

**Russian River Redevelopment Project  
Strategic Plan  
Visioning Event Summary Report**

**Executive Summary**

**November 7, 2006**

**Prepared by**

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## ***Introduction***

A community visioning event was held from October 9-12, 2006 in the Russian River area as part of the Russian River Redevelopment Project strategic planning process.

The purpose for this intensive activity was to engage as many citizens and stakeholders in the area in a short period of time to determine their desires for the future. Events held included:

- Community-wide forum to kick-off the process
- Four focus groups
- Hispanic community forum
- Drop-by sessions in Rio Nido, Monte Rio, and Guerneville
- Strategic Planning Subcommittee meeting
- Community-wide forum to present the results of the activities

In addition to this in-person involvement, dozens of citizens submitted questionnaires and provided comments on the project Web site [www.russianriverplan.com](http://www.russianriverplan.com). Over 300 people participated in all, with more that 270 in-person.

A summary report of all activities has been developed that provides the detailed comments and results of each of the events. The purpose of this Executive Summary is to present the Values and Vision developed by the consultant based on the input received. The Values and Vision were presented at the conclusion of the event during a community-wide forum and were widely applauded. There was general consensus that they accurately depict what the community would like to achieve.

**The Strategic Planning Subcommittee adopted the Values and Vision at their November 1, 2006 meeting. It is intended for the adopted Values and Vision to be used throughout the remainder of the planning process and well beyond to help guide decision-making and track results.**

### ***Community Values***

Core community philosophies and assets that should not be compromised under any circumstances. That which makes you want to be here that if lost, would prompt you to leave. These values were determined to currently exist and are therefore stated in the present tense.

### **The River Runs Through Us!**

The Russian River connects us to one another at a deep, soulful level. The power and tranquility of the river, the majestic Redwoods, and splendor of the natural environment are why we choose to call this area home! The peaceful, quiet, and rustic ambiance of this special place resonates deeply with those that visit for a day or stay for a lifetime.

### **We Honor our Diversity**

People, ideas, and attitudes are welcome and the community's diversity is embraced as a community asset. Compassion is shown for people of all walks of life and lifestyles, families of all kinds, and individuals struggling along their life journey. There is always a "community light left on" to welcome those new to the area or just passing through.

### **Doing it Our Way!**

Strong minded, independent individuals that are passionate about this unique place provide the community foundation. Historically, people have come to the area to live their life and raise their family on their own terms. This independence has been embedded within the community culture and is the motivation to find solutions "to do it our way!"

### **Tread Lightly**

Residents are honored to live within this beautiful environment and understand their stewardship responsibility to the area and globally. The area recognizes the sensitive balance and close interconnectedness between economic vitality and environmental sustainability. If the quality of the river, our water, or the natural environment is diminished, the reason to live or visit here will be compromised.

### **Our Children, Our Future**

The children are a sense of community pride and the hope for the future. The area strives to maintain an environment that nourishes children's ability to play and learn in a safe and supportive manner. A drug-free community with strong families that allow children to expand their creativity and explore the wonderment of life is expected. Children have the opportunity to reach for the stars and create their own successful path.

### **Reflecting the Past**

The area has a long and colorful history that is celebrated and has defined the area's uniqueness and eclectic-ness. The arts, music, and creativity have been the threads that connect today to the past. This rich history has created memories that linger and a desire to reflect this history as we move forward.

### ***Community Vision***

A statement of the desired future condition for the community that is used to guide decision-making and track results. The Vision describes the community's desired, long-range future condition. Looking optimistically that this desired future condition can be attained, the Vision is expressed in the present tense.

The Russian River area is a collection of unique communities nestled in the Redwoods along the banks of the pristine river. The area is a globally-recognized model for environmental preservation and sustainability. Long-term water supply and quality is assured and an innovative approach has been taken to address the impacts of river

flooding. People come from around the world for eco-tourism and the area is home to the finest ecological educational opportunities.

The Russian River has a thriving, year-round economy that meets the needs of the local residents while providing services to visitors. The vibrant business climate is comprised of locally-owned small businesses that are compatible with the area's environmental ethic and quality of life. The area supports entrepreneurs and provides assistance to new local business start-ups.

Schools are the cornerstone of the community and quality education is a point of community pride. Life-long learning opportunities are abundant and tailored to people of all ages. Scholarships, apprenticeships, and mentoring programs are available to assist residents in achieving their dreams. Employment opportunities are available locally for all so people do not have to leave the area to work and young people can choose to stay and raise their families.

The built environment compliments the splendor of the natural setting. As visitors enter the area, the community's sense of pride is evident with beautifully renovated buildings, clean and litter free areas, and improved streetscapes. The area has quality housing and neighborhoods that are well-kept, but affordable for year-round residents.

Recreational opportunities for people of all ages abound. Kids have a place to call their own and to learn or just hang out in a safe environment. Improved public river access and recreational opportunities have increased while ensuring the river's long-term health. Trails, walking pathways, public transit, and bike paths offer alternative modes of travel throughout the area connecting communities and providing access to services for residents and visitors.

Collaborative efforts between the schools, neighborhoods, religious institutions, businesses, and social service agencies have resulted in numerous community improvements including addressing homelessness and substance abuse in a comprehensive and compassionate manner. The root causes of these social issues are addressed by providing support and education to assist individuals to help themselves. Caring for the less fortunate is an effort that unites the community.

Civil discourse is a way of local decision-making. Residents, businesses, and agencies work together to collaboratively identify and implement innovative solutions to critical community issues. The public has a voice in local decision-making impacting the area. Self-determination is the result of a cohesive, community consensus.

**Russian River is more than a place; it's a state of mind and a way of living.  
Our Vision, Our Future!**