

Santa Rosa Town Hall on State Policy

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Short Summary

Local and state leaders discussed Santa Rosa's development, California's budget resilience, and critical community health and housing initiatives.

Long Summary

The Mayor of Santa Rosa joined state legislators to discuss the city's growth and fiscal plans, highlighting significant investments in infrastructure and public safety. State representatives addressed California's economic resilience despite federal budget threats, detailing protections for Medi-Cal, childcare, and education. The town hall covered local concerns including behavioral health funding under Proposition 1, streamlining housing through CEQA adjustments, and the importance of government transparency. The session concluded with a commitment to addressing unintended legislative consequences while prioritizing community engagement and equity.

Santa Rosa Infrastructure and Capital Improvements

- **Funding and Development:** Significant investment in public facilities including the Hearn Avenue hub, which combines a new library and fire station.
- **Fire Station Reconstruction:** Ongoing efforts to rebuild the Fountain Grove fire station lost in previous fires.
- **Capital Improvement Projects (CIP):** The city executed \$75 million in projects last year.
 - A budget of \$125 million is planned for 2026.
 - Primary focus areas include street repair (potholes), park improvements, and general infrastructure upgrades.

City Economic Outlook and Budget

- **Fiscal Management:** The city is addressing budget challenges with a structured plan and community town halls to ensure fiscal stability.
- **Business Growth:** Santa Rosa is the fifth largest city in the Bay Area, seeing an influx of major brands in Montgomery Village.
- **Economic Expansion:** Expansion of services like Southwest Airlines and potential entries from the United Soccer League and Minor League Baseball.

State Economy and Federal Funding Challenges

- **Economic Standing:** California remains the 5th largest economy in the world and the top state for agriculture, technology, and AI.
- **Federal Relations:** As a "donor state," California contributes \$80 billion more to the federal government than it receives.
- **Federal Funding Risks:** Concerns regarding "HR 1" and potential federal cuts to Medicaid, SNAP, and infrastructure.
 - Anticipated \$10 billion clawback in infrastructure projects.
 - Potential \$2 billion to \$4 billion hit to National Institute for Health (NIH) research grants.

Public Education and Student Support

- **Per-Pupil Spending:** Increased from \$6,900 to approximately \$27,000 per student.
- **Universal Programs:** Implementation of universal transitional kindergarten and universal school meals.
- **Higher Education Accessibility:** 54% of community college and UC/CSU students now graduate tuition-free.
- **Local Investment:** \$90 million investment secured to support and save Sonoma State University.

Healthcare and Behavioral Health Services

- **Medicaid and Medi-Cal:** 92% of the population has healthcare access, but federal "cliffs" in 2027 threaten rural hospital stability.
- **Proposition 1:** Implementation of the behavioral health bond to expand treatment beds and day programs.
 - Success in Humboldt County expanding beds from 16 to 130 serves as a model.
 - Focus on reducing "transfer trauma" by keeping youth patients local.

Childcare and Corporate Taxation

- **Childcare Expansion:** 140,000 new slots created over five years, with 15,000 added last year.
- **Revenue Proposals:** Discussion of "Water's Edge" tax changes for international corporations to increase state revenue.
- **Large Employer Accountability:** Proposals to penalize large corporations (e.g., Walmart, McDonald's) that shift employee healthcare costs onto the Medi-Cal system.

Housing and Environmental Legislation

- **AB 130 "Fix-it" Bill:** Addressing unintended consequences of housing legislation passed last year.
 - Efforts to reinstate the ability to use newer fire-resistant materials in building codes.
 - Correcting issues related to tribal consultation and endangered species definitions.
- **CEQA and Biodiversity:** Balancing the need for housing streamlining with the protection of California's unique biodiversity.
- **Good Fire Act:** New legislation incorporating indigenous fire practices and knowledge into state wildfire management.

Transcriptions

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 10:38:54

Can you hear me? Yeah. Alright. Well, thank you, Assembly member and former mayor. I had the I had the great pleasure of serving with Chris for a couple years in the count on the council, and he was very much a mentor to me. In fact, the reason I even thought about running was because of Chris.

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 10:39:14

And it's a thrill to be up here today, both with the assembly member and with the Senator. So I'm glad that Erica mentioned it. Erica mentioned the Hearn Avenue hub where uh Chris and Mike brought in uh eight figures of money to help build not just a library but a new fire station. In addition, the Senator Earn has been incredibly helpful building another fire station in over Fountain Grove to rebuild that fire station which we lost in the fire. And I'm not going to talk about the parks funding that's come in, the community center funding that's come in. A special thanks to the senator for decades now, it's literally decades, of support for the city of Santa Rosa. If you see the building that's going on, it's because of these two in large measure. And that's a big part of the

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that's a big part of the Santa Rosa story right now. I'm not going to take a lot of time, but but one of the one of the really nice areas of momentum for the city is that we are building. Last year we did 75 million in capital improvement projects in the city. So you saw the street improvements along Sonoma Ave, Santa Rosa Ave, in your neighborhoods. You saw some of the improvements to parks. Well, in 2026, we're going to put out a bid or start construction on 125 million dollars of capital improvement projects for the city. So that's going to

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A lot of street repair because heaven knows we hear it about the potholes and the street issues. But it's gonna be it's gonna be parks improvements, it's gonna be other kinds of infrastructure improvements. And so when you see the cranes, when you see the construction, know that that's money that in part has been brought in by these two gentlemen, which is making our our city better. And it's gonna it's gonna be a good thing for the community. Uh at the same time, I'll just I'll just mention it because you're reading about the paper. We've got some budget issues, but we've got a plan. And right now the city is reaching out through events like this, town halls, to talk about where we're going with our budget and what our plan is to get ourselves on firm fiscal footing. But know that as you're reading those headlines that will no be negative, there isn't there is a plan, and things are gonna be good, and we're gonna be making every effort in the city to make sure that you're you're aware of the details. Uh and then finally, back, I'm gonna end on a positive note. I heard that's what how you're supposed to handle these things.

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 10:41:19

Look at the companies that have been moving into our city. Our city that's the fifth largest in the Bay Area, a fact that a lot of Santa Rosans don't recognize. When you see the you see the name brands that are coming into Montgomery Village, I hope you're all enjoying enjoying Montgomery Village. You see Southwest Airlines coming into the community. You see the discussion about the United Soccer League. Minor League Baseball is thinking about coming to Santa Rosa. They see they see our population center, they see our income level, and they want to be here. And it's gonna be great for the economic development of for our area, for the jobs, for all for all the great things that come along with that development. So I'll end on that note, but again, end on a note of thanks for these two gentlemen in particular for all for all that you've done for Santa Rosa. And just know that there's some there are some really good things coming for the city. With that, I'll turn it back over to uh former mayor rangers.

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 10:42:16

And I do want to say uh there is no one who works harder for the city of Santa Rosa than the mayor. Uh has been on the council three years now, uh and has really thrown himself and his family into uh making sure that the city is an incredible place to live. So I appreciate that, uh, Mr. Mayor. Uh let's go ahead and start talking.

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 10:42:35

About the state. And I'll kick it over to Senator Maguire in just a minute here. But it really is interesting, might not be the right term.

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 10:42:46

But I will tell you on a personal level, there's no better time to be in public service than when you feel like you can be service to your community. And the work that I started doing last year, the legislation that we pursued really has been impactful and meaningful for me to be able to fight for the community that I grew up in to make sure that we are defending California and Californians first. And we'll get into a deep dive on each of these issues, folks want to. But we'll talk about what are we doing about ICE. We'll talk about how are we protecting California from having billions of dollars bled off by the federal government. We'll talk about the impact of HR 1 on our healthcare systems and what that means cascading down into the social safety net and how California is trying to make sure that we put everybody in a position to succeed. That's been a lot of the work that we've done over the last year. There's a second bucket that I think is really important, and that is recognizing that our district is very unique, and that when we are working on issues at the state level, it wasn't perfect before Trump.

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So, how do we continue to address the affordability crisis for California? How do we make sure that energy stays affordable? How do we make sure that our schools are able to have a good education system for our youth that are coming up? And I think that that's very important as well. And then the third one is how do we strengthen our institutions? Because we have seen the test points from the White House, we've seen the test points even from our governor's office. How do we strengthen the institution so that we leave it in a better place and that democracy is stronger for having served in the legislature? I'm happy to get into the specifics where folks want, but I'm gonna kick it over to Senator McGuire, who I've had the pleasure of working with for over a decade now. He knows all of my terrible puns. I

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 10:44:49

And now we get to have kids growing up together, which has been really uh exciting for me and special. Uh so thank you, Senator, for being here.

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Uh, first of all, I just want to take a moment to say thank you so much for getting up

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right and early in joining us uh for this town hall. And I think we need to take a moment to say thank you to Chris Rogers. Uh he does an amazing job representing Sonoma County, the entire North Coast. He is up and down Highway 101 from Oregon border all the way here to Sonoma County. Let's give them a round of applause

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is uh you can trust them completely. Uh not only is he a colleague, he is a dear friend. And I am grateful for his friendship and partnership, most of all, and just want to say thank you so much. I want to say thank you so much to the mayor.

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 10:45:53

Uh the mayor is guiding us through some of the toughest times that we've seen in a generation. Uh has steady leadership, he's laser focused on Santa Rosa and wanting to do what's best for working families. Let's give it up to the mayor, please.

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 10:46:12

Sonoma County Library are some of the best that we have in the country. And it is uh thanks to the voters of this county who stepped up to be able to support the library system, to be able to take what was a really good system and make it into a great system here, not just in California, but throughout the nation. Uh they are welcoming, they welcome all. They're all about inclusion. Uh and what I greatly appreciate is that they are embedded in our communities each and every day. And that \$8 million that's coming in uh for the library plus the fire station is only gonna make it even stronger within Southwest here in Santa Rosa. Can we please give it up to the Sonoma County Library? Quick overview to some items uh and issues, some issues uh that we're seeing across the state of California, then I'm gonna immediately turn it over.

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 10:46:59

To some member Rogers and independent summing, thank you so much for bringing us all together here today. Look, I think that we are living in some really tough times. And I think some of the toughest times in our lifetime. And I know that we've said that in the past, but I firmly believe it now. And here's what I know about California. No matter if you are a Democrat in Sonoma County or a Republican up in Delmore County, there's still more that unites us than divides us. While we may not vote for the same person for president, we have a lot of the same priorities. We want to make sure that we have good public schools that we can send our kids to. Am I right? Yeah. We want to be able to protect health care and making sure that we have hospitals that are open and thriving in the community that we call home. Am I right? We want to be able to afford a home in the community that we love. Am I right? And we want a more affordable life. And that is that's not too difficult or partisan. And that's where we need to be focused. And that's where I firmly believe State of California is moving and focused. Good schools, making sure that we have strong health care, good jobs, housing, and the mayor is absolutely right. Literally thousands of units are now being built in the lot of that is because of the state of California has been investing and putting money where its mouth is in making housing more affordable. Expanding renters tax credits to record, expanding the first-time homebuyer program. That's where we need to be focused. And California's economy, um, look, just being very blunt about it. Under the Trump administration, we've taken a hit. And it's the honest God truth. Uh but here's what I'll tell you what you may not see on cable news. California is still the number one economy in the United States of America. We're the fifth largest economy in the world, and we're the most diverse state in the United States of America. And what we know here in California, our diversity is our strength. Am I right, maybe?

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 10:49:12

And let's not forget California is one of the biggest donor states to the federal government. We give the federal government \$80 billion more than we receive every damn year. We are America's economic engine. And by the way, Texas, Texas takes \$50 billion more in federal funds than they receive.

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So here's the piece. We're number one agricultural state in the nation. Number one technology state in the nation. Number one state for AI. Number one new business starts for small businesses. Number one for new business starts for women-owned businesses. Number one for new business starts for minority-owned businesses. I could go long, could go on, but look, as much as we have challenges and we need to focus on the challenges, we got a lot of great things going here in California, and 92% of our population has access to health care. And we've ground even by 80% over the last decade. We've cut our greenhouse gas emissions by 20% over the last decade, and over 60% of all students who go to a UC are now graduating debt-free because we put our money to be.

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 10:50:32

Very quickly talking about public education. I think it is the ultimate equalizer in our society. And look, we've gone from dead last in the nation in the United States of America and per people spending, we are now in the top 20. We've gone from 8,000, excuse me, 6,900 per year now to about 27,000 next school year. And that is absolutely critical. We have now expanding universal transitional kindergarten to every public school in the state of California. Universal school meals, because we know that kids can't go to school on a hungry tummy, am I right? And we became the first state in the nation to be able to do so, and we are deeply concerned about that federal share that's coming in that that may be cut here for our K-12 public schools. 10 billion dollars we're investing to be able to make modernized schools across the state, a billion dollars.

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 10:51:23

Every year for career training programs, 1.5 billion a year for after school programs to make sure kids don't have learning loss after school and through summer. And in college, 54%. 54% of all community college students now are going tuition-free, over half at a UC and CSU. And locally, I want to say thank you to each and every one of you, and I want to say thank you to the assembly. Thank you so much. This community rallied, and we've saved Sonoma State. And we need to

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 10:51:57

\$90 million investment. On affordability, you're gonna see a \$60 billion decrease in your utility bills over the next decade. And that is what we just passed this year: an expansion of their ventures tax credit, the anchor of the first time home buyers program. Would love to talk about wildfire today, if you'd be willing, uh, because we have a lot of major news happening on wildfire, insurance stability, and how we are protecting vulnerable communities in standing up to this administration in defending California values. We are so excited that each and every one of you here. The most important part of today is hearing from you. Thank you so much for standing up for our country, for our community, and our democracy. I'm gonna turn it over to December.

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One thing that the senator said and more likely didn't say, and he talked about all of the incredible things that are happening in California, and he mentioned it we, we, we, we, we, uh, without mentioning that he was the president pro tem leading the session

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who was driving these priorities home. And so I think that that needs to be acknowledged as well, that much of this would not have happened without his leadership. And just thank you so much for all of that.

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Now we want to turn it over to you. And as I mentioned, uh, we did 20 town calls last year from Point Arena to Hayford. Everybody had different priorities, different things that they were worried about. And we really just wanted to hear what can we answer? Uh, what questions do you have? What concerns do you have? Uh

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Uh and let's have a discussion about it. So who wants to start? And uh I will point out some of our staff. I've got Scott Alonso, who's our district director, Monica Berrigan in the back, who helps represent Sonoma County and lives here in Santa Rosa. Uh and Scott will be taking the microphone around, uh, but also just bring phone over for you all to know as well. Gregory. And I can repeat the question too if they're up front.

user - Feb 07, 2026 10:54:00

Yeah. As you probably know, I'm chair of the committee of the behavioral health board here in the county, charged with Prop One to try to figure out how to keep us from falling all apart. Uh one of the things we're gonna be asking the Board of Supervisors to ask you is not to send us unfunded mandates. Not to say we have to do something locally but not send any money. Uh either roll back the unfunded mandates or provide some money. Um so I want to know when they ask you to do that, how are you gonna respond?

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 10:54:37

So the good news, Gregory, is that in the state constitution, it says that every time we pass legislation, we need to compensate locals for the unfunded mandates, which the state totally has done over the last 40 years. Uh so we're we're good on that. But no, the the answer is that yes, when it comes to health care, we've seen the impact of HR one, and we've seen specifically certain protections for our locals uh and uh that are gonna disappear. Uh and we know that folks are gonna be pushed off of the social safety net and pushed further into county organizations and really over uh enroll and oversubscribe the amount of services that are gonna be provided. Uh, there's a designation, for instance, that HR1 was helping to eliminate that looked at areas that didn't have enough providers that provided resources to those areas. Uh, that is going to disappear under HR1. Uh, we are getting ready to introduce a bill in partnership with RCRC, the rural counties representatives of California, to reinstate that on the state level so that our local care systems get that funding that they need as well. Uh, we know that it's going to push folks from preventative.

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Edison into emergency room visits. There's going to be issues around indigent care for the county system. And we know that the estimate for Sonoma County is that that'll last for about six months at its current funding level. We know that the diffusion of those costs across a larger pay base is going to disappear as we have additional work requirements that are being put in place as well for folks. So it's top of mind. We know 100% that we need to completely revamp how we view our care system in light of HR 1. And happy to work with you on that. But certainly we'll be watching what happens in terms of unfunded mandates or costs, and we'll be working with you. Thank you so much, grateful for your work. So quickly on the issue of mental health, behavioral health addiction.

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First and foremost, we need equity when it comes to physical and mental health care in this nation. Yes, indeed. And I think ultimately what we need is universal health care in the United States.

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That was proposition one. That was the behavioral health bond that is now moving to be able to expand by thousands of additional behavioral health beds and slots, day programs, and long-term stays in the state of California. We'd love to be able to work with the County of Sonoma on the implementation of their long-term plan.

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County Humble, it's a county of less than 200,000 folks, and they had uh 16 behavioral health beds total.

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16.

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And with a lot of work, and this has been gosh, seven years in the making. Uh, Chris Rogers and I have been working on this. Um, we are now expanding the number of behavioral health beds in Humboldt County to 130. Um, we are about to

break around on a brand new wing of Madrid.

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Hospital that will have 40 behavioral health beds focused on addiction and mental health. We're going to be breaking ground on a behavioral health center for the first time in that county's history for individuals under the age of 18. So they're no longer transferred to the Bay Area or Sacramento or LA and are separated because what we know is transfer trauma is real.

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 10:58:21

We would love to be able to work with the County of Sonoma on the implementation of the long-term plan. And for one of the first times, we actually have money to do it.

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So whatever you want to call it, you can call it Obamacare, the Affordable Care Act, or Medicaid. For the past 20 years, we've been expanding mental health beds and federally qualified health centers and expanding rural hospitals based off of medical. Is it the ultimate answer? No. But it's what covers the cost, especially when it comes to behavioral health in this state.

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And we are going to see millions off of Medicaid, both for their primary care, but then

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is going to take a huge, huge whack when it comes to behavioral health care. And so that is something that we are desperately concerned about. And the last thing I'll just say in just the first congressional district, 42% of all residents are on Medicaid. Wow. 42%.

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 10:59:41

We are in danger in this country of losing what we've all fought so hard for. We'll give you the last word and hold the microphone.

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 10:59:50

What county is that Shepherd? Humble. Up and Humble.

user - Feb 07, 2026 10:59:55

You'll be happy to know that, and I'm hoping all of you will help us be that partners. The county's integrated plan, which we have to have by June 30th, and we're working hard on right now, will be up on the county website in about two weeks. We invite all of you to help us make

user - Feb 07, 2026 11:00:12

that even better by reading it and giving us comments. Um it's called the county um prop 1 integrated plan uh look for it on the website and uh hopefully we'll make it uh really help us out a lot thank you much more

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 11:00:37

and um i'm wondering if you are aware of the sonoma county land grab that's going on in snow county um our co-enforcement come around if they're mainly focusing on elders uh Spanish speaking people giving us uh code violations don't know how to deal with it and they're losing the land I'm just wondering if you're aware of that one and two if you I've got hundreds of cases going through the courts right now be willing to sit down with me and um talk about it. Thank you Kenny uh for that and um I'll turn it

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 11:01:17

over to Assembly member Roger to be able to be uh happy to hear more I'll be candid I don't know um a lot about it in regards to I I assume this is co-enforcement through PRMD uh cinema planning yeah yeah they changed their name yes it did yeah I apologize um so happy to talk more about that um and have a further conversation yeah I I also haven't heard about that but we'd be more than happy to sit down and talk with you uh my experience uh being on the city council was working with the city's co-enforcement and their progressive enforcement model uh always can be fixed but it's lovely curve to make it better.

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 11:01:57

Yeah actually uh I think Scott's about to handle a carton

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 11:02:07

and then my wire

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 11:02:12

my name is Jerika Ramon from Fighting Voices. I do know government usually budget those notes include the promise 77 77000 slows with

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 11:02:29

We must remain it in C plus in under mental families and child care providers. We have clear options to improve California's lives. For instance, we can restore the 20,000 42 million in cannabis that revenue that was lost on the proposition 64. Additionally, we need to eliminate significant incorporate tax rates. So we asked, we used to for the funding for 77,000 child care spaces in this year by year.

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 11:03:03

We use the for a community to review the buyer's age and election and the research and development tax credit to identify a possible revenue source for child care. I would say yes.

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 11:03:17

I see. Yeah. So I I the question about child care, and I will say the best indication that I can give you on where the legislature is going to go on this is to look at how they handled it last year. So there has been a commitment and a promise to universal child care as one of the most uh substantial rising costs that families are feeling in California. I feel it, the senator feels it. Uh we both have kids who are in daycare and in preschool. And last year, even in a tough budget year where we were making cuts, the state still made progress. And the Democratic caucus insisted on 15,000 new spots of child care to make sure that families who need it the most have access to that care and don't have to choose between going to work and putting food on the table or providing an opportunity for their kids as well. Right? We're going to continue to fight that, uh, fight for that, and especially when you see New Mexico, who's been able to do universal child care. Uh we're the largest state. Uh the Senator talked about the economic impact. It is shameful that we still have the most kids living in poverty. It is shameful that we have kids who don't have access to the care that they need. So we'll continue to pay for that. I'm actually working on two pieces of legislation this year with four C's of Sonoma County.

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 11:04:36

To try to make sure that we are bolstering our system here in Sonoma County and abroad to meet that commitment for folks because you just can't get ahead in the state with the cost of childcare the way that it is. It's up to about \$30,000 per kid in parts of our community. It's amazing how many things they were. Thank you so much.

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 11:04:57

And I uh just want to take a moment to say they need to pair voices. Uh pair of voices, travel the state to expand child care and other services that will help work in families, and we owe you a better gratitude and want to say thank you so much for your work. Um

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 11:05:16

picture on child care. Number one, over the last uh five years, we've created an additional 140,000 child care slots, 15,000 additional last year. Um, and I cannot imagine that there is not going to be another push to expand child care slots this year. It is one of the greatest economic development tools that we have in this state is to be able to provide child care, to be able to get folks out of the home, working in our communities, uh, and um that's where we need to focus. Um I am not at all trying to not answer your question directly, uh, but we're going through, uh we're going through the budget right now, and here's the good news. We've closed the budget gap. Uh and um we are we are seeing um revenue coming into the state above estimates, um, which is really good news. Um I cannot imagine that we will not put additional child care slots and implement them here starting next school year. Uh we are in a better budget situation now than we were last year. Much more to come, and I think what we always do is that we sit down, we talk and meet, and that is both of our commitments and look forward to it. Thank you so much. Thank you. Yeah, and I will say I think that the I think that that's also a good launching point to talk a little bit more about what to expect in the budget this year.

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And the senator talked about we do see revenues that are coming in above what the expectation was, but we also still see a structural deficit. So one of the things that we are preparing for is you have a governor who wants to wrap things up. It's his last year in office. We are very concerned not just about balancing the budget this year, but looking long-term, three, four, or five years out, what that runway looks like so that we can meet some of those priorities. We're also having a pretty substantial conversation about what our tax system looks like from an equity standpoint. And so, no promises because I don't know which ones will actually make it to the top of the discussion. But we're actively talking

about additional revenues that focus on not just taxation policy but inequities that have existed for a long time. And I'll give you two really good examples of proposals that are floating around. One is called the water's edge designation, uh, which assembly member Jamie Connolly, who represents from Highway 12 down to the Oregon board or to the Golden Gate Bridge has been leading on. We allow international corporations to essentially choose how they are taxed for the goods and services that they do in California. And if all we did was take away the option that is the easiest for them, uh the money for them, and tax them the way that Texas does, it would be a couple of billion extra dollars in our coffers a year. That is not something that is put on the backs of the working poor in California. It's on the international corporations who do business here. So that proposal is moving forward and is has been introduced as a piece of legislation. The other one, uh, I'm not sure what we're actually calling it now, but it was originally being called the MICTAX, uh, where we were looking at corporations that don't pay into Medi-Cal and then turn around, and when you fill out your job application to start, literally do an application for Medi-Cal. Well, Walmart, McDonald's, some of your large corporations that are cutting out the knees of folks by paying them less, but then putting

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them off to the social safety net so that the rest of us are paying for them and that not only increases that cost but it increases the cost for emergency services for folks so we are also looking at a stipend on those corporations as well to fully fund our healthcare system uh and our social safety debt programs I'll be very quick on that uh Massachusetts has implemented uh this exact um structure look here's the bottom line um you have the largest corporations in the world that hire folks under the mandated hours so they don't get health care benefits money from the company that they've worked for so then what they do is they go and get on to benefits through either Medi-Cal or Medicaid and then all of us pick up the dime and I want to be very clear of what this would look like it would only be for the largest employers uh in the state of California and it would be based off of the percentage of employees that they have that are on um either Medicaid or Medi-Cal.

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 11:10:10

So this would not impact small businesses but I'm gonna be blunt I am done subsidizing the largest corporations in the world and the billionaires who can afford to pay the

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impact approximately 95 to 98% of the businesses in this state would not be impacted by

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this approach.

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 11:10:47

So that's really important. The other thing I'll just mention really quickly that makes the budget a little squishy this year is technical technical term we're waiting to see what the damage is going to be for the federal government if I can do some and again I'm not at all trying to be partisan but I'm gonna talk uh tick down some of the the biggest areas of threat number one uh the Medicaid cuts so the Medicaid cuts the big Medicaid cuts where they're taking folks off of health insurance that won't take effect uh until the end of this year

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Conveniently after the midterm elections.

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Fast forward to mid-2027, that is when the cliff is gonna hit.

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 11:11:31

Rural hospitals and health centers will close by mid-2027 in the state of California. Three in our district, I think. Yeah. Uh Glenn County Medical Center, by the way. Closed. The only hospital in Lynn County closed 90 days ago.

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 11:11:50

So that's a big issue. Another b big one is SNAP.

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We know that the federal government is some of the is one of the largest buyers of produce, protein, pork, beef, etc. They've already cut out the subsidies that they've been given to food banks. That impacts uh agriculture. And then two, these snap cuts are gonna have a deficit in impact on families, and it's also gonna have a devastating impact on rural stores, grocery stores, and markets, because they rely on folks who come in with government benefits to be able to buy milk and cheese and protein, etc. Those snap cuts could be anywhere between low-end three billion in California, five billion uh in California. The NIH cuts, the National Institute for Health, um, you see the University of California system is one of the largest research arms in the entire world. We're expecting anywhere between a two to four billion dollar hit

from the federal government and to some of the smartest folks who are leading the way on research. And the last piece uh I'll just uh mention is on infrastructure cuts. We've already seen about a ten billion dollar clawback on uh projects that were already funded for infrastructure, highways, bridges, energy projects. We saw 400 million taken from the port of Humboldt for offshore wind. Uh and that is gonna have a big impact on the economy as well.

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Um, uh thank you very much for coming. This is exciting.

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Um I uh I'm here uh I'd like to talk a little bit about AV 130, which is uh a build for housing. Um and it its intent was to clear some of the hurdles and create more, which I think we really do need. Um it's had some unintended consequences, and uh you could you say it you're like, yeah, we know. So um for for us it's um it's it's put up some hurdles that say no new code adoption for some some new materials that could be beneficial, fire resistant, healthier, um economic, until 2030. And I'm I'm wondering how we might be able to fix that to incorporate better new progressive things um by just tweaking the bill but maintaining the the uh the speed that it was supposed to be make more housing. Yeah, absolutely. So uh 130 was a bill that was passed last year on the budget, and it became sort of a conglomerate of a number of different housing bills that working their that were working their way through at the time. Uh that bill in particular was a Nick Schultz bill that was really focused on the staff cost of having to implement new building regulations more frequently. Uh and that's what he was aiming for. There are some unintended consequences, like you mentioned, which is it does prevent us from putting materials in that are more fire resistant uh or putting that into the code right now, uh which is something that obviously Sonoma County knows quite a bit about when you saw the disparity in the homes during the tubs or the Kincaid fire that were built to different standards. So it is something that's being looked at. Uh but 130 in general, there's a fix-it bill that is being worked on right now between the speaker and a couple of assembly members that really focuses on three other really big mistakes that were made, I guess is the way to put it. Uh one was it wanted to streamline advanced manufacturing projects, but didn't actually define what that was. And so you have CEQA that has been waived for a number of really big projects, uh, with communities not sure what the impact of that will be. That's one thing that that is on the agenda. Uh the other one is it eliminated some tribal consultation from CEQA projects that

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Unintended consequence of it, and that we've we've been working hard to make sure that that gets resolved as well. Then the third one was it uh messed with the definition of an endangered species that has some ramifications in our communities around funding uh and around uh local land use policies. So there is an effort that has been introduced this year to fix some of that as follow-up from last year's budget. Uh, we're happy to keep you in the loop on that as it goes forward. Yeah, as the fixes happen, um, just helping with housing and community development department um define what it is, giving them a mandate to say, hey, voluntary code is different than mandated code, and that would be really great. Okay, that's great. Thank you.

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 11:16:56

They don't keep records of the reports on governments, the jurisdictions that are taxing you, the things that lead up to the decisions, the back room meetings, the secret meeting, and they don't keep records of any most everything falls off the edge of the table and subject for some reason. I'd like you to answer that question. I know that Chris, you have a huge investment in open government.

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 11:17:23

You provide that to the city of Santa Rosa, that's the governor wise. But I'd like to ask about this question of intellectual rigor that seems to be really, really important as we get through these partisan days where people seem to have their minds made up more from a crowd opinion than actually being able to research accessible facts of the I will say that this is something that we have conversations about all the time because we do want government to be open and accessible to folks, and at the same time, there is a

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Overwhelming cost that is associated with that. In the City of Santa Rosa, we passed the open government ordinance, which did allow for much more openness in terms of accessibility, language accessibility in our agendas, more lead time into what items were going to be on the council's agenda so folks can be more prepared, more opportunities to come and give public comment and be a part of those conversations. When we have these, we're live streaming today's event as well. And the real question, the real limitation is going to be how do you store so much data? Where do you store so much data? So, for the instance, the City of Santa Rosa no longer does transcripts of everything. They provide the video for folks. They do annotated agendas where you can see what the topic was, and if you want to go back and watch the video, you can. And that's a staff cost, that's uh an infrastructure cost. We're always trying to find the best way to find that good point between open and reasonable. Uh, if it is something that only one person is using, does that mean that that's no longer important? No. But does that mean that the average voter wants to vote to continue to fund infrastructure to support it? Maybe. But we should have those discussions. Uh we always have to think about those, especially in an era where we're talking about data centers, what that means in terms of affordability for folks. That's

really what this comes down to is how many bytes, how many megabytes do we want to store, where do we store them? I don't know that people are ever going to completely agree, uh, but I do think that the city in particular has moved in the direction of trying to make it so that things are more accessible.

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 11:19:36

Sure. Thank you, Chris. Yeah, please. So you just draw sort of the options of it. What happened as people and leaving?

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Much of the decision making is pre-RD for people's opinions, don't really matter at that stage. The issue is already, as a juggernaut, gone down the rail. I'm talking about access to your

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Well, so first of all, I think I disagree with your character characterization. After having served on a city council for eight years, I can tell you most of the council members will have a predisposed viewpoint

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on a topic and they will seek additional information to confirm that or to deny that. When you get to the council meeting, if somebody has not read their packet and doesn't have an okay idea of where they are headed, then that's a bigger problem than I think the perception that they already know how their mind is made up. We make different decisions all the time when you get more information. When the public shows up and speaks on an item, there are many examples of where the direction that the council was going to go changed. And that's part of the process. But there does need to be open accessible information, which all of the data is when an item comes forward, so that the public can make an informed decision about it.

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 11:21:08

Yeah, go ahead, Mr. Mayor. Some of some of her, if I may, I just wanted to step in and concur with Chris on the way that he just characterized the uh the level of research and um prior to prior to the council investigating matters. We come with an open mind and we use a lot of research for the facts. We certainly have some idea on all the topics, and that's our job as council members. Uh to the seven members' point about the investment of the city, uh, it is absolutely true that Chris, when he was mayor and that council put a lot of time and money into making sure that our um all the information available to council members and the discussions were very public that continue today. Uh, as an example of this, if you're paying attention to council agendas, you're gonna see that in a few weeks, we're gonna look at a \$600,000 line item to bring in a new piece of technology, help our city clerk's office respond more quickly to public public records app requests. Now, this can come both ways, all right? Think about that. Think about the amount of money during a tight budget time that we're putting in to our clerk's office to make sure that when people from the public ask us for information, we're able to respond, but in the case of real investment, and that's not talking about the personnel line.

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Salaries that are involved with that. We have a person and a half that's dedicated just to responding to public records act requests. So again, with paying specific with pays to be assembly member, former mayor and council member for the work that he did and the council did at that time to make sure that the city is that the city of Santa Rosa has been very responsive to the public. We put a staff line of money in making sure that we are mentioning.

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 11:22:50

That is what the city is investing to try to be more open and transparent. And then in this new role, part of why we do these town halls is going around and talking to folks about their specific issues. I tell them all the time we get one assembly member for five counties, LA gets 27 assembly members. And so it's harder in some of our more remote areas for people to feel heard. And we have gone on this town hall tour, we'll do it every single year, where we've actually introduced a number of different bills this year in response to the things that we have heard and the specific issues that folks have. I'll give you a really great example. My district has the most tribes out of any assembly district in the state. The first bill that we introduced last year was 8263, which recognized for the first time indigenous voices up on the Klamath River working with the UROC tribe that was signed into law. This year, uh at the end of last year, we took three days and spent time up with the Karuk tribe up in Humboldt County who practice indigenous fire practices. We learn from them, and we've introduced a bill this year called the Good Fire Act that is building off of indigenous knowledge. That all comes from that open engagement and that community engagement with the public because I'm not going to be the expert in most issues. So talking to folks who are and hearing the impact that they have, I don't think that that's just a good governance thing, governance thing, but I think it helps build trust in the institution as well, which is probably so much more.

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 11:24:13

Issues.

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The environment.

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 11:24:29

And so last year our legislature weakened the California Environmental Quality Act. And this was to get rid of make exemptions for mainly for housing, etc.

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 11:24:44

And so there was a bill to try to reinstate some of the things that were taken out of it. And I want to mention that California has the most biodiverse environment of any state. We are so lucky. But we are in a biodiversity crisis, and we cannot ignore our environment. While we solve these other problems.

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 11:25:26

It's no longer, and there's a new bill to allow more time. So what in the heck is going on with our California Environmental Quality Act and how do we fix it? Thank you for that. So big picture again is we just talked about thank you so much for the question, and you're absolutely right in regards to protecting the environment.

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 11:26:06

So there were two bills, AB 130 and SB 131, and you're absolutely right about the two major challenges. Number one, the broad definition of advanced manufacturing, for example, like chips, and how we're able to expedite microchips. Yeah, microchips, yeah.

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 11:26:27

Yes. I would rather prefer gorgeous, but uh I know that would be controversial. Um but look, here's the bottom line. Um there was

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A bill that was moving by a similar member convoy. And um I'm I don't mean to nerd out, I'm gonna nerd out for 30 seconds so you can throw your shoe at me. Um so there's a there there's this weird piece. If a bill starts and at the start of a two-year session, it then has um first 30 days of the second year of the two-year session to pass. This issue of fixing the advanced manufacturing definition and on the endangered species was not going to get fixed in the first 30 days of the time limit for this bill. So now what's gonna happen is that the assembly is going to advance a bill. The Senate is going to advance a bill, which is great because then it makes it mandates that this has to be addressed. So it's gonna take a little bit more time. I'm just being very honest with you. Um, it was not gonna get resolved in the first 30 days of this year, and uh the Senate and the Assembly are already starting to have conversations um on that, and so you'll see two different bills moved this year, one from the assembly, the other from the Senate, and then what ended up happening last year by the end of session um after everyone negotiates, the final bill will be advanced. Or two bills will be advanced, one would have advanced manufacturing, one would have endangered species, and then they um then both houses pass it. That's the the truth of the matter, and it's just gonna take a little bit more time, and that is why you did not see that original bill move. But there are discussions happening in earnest on this exact subject, and I don't want to speak for the assembly member, but I think we are very much on the same page. We need to be able to bring forward fixes, and I think you're gonna see fixes advanced this year. Thank you. Yeah, I'll uh I'll add as I'm a co-author on the fix that bill.

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 11:28:35

I move on. I'm going to speak in this party because I want the voice to be here.

Unknown - Feb 07, 2026 11:28:43

Well, the F equals that all.