an all-volunteer association of over 500 Santa Rosa residents dedicated to building Santa Rosa into an affordable, vibrant, and low-carbon city for all, I am pleased to share our support for the proposed Exchange Agreement. If done right, the exchange could instantly bring more people downtown while saving money and providing the city with an extraordinary opportunity to increase downtown vitality while daylighting more of Santa Rosa Creek.

As included in the staff report, the current City Hall campus is a \$100 million liability (and rising). The campus is also a poor and inefficient use of six acres of downtown land whose conversion to some combination of housing, retail, and park space would benefit the city's housing and transit goals while boosting overall urban vitality and reducing downtown flood risk. Cities don't get many chances to deliver so many potential public benefits from one real estate transaction. The city must make good on that potential. Specifically, the final Development Agreement, on which closing of the exchange is contingent, must make the following commitments:

- **Require the site to be used primarily for mixed-use housing and commercial housing.** This is a generational opportunity to strengthen downtown vitality with new residents, shoppers, and workers to support downtown businesses while minimizing vehicle traffic.
- **Make creek daylighting a binding condition, not an aspiration, and set a design standard, not just a green space requirement.** Santa Rosa already has an example of creekside development done poorly: the Prince Memorial Greenway, where new development turned its back on the otherwise well-restored creek and walled it off, leaving a corridor that today feels unsafe rather than vital. Any creekside development tied to this site should be required to face the water (e.g. sidewalks, storefronts, patios, stoops) not treat it as an afterthought.
- **Think regionally, not parcel-by-parcel.** The John F. Shea Federal Building next door sits on the same creek system and has been flagged by GSA as underutilized since 2023. A comprehensive vision for this stretch of downtown—one that eventually incorporates that property too—will produce a far better outcome than negotiating this site in isolation. The city should at least begin exploring that possibility in parallel.
- **Give the public a real seat at the table before the land changes hands.** Eighteen months of closed session is a long time for residents to have been shut out of a decision this size. At minimum, I'd ask for a public design process—even a single well-publicized workshop—before or alongside the Development Agreement, so the community can weigh in on what “creek-centered” should actually look like here.

Thank you for your leadership and for considering our views.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Adrian Covert", with a stylized, flowing script.

Adrian Covert
Local Lead
Santa Rosa YIMBY

From: [Margaret R Buhn](#)
To: [_CityCouncilListPublic](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] City hall/Santa Rosa Creek
Date: Sunday, August 16, 2026 8:56:05 AM

To Whom it May Concern,

I have read that there is a possibility that the outdated City Hall building will be sold, and that a future developer may be able to revitalize that area including uncovered the Santa Rosa Creek. I wanted to add my support to trying to make that a reality. It was a huge misstep when our city covered up the creek. I know now we have been investing in walkways, bike lanes and green belts. There was a lovely plan back before the creek was concreted over to create just that-green belts and walkways along the creek. If we could bring back a plan like that plan from the 1960's, revitalize the creek area and create a lovely open space I think it would be a huge boon to our city and revitalizing our downtown. The creek is such an amazing thing to have right there in downtown, taking advantage of that would be smart. Please consider adding specific language to any plans going forward that specifies some kind of creek revitalization be part of future plans. Thank you

Sincerely,
Margaret R Bühn
Sent from my iPhone

From: [Robin](#)
To: [City Council Public Comments](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Real Estate Exchange for City Hall Property
Date: Sunday, August 16, 2026 7:45:52 PM

Councilpersons,

Congratulations on the innovative idea of exchanging the failing City Hall Campus for newly remodeled offices in the downtown core.

The documents mention that the city will retain ownership of Santa Rosa Creek and Matanzas Creek for purposes of flood control and perhaps future environmental restoration. That stipulation isn't really good enough for this environmentally sensitive location.

The undergrounding of the creeks was a huge environmental misstep and it is time to make a solid promise to fix that. The agreement between the City and Museum on the Square aka Hugh Futrell, must clearly state that the City commits to daylighting and restoring the creeks, retaining the fish ladder and creating a space accessible to the public. And Futrell must commit to developing the property that adjoins the creeks in an environmentally sensitive way that invites public use. This must be stated in the exchange documents from the very beginning of the agreement between the two parties. With that promise on the books, the details of the public project can happen at the appropriate time.

Please make this alteration to the contract and bring a better future to downtown Santa Rosa,

Thank you,

Robin North

resident of District 5

From: [Bonnie Raines](#)
To: [_CityCouncilListPublic](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Creek Daylighting
Date: Sunday, August 16, 2026 10:05:46 PM

Dear Mayor Stapp and Council Members,

I am aware that Tuesday you will be holding a session to discuss some important aspects of building design in the future of Santa Rosa.

I write this as a plea to hold on to the vision that our downtown could someday (when economic times are better) be like other cities that have uncovered and restored their creek systems to the light, creating vibrant centers of shops, museums, public spaces and walkways that will benefit all. We are so fortunate to have this resource that has been covered for so long.

Here is what I ask. Please do not forfeit or sell any right-of-ways currently in the city's possession. If you sell it, it's no longer yours and it will be too late. Keep options open for down the road, even if it is twenty-five or fifty years from now. Keep the possibility of this treasure alive. It is the wise choice. Future generations will thank you.

Long time Resident of Santa Rosa,
Bonnie Raines

From: [Dexter Keen](#)
To: [City Council Public Comments](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Downtown creek
Date: Monday, August 17, 2026 9:27:59 AM

Downtown sucks enough with all the shitty decisions that city leaders have made throughout our towns history starting the with freeway placement. We don't need another shitty closed door decision with this creek. We need to turn it into Santa Rosa's Riverwalk like San Antonio Texas has. This is huge and yall can't decide this behind our backs. See you Tuesday!

From: [Deborah Adams](#)
To: [City Council Public Comments](#)
Cc: [Banuelos, Caroline](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Agenda item 15.1
Date: Monday, August 17, 2026 12:17:47 PM

To City Council

I would like to register my support for the comments below made by Evan Wiig regarding item 15.1 on the agenda.

We have walked this creek for many years, having lived nearby for over 40 years and would like it to stay open and accessible to the community. The tunnels under the creek and city are part of our history and I hope they will remain open to the public also.

Deborah Adams, 121 Fernwood Ct. SR 95401

707-694-7176

"Having read the staff report for Item 15.1, I want to flag what it does and doesn't commit to:

- The city will retain 1.61 acres containing the culverted creek "for future environmental creek restoration projects." That's a possibility, not a commitment. There's no design requirement, no funding source, and no timeline attached to it.
- The nearly 6 acres being exchanged to the developer—the majority of the site, including the most visible downtown frontage—carries no requirement at all that any future development engage with, open up, or even acknowledge the creek beside it.
- The Development Agreement that will eventually govern what actually gets built is a separate, future process. By the time the public gets to weigh in on design, the land will already be gone and the city's negotiating leverage will already be spent.
- This has been negotiated in closed session for roughly eighteen months. For a decision this consequential to downtown's future, the public record is thin.

I'd ask you to consider a few concrete things before or as part of Tuesday's vote:

- 1) Make creek daylighting a binding condition, not an aspiration. If the city is retaining land specifically to protect the ability to restore the creek, that intent should be written into the exchange terms or the surplus land findings now, not left to hope for in a future Development Agreement. Grant funds, especially those from Prop 4, rather than city funds could be used for multibenefit projects just like this.
- 2) Set a design standard, not just a green space requirement. Santa Rosa already has an example of creekside development done poorly: the Prince Memorial Greenway, where new development turned its back on the otherwise well-restored creek and walled it off, leaving a corridor that today feels unsafe rather than vital. Any creekside development tied to this site should be required to face the water (e.g. sidewalks, storefronts, patios, stoops) not treat it as an afterthought. I don't want a decorative culvert; I want the creek to be the organizing feature of this district.
- 3) Think regionally, not parcel-by-parcel. The John F. Shea Federal Building next door sits on the same creek system and has been flagged by GSA as underutilized since 2023. A comprehensive vision for this stretch of downtown—one that eventually incorporates that property too—will produce a far better outcome than negotiating this site in isolation. I'd ask the city to at least begin exploring that possibility in parallel, rather than foreclosing it.
- 4) I'm willing to make this easier for the developer, not harder. If protecting meaningful creek

frontage means the buildable footprint shrinks, I'd support the city offering something in return—additional height, for instance, to preserve the project's overall economics. A creek-centered downtown is good for a developer's asset value too.

5) Give the public a real seat at the table before the land changes hands. Eighteen months of closed session is a long time for residents to have been shut out of a decision this size. At minimum, I'd ask for a public design process—even a single well-publicized workshop—before or alongside the Development Agreement, so the community can weigh in on what “creek-centered” should actually look like here."

From: [Marlene Russell](#)
To: [City Council Public Comments](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] 15.1 Report Approval of Real Property Exchange Agreement for City Hall Campus
Date: Monday, August 17, 2026 2:33:01 PM

To Whom It May Concern:

As a long-term residential homeowner of District 5 in Santa Rosa, California; I genuinely support the City Council's desire to save our failing downtown. The potential plan to exchange the City Hall Campus for a newly remodeled office in the central downtown area is a step in the right direction.

The suggestion that the city will retain ownership of the Santa Rosa and Matanzas Creeks for the intent of flood control is both positive and encouraging. However more appropriate would be to strongly include the possibility of future environmental restoration as an integral part of the above plan. Reality is if a less-than-ideal solution for the future of these two creeks is not a priority: it will simply never happen.

Let us work to undo the mishaps of the past. The under-grounding of the creeks was a huge environmental error of the past and plans to fix this mishap is now our responsibility.

It is imperative that agreement between the City of Santa Rosa and the Museum on the Square (Hugh Futrell) must clearly state an agreement to daylighting and restoring the creek and retaining the development of the property that adjoins the creeks. This will create an avenue for the public to enjoy the natural purpose of these creeks. Please push Futrell to commit to ensuring this project as it is both environmentally sensitive and sound.

It is imperative that this must be clearly part of the contractual agreement and communicated clearly to the residents of Santa Rosa, California. This is the right thing to do!

Thank you,

Marlene Russell

Resident of District 5

From: [Sarah Levitan](#)
To: [City Council Public Comments](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Regarding Agenda item 15.1 at the 8/18 meeting. From Joey Smith
Date: Monday, August 17, 2026 4:29:12 PM

I am a lifelong Santa Rosan-

Regarding agenda item 15.1 ~ I think it's a great idea to swap the deteriorating city hall property. Please do it.

I'm writing to ask you to use your leverage **now** rather than being content with "leaving the option open".

Now is the time to say to the developer: do good things with this property. Make your money. If you need to make a taller building to do that, great (we need more housing and businesses downtown!) BUT - please let's require them to do two things:

1) daylight the creek confluence

2) make the buildings face the creek (let's not repeat the problems with the prince memorial greenway

To me the BEST example of this is what Mayor Pete Buttegieg did in South Bend. Feature the creek!

So many people I talk to say what I have felt my whole life— Santa Rosa downtown is not living up to its potential.

I truly think that daylighting the Santa Rosa and Matanzas creek confluence could be what we've been missing all these years. Please don't "pass the buck" on this... let's write it clearly for the developer so they know what they're working with when the contract is complete.

Thank you,

Joey Smith
707-543-6577

Sent from my iPhone. Please excuse any typos.

From: [Kelsey Wiig](#)
To: [_CityCouncilListPublic](#); [Stapp, Mark](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Daylight the Creek!
Date: Monday, August 17, 2026 4:40:27 PM

Dear Mayor Stapp and Councilmembers,

I'm writing ahead of Tuesday's vote on the City Hall property exchange. Water is an integral part of every community, and Santa Rosa Creek and Matanzas Creek are why this city exists where it does. Please ensure this once-in-many-lifetimes opportunity doesn't slip past us yet again.

We all know that burying that creek was a huge mistake in the development of Santa Rosa's downtown. Aren't we tired of hearing about Santa Rosa's "potential"? This is it, right in front of us. Letting this property exchange occur without a commitment to daylighting the creek would be yet another grave mistake, one that would bar downtown from becoming the thriving, creekside city it was always meant to be.

It's simple: don't let this property change hands without establishing that intention now.

Warmly,
Kelsey

From: [Thea Hensel](#)
To: [_CityCouncilListPublic](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Item 15.1
Date: Monday, August 17, 2026 4:56:46 PM

To: Mayor Mark Stapp and Members of the Santa Rosa City Council

Re: City Hall Property Exchange Agreement (August 18, 2026)

Dear Mayor Stapp and Councilmembers,

I was surprised to learn of the proposal before you tomorrow which is so important to the future lifeblood of downtown Santa Rosa.

Downtown Santa Rosa needs more revitalization and it is making progress. That said, having a meandering creek with adjacent trail connectivity is an amenity that would enhance it's beautification and present another open entry to the Prince Memorial Greenway and beyond.

Can we please put this decision on hold and hold a public charette? It doesn't have to be extensive or expensive- just give folks an opportunity to check off the boxes and come up with ideas that help business, travel, beautification and rehab of an eyesore, City Hall.

Daylighting the creek could really be a destination to downtown and help with flood control. Santa Rosa has an opportunity to "fix" downtown and enhance safety as the new amenities are a draw to the area. Can you consider tightening up language to require, rather than suggest:

- Make creek day-lighting a binding condition
- Require integrating the development into the creekside; not the fencing off we have seen on the Prince Memorial Greenway
- Encourage the developer to go up and reduce building costs and provide creekside space for residents and visitors

Thank you,
Regards,
Thea Henseel
1354 Yulupa Ave
Santa Rosa, CA 95405