



San Rafael Canalfront

DESIGN GUIDELINES

DECEMBER 2009

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INTRODUCTION

The Canal is widely recognized as an under-utilized community resource and, in many ways, can be thought of as an open space - a public amenity for all the neighborhoods of San Rafael. It also provides a much sought after literal connection to the San Rafael and San Francisco Bays and the San Francisco Bay Trail (a project of the Association of Bay Area Governments to develop a trail around the perimeter of San Francisco and San Pablo Bays).

The *San Rafael Canalfront Conceptual Design Plan* envisions providing and improving access to and along the water's edge for all of San Rafael's residents and visitors. This includes providing clear and open views toward the open space of the Canal, which will strengthen the area's unique waterfront identity.

The following design guidelines underscore these goals and identify options for achieving them and provide an architectural and landscape architectural framework for future development or redevelopment along the waterfront in the Canal Neighborhood.

Written primarily for property owners, developers, design professionals, City staff and elected/appointed decision makers in San Rafael the guidelines are not mandatory rules. They will, however, be referenced during the City's design review process for any new projects or developments in conjunction with the City's zoning ordinance and municipal code. These guidelines supplement the San Rafael Design Guidelines, providing additional direction to help with the design of new commercial, residential and mixed-use buildings. Together, these guidelines are an invitation for innovation in redevelopment along the canalfront.

Throughout these design guidelines, special attention is paid to both the commercial and recreational marine influence in the area. The Canal has a unique maritime character and natural beauty admired by many residents and visitors. These guidelines endeavor to protect this character and beauty as well as to enhance the many and varied uses of the Canal. Some key issues include ensuring bicycle and pedestrian safety, promoting sustainable design solutions in new public and private development projects, and providing public access to the canalfront.

The current character of the canalfront area varies greatly. Commercial businesses, yacht harbors, high density housing and single family homes line the Canal, yet many residents and visitors to the area do not know that the Canal exists. In addition, some buildings in the area have deteriorated over time or are reaching the end of their expected life span. Others have been developed, renovated and re-purposed without clear direction as to how to engage with and acknowledge the canalfront. This document attempts to acknowledge what is working in the area but, most importantly, what could be improved in the future.

As is common in San Rafael, the community has articulated a preference for an eclectic and diverse architectural character for the area, and a desire to support creative design ideas that might evolve over time. At the same time, preserving the history and memory of the Canal's past is also important. These guidelines attempt to address all of the above by setting general parameters for future projects that highlight key issues such as community identity, safety and public access to the Canal.

This document is organized into two sections. The first section discusses design guidelines that apply to the entire area, while the second section presents guidelines specific to particular sub-areas. A map is provided to clarify the locations referenced in these sections.



Along the Canal, San Rafael



View of the Canal by boat, San Rafael



AREA-WIDE (AW) DESIGN GUIDELINES

Area-wide guidelines apply to the entire area defined by the San Rafael Canalfront Conceptual Design Plan. They promote a cohesive, holistic vision for the area that will improve the quality of life for local residents and visitors alike. Although each sub-area has unique attributes and considerations, a relatively uniform attitude about some aspects of future development improvements is warranted, and will be beneficial in establishing a common identity for projects related to the Canal.

AW: Water's Edge - Paseo, Boardwalk or Pathway

- Create and/or maintain a minimum 10' clear pathway along the water's edge whenever possible. A 12' wide shared pathway for both pedestrians and bicycles is strongly encouraged.
- All pathways should endeavor to meet the design standards of the San Francisco Bay Trail, and be fully accessible per the California Building Code and the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- The pathway may be a free-standing boardwalk, a cantilevered walkway, or an on-grade pathway to be determined based on the existing context and with the approval of the City.
- Permeable paving is strongly encouraged for paved areas at the water's edge where possible, in accordance with widely accepted sustainable design practices such as those defined by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC). The durability of all materials in a marine environment must be carefully considered.
- Provide public access to maritime uses of the Canal in the form of kayak launches, boat docks, public boat tie ups, etc. as is appropriate per the *San Rafael Canalfront Conceptual Design Plan*.

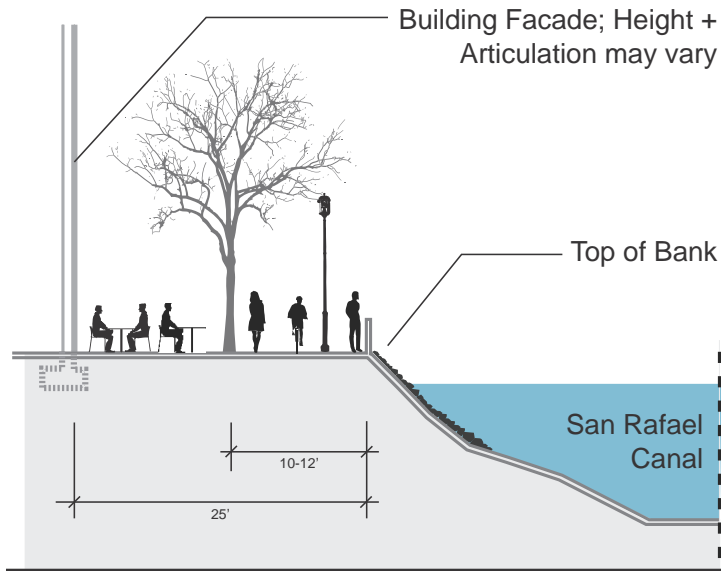


Examples of waterfront access

- Provide public amenities of common design/type such as seating, lighting, litter and recycling receptacles, bicycle racks, etc. at an appropriate interval along the water's edge. See **Site Furniture** section for more detail.
- Whenever possible and appropriate, improvements along the water's edge should carefully consider and support the natural environment including wildlife habitat, native vegetation and water quality issues.
- New public amenities along the water's edge should be designed with maritime uses, both commercial and recreational, in mind. For example, where appropriate, new development should accommodate and encourage recreational boat traffic (canoes, paddle boats, sail boats, etc.) along the Canal.
- Public boat docks and launches for small, non-motorized personal watercraft such as kayaks, canoes and sail boats are strongly encouraged.

AW: Building Scale and Mass

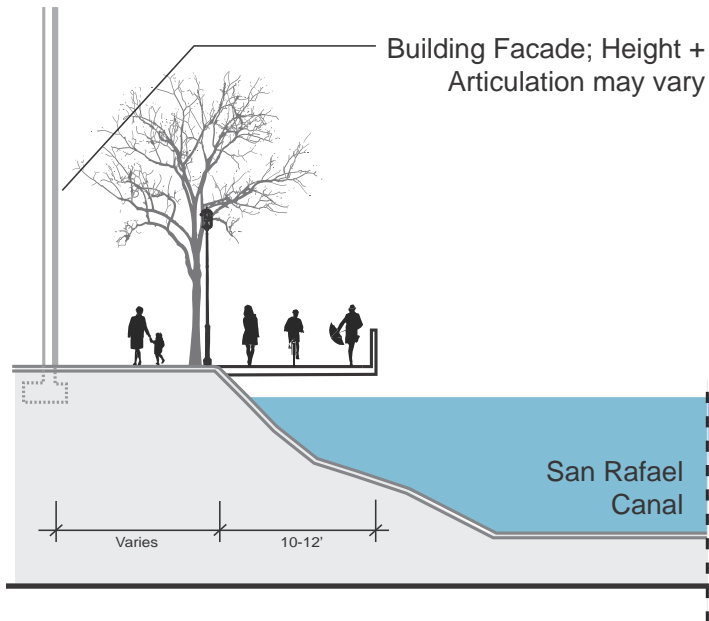
- Buildings should be complementary with the surrounding area and should not adversely affect the visual quality of the canalfront. For example, taller buildings can be made compatible through transitions between existing and new buildings by maintaining horizontal proportions of ceiling heights, windows, doors, and/or materials at lower floor levels.



CANALFRONT PASEO

OPTION 1:

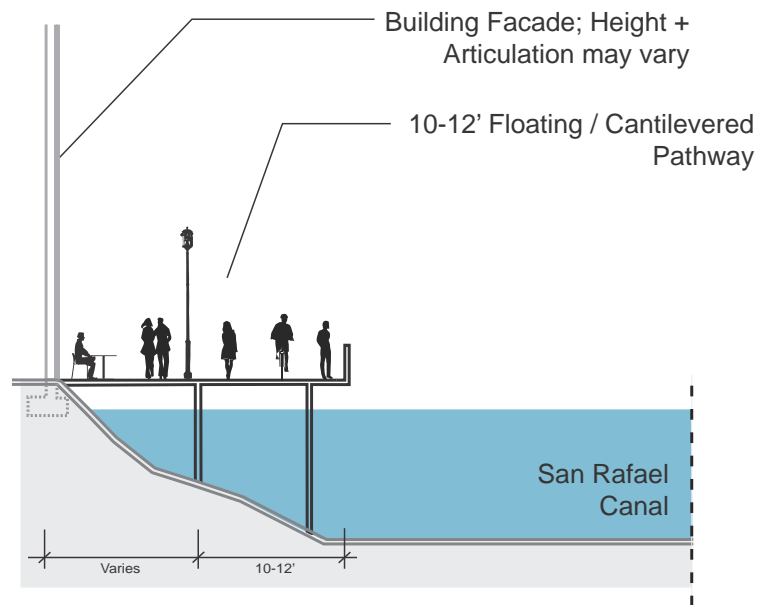
All New Development



CANALFRONT PASEO

OPTION 2:

Possible Modification to Existing Development



CANALFRONT PASEO

OPTION 3:

Possible Modification to Existing Development



Kayak launch



Small boats

AW: Building Character and Articulation

- Building design should maximize visual and physical access to the canalfront.
- Buildings should provide visual interest and variety.
- When a building lot has both street and Canal frontage, the building design should take advantage of its Canal setting and provide equal facade treatment, windows, and other design features on both sides.
- See also the **Area Guidelines** for specific recommendations.

AW: Architectural Style & Materials

- Building designs should be innovative and provide visual interest and variety to support the unique identity of the area.
- Durability of architectural materials in a marine environment should be a key consideration for all new or renovated buildings. Materials and architectural detailing that is not well suited to the canalfront environment should be avoided.
- Typical industrial developments utilizing box-like concrete tilt-up buildings with minimal architectural interest are discouraged along the canalfront.
- Facades of high quality, architectural-grade steel, masonry, corrugated metal, concrete, wood, glass or other appropriate materials relieved with reveals, moldings, and punched openings are encouraged.
- Pre-fabricated metal buildings should not be permitted unless an exception is recommended by the Design Review Board based on exceptional building and site design.



Architectural variation in style and materials



Architectural variation and interest

AW: Lighting

- Building accent lighting and uplighting along the canalfront (street and Canal sides) should be used to highlight the facility's entrances and architectural features.
- Building lighting should be functional, support a unified concept for each building/property and should not spill light onto adjacent properties or natural areas (unless such spillover is desirable to illuminate a public area).
- Surface-mounted lighting on buildings and sources of indirect lighting should be concealed to mitigate glare and reduce light pollution.
- Site lighting should be designed to provide safe conditions for pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists, and to discourage vandalism.
- Exterior site lighting near wetland areas should be sited carefully to reduce glare into sensitive natural areas.
- Where appropriate site lighting may be designed to encourage use of public spaces at night to promote vitality along the canalfront.
- Utilize light fixtures that are of appropriate scale, material and color. A combination of pedestrian pole lights, bollards and wall lights may be utilized in pedestrian areas, for example.

AW: Signage

- Provide consistent wayfinding and signage elements to show the walkway along the water's edge, public access points, and locations of nearby public amenities such as the Transit Center and Pickleweed Community Center.
- Interpretive signage regarding the natural and cultural history of the area along the canalfront is strongly encouraged when possible and appropriate. Design, materials, locations etc. of all interpretive signs along the canalfront will be reviewed and approved by the City.
- Signage for buildings along the canalfront (street and Canal sides) should be used to identify entrances and architectural features.
- Signs should be high quality and have a durable finish suitable for the marine climate.
- Signs with individual letters with architecturally integrated backgrounds are preferred; "canned" or framed signs are not recommended.
- External illumination of signs is preferred.
- Sign types, materials, sizes and locations should be appropriate and specific to the project and its site.
- Use universal symbols in place of text wherever possible.
- Provide signage marking the Bay Trail's alignment as per ABAG's standards.



Signage examples

AW: Views

- Enhance views toward and over the Canal wherever possible. Although the water itself may not be visible from some vantage points, views of the Canal and the canalfront should be ever-present from developed areas and should be the design focus of new or renovated buildings and sites.
- On narrow lots, view preservation may not be feasible but every effort should be made to obtain views wherever possible.
- Careful placement of architectural and landscape architectural elements is strongly encouraged. For example, buildings should be sited in clusters or tiered to provide view corridors.
- Locate architectural and landscape architectural improvements (both public and private) such as buildings, structures, walls and planting areas, etc. to create clear view corridors from public streets, canalfront parks, and plazas toward the Canal and the water's edge.
- Private development and/or improvements are encouraged to provide and frame views toward the Canal from both indoor and outdoor spaces wherever possible in order to promote awareness and strengthen the identity of the area.
- Consideration of views to Mt. Tamalpais and nearby ridge lines is strongly encouraged. Where possible and appropriate, new development and improvements should take care to frame views of ridges and mountains.



View of the Canal



Lively streetscape

AW: Public Open Spaces

- Providing outdoor spaces, such as plazas and courtyards, is encouraged as part of any new public and private development in the area, particularly along the canalfront. Due to high vehicular traffic volumes in this area, consider including interior courtyards or canalfront patios as part of any new retail development including restaurants. Outdoor spaces should include access to power, water, and other utilities as may be necessary to support public events.
- Consider adjacencies when planning public access and open spaces. For example, restaurants and retail establishments sited with proximity to parks, plazas and courtyards are strongly encouraged. These types of land use synergies will encourage vitality in public spaces.
- Public and recreational uses of City-owned or controlled outdoor spaces, particularly those that encourage connectivity within the canalfront area or to adjacent City neighborhoods, is encouraged. One example is the area under Highway 101 where improvements to pedestrian and bicycle access would be beneficial for safety reasons as well as to strengthen the connection between the canalfront and downtown San Rafael.
- Provisions for public access to and along the water's edge is strongly encouraged whenever possible, as is connecting to other City trails in the area such as along Mahon Creek.
- The inclusion of family-friendly and multi-generational amenities in public parks and open spaces in the Canal Neighborhood is strongly encouraged.



Waterfront access and public art

AW: Landscape Design

- Continuity in landscape design elements such as light fixtures, railings, and site furniture that may occur along the canalfront is desirable.
- Hardscape and planting materials should be chosen for durability, ease of maintenance, site appropriateness and aesthetic considerations in conjunction with City staff and user groups. Universal accessibility (accessible to all people of all abilities) is encouraged.
- Landscape designs for individual site developments may vary in character, materials and design but visual and physical access to the Canal should be key considerations in all cases.
- All landscape design should minimize negative impacts to natural areas and wetlands.
- The use of plant materials that have naturalized to our climate zone and waterfront in natural areas is encouraged.

AW: Public Art

- The inclusion of public art elements into public or private developments that celebrate the City's cultural heritage and/or natural environment is strongly encouraged.

AW: Sustainability

- The use of sustainable landscape and building design practices are encouraged. Following Marin Municipal Water District standards for low water use may be required; adhering to the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design (LEED) standards is strongly encouraged.
- New development, both public and private, should protect and enhance the natural environment of the Canal.
- Site and building design along the canalfront should use rainwater infiltration and retention strategies to reduce run-off into the Canal and improve water quality.
- The use of locally produced and/or recycled materials for building and landscape projects is strongly recommended.
- New buildings along the canalfront should consider implementing alternative energy generation strategies such as installing photo voltaic collectors on roofs.
- New buildings should also reduce energy consumption as much as possible by utilizing highly efficient materials and designs. Utilizing green roof technology is an example of this.
- Pervious paving materials for the Canalfront Paseo are strongly encouraged.
- New development should provide ample bicycle parking in convenient locations along the canalfront.



Wetland area near the Canal



Class II bike lanes

AW: Streetscapes & Sidewalks

- Ensure that streetscapes are designed for universal access (accessible to all people of all abilities) and are in compliance with all local, state and federal accessibility guidelines.
- Where designated as Bay Trail, sidewalks should be a minimum of 10' wide wherever possible. Widen existing narrow sidewalks where possible.
- The use of natural gray concrete paving for standard pedestrian sidewalks is preferred in order to maintain a consistent look over time. Adhere to current City standards where applicable; all sidewalks should be designed to facilitate easy maintenance and replacement by the City.
- Consider using alternate paving types and permeable paving materials as accents in streetscape designs at key areas such as intersections and crosswalks to improve aesthetics and wayfinding. Examples include permeable asphalt or concrete, colored or textured concrete, and concrete unit pavers.
- Crosswalks should be designed to clearly identify the right of way to pedestrians and minimize crossing distances where possible.
- Obstructions to pedestrian and bicycle travel (e.g. utilities, signs, overgrown landscaping) should be removed or relocated where feasible.

- The undergrounding of utilities is strongly encouraged.
- Provide screening (an art program or planting are examples) of utility installations, utility boxes, traffic signal boxes, pad mounted transformers, pump stations and other similar utility facilities where feasible.
- New drainage facilities and utilities should be designed and located to minimize visibility and interference with pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular traffic.
- When sidewalks are repaved or upgraded, improvements should also include new planting areas and street trees wherever possible.
- Select tree species based on site and soil conditions, desired size, aesthetic considerations and City standards when present. The use of low-maintenance, drought tolerant, climate appropriate, disease and pest-resistant canopy trees is encouraged. Consideration should be given to existing street trees in the vicinity, and match if appropriate.
- Use tree grates and guards that are consistent with existing streetscape standards in the vicinity. If no precedent exists, tree grates should be heavy duty, low maintenance and readily available.
- Provide groundcover and shrubs where appropriate to create a pedestrian friendly and aesthetically pleasing environment. Plants should be low water use, low maintenance, and highly durable.
- Identify and consider utilization of any available street right-of-way in the area. In particular, capturing additional width for sidewalks and/or bike lanes is strongly encouraged wherever possible.

AW: Site Furniture

- Provide durable, high quality street and site furniture for the canalfront that is aesthetically consistent throughout and enhances the unique identity of the area. This includes seating, bicycle parking, trash/recycling receptacles, newspaper racks (if possible), and lighting.
- Once standard furnishings have been selected and established in cooperation with the City, street furniture in the area which does not comply should be removed and replaced.
- Locate secure bicycle racks in all parks and plazas and near other public gathering areas as is appropriate.

AW: Parking

- Conceal on-site parking and locate away from the street edge and the water's edge to minimize visual effects on the streetscape and canalfront where appropriate and possible. Locating surface parking lots behind buildings and toward the interior of blocks is encouraged.
- Ensure that all parking areas are designed so that pedestrians are protected from conflicts with entering and exiting vehicles. Minimize the width and number of curb cuts.
- Use canopy trees in parking lots to create shade wherever possible. An exception to this may be allowed along the Highway 101 frontage where visibility for businesses from the freeway might be preferred.
- Where a surface parking lot abuts a street edge, create a visual buffer with planting to minimize the impact of parked cars and to provide interest for pedestrians and cyclists.
- If a parking garage is proposed, it should be designed to include retail uses at the street level to encourage a lively pedestrian experience. Blank walls should be avoided; lush planting and architectural articulation is encouraged. Curb cuts at sidewalks should be minimized as much as possible in order to limit vehicular and pedestrian conflicts.
- Transit-oriented development that would reduce on-street parking demand in the area is encouraged. Ideas for consideration include providing shared cars for residents, transit shuttles, and van pool parking spaces.



Example of an operable crossing

AW: Crossing(s)

- Any proposed crossing must be fully accessible, be a minimum of 12' wide to accommodate bicycle and pedestrian traffic, and meet the clearance requirements of the U.S. Coast Guard. A crossing should be well lit for night use and safety. Any crossing is strongly encouraged to have a unique and iconic design to create a gateway for both the Canal and Montecito neighborhoods.



Examples of operable crossings



AREA 1: TRANSIT CENTER AND VICINITY

The Transit Center and Vicinity area includes Second and Third Streets from Lincoln Avenue to Irwin Street. Unlike other areas included in the *San Rafael Canalfront Conceptual Design Plan*, this area has no direct access to the Canal itself. It is part of the study area because of the critical link it provides from the Canalfront area to the Transit Center and serves as a gateway to the city from Highway 101.

Pedestrian sidewalks and bicycle paths are at less than ideal widths in this area due to myriad site constraints, namely the narrow right-of-way between the columns under the Highway 101. Even so, there are many opportunities to improve the pedestrian and bicycle experience under the freeway with beautiful lighting and/or the creation of a public art program.

The following guidelines refer to the Transit Center and Vicinity only and are to be followed in addition to the Area-wide Guidelines.

A1: Public Open Spaces

- Improvements to pedestrian and bicycle access under Highway 101 should be explored for safety reasons as well as to strengthen the connection between the Canal and Montecito neighborhoods and downtown San Rafael.
- An accessible and welcoming park-like setting would be ideal in the open space under the freeway.

A1: Lighting

- Improve lighting under the Highway 101 viaduct. Consider providing a public art element that incorporates lighting for this area.

A1: Public Art

- Encourage public art in the area underneath Highway 101 that celebrates the City's cultural heritage and/or natural environment to provide visual interest.



Art, lighting, and activities under the highway



AREA 2: WEST CANAL

The West Canal Area, Area 2, is comprised of lands north and south of the waterway at the western end of the Canal. It includes the land from the northern edge of Third Street and from Highway 101 east to the City limit line and is home to retail shops, offices, and businesses.

Area 2 also encompasses the land from the southern edge of Francisco Boulevard East and Highway 101 northbound. On the east end of the area is Harbor Street and on the west is the northbound off-ramp from Hwy. 101. It is populated by retail establishments, auto dealerships, offices, businesses and light industrial uses including those along Bay Street (a private street) and at the Harbor Center shopping center.

The *San Rafael Canalfront Conceptual Design Plan* envisions a pedestrian and bicycle pathway along the water's edge in this area, a Canalfront Paseo (which means 'walkway' in Spanish) enlivened with restaurants, housing, businesses and cafes. Currently there is a walkway behind the popular Montecito Shopping Center that should be widened and improved as part of this effort. The area's businesses are encouraged to face both the street and the canalfront wherever possible.



Waterfront walkway

Area 2 is fortunate to have public lands as well. In particular, the City has the rare opportunity to re-imagine Beach Park and the land currently occupied by the San Rafael Yacht Club (owned by the City) as part of the Canalfront Conceptual Design Plan. The options for improvement are tremendous and will provide substantial benefit to City residents.

The following guidelines apply to the West Canal area only and are to be followed in addition to the Area-wide Guidelines.

A2: Water's Edge - Paseo, Boardwalk or Pathway

- Expand and improve the existing walkway along the Canal that begins behind Montecito Shopping Center and follows the Canal eastward to the city limit line.
- Create and/or maintain a 12' clear shared pathway along the water's edge for pedestrians and bicycles wherever possible. This pathway may be a boardwalk, a cantilevered walkway, or an on-grade pathway to be determined based on the existing context. Varied conditions are allowed and encouraged. All options should endeavor to meet the San Francisco Bay Trail standards, connect to adjacent segments, and be fully accessible.
- Additional width to accommodate site amenities such as cafe tables and chairs is encouraged.

A2: Marine Related Amenities

- A publicly accessible boat dock at or near the Montecito Shopping Center is encouraged so that boaters could access the businesses and restaurants.

- A concession for boat rentals (canoes, kayaks, peddle boats, etc.) is also encouraged in this location.

A2: Setbacks

- A 25' setback from the top of bank is required. (Top of bank is defined as the point at which there is a break in slope, toward the water, at the Canal's edge.) The intent of this setback is to provide space for a walkway, the Canalfront Paseo, and to protect the natural environment along the Canal. This may be modified where site conditions, such as at a narrow or odd-shaped lot, may warrant.
- An 8 - 10' setback from front (street side) lot line for landscaping, sidewalk, and pedestrian amenities is encouraged
- Connection/s between street and canalfront should be incorporated where appropriate.

A2: Building Scale and Mass

- New buildings should be massed to avoid creating a narrow canyon-like space along the Canal lacking natural light.
- Development projects that increase density for multi-use, retail or commercial properties are encouraged as they will help to bring life and vitality to the area.
- Storefronts and building heights should be varied, along with roof lines and parapets, to create unique individual/business identities.
- Street frontage parking at buildings facing the street should be limited and occur only where necessary due to site or project constraints. To enhance the urban context, parking should be concealed as much as possible. Alternatively, parking could occur in combination with landscaping or green space alongside the building as a break or buffer between development projects. See **Area-wide: Parking** for more information.

A2: Building Character, Articulation and Color

- Provide visual interest and variety in architectural character and building colors.
- Retail storefronts should face the Canal where possible. If a business has two facades, one on the Canal side and one facing the street or parking, they should be designed to be of equal importance visually.
- Businesses offering outdoor seating along the canalfront are strongly encouraged.



Variation in architectural materials and massing



Restaurant with outdoor dining

- Use of colors that are complementary to the waterfront is strongly encouraged. Combined with the natural coloration of materials such as wood or metal, color can provide a visually diverse edge to the Canal. Color may be used to identify a particular building function such as a main or secondary entrance door, structural elements of the building, vertical circulation, a special architectural feature, or to break up and articulate longer facades.
- Single coloration of an entire building is not encouraged, except in the context of a multiple building development.
- Using color to articulate building massing, step-backs, and floor level changes is encouraged.



Streetfront view of mixed-use development and architectural variation



Building materials and color

A2: Architectural Style & Materials

- Incorporate traditional waterfront architectural motifs with more modern types by using a variety of materials to provide visual interest. To assist in the desired variety and individuality of each building and use, a variety of roof forms are encouraged and should be complementary to the building façade.
- Employing materials such as metal siding/roofing, wood and glass found on the marine and commercial properties on the south side of Canal may be appropriate on the north side in order to create visual continuity on both sides of the Canal.
- Similarly, attention should be paid to the character of the adjacent residential neighborhoods; any new development should acknowledge its context and transition appropriately.
- Cement plaster is not encouraged as an entire building concept or a treatment, however a combination of materials including plaster incorporated in a balanced application would be acceptable.
- The use of varied materials, including those consistent with the existing buildings in the area, is encouraged.
- The texture and scale of siding should be combined with various sizes, scale, and direction of pattern to add visual interest to an otherwise simple utility building type.
- Smaller buildings should employ a siding with texture and scale appropriate to a smaller scale structure.

- Other materials such as wood, concrete or plaster could be woven into a project or development to provide some variation while maintaining a visual link to the other areas along the Canal and enhancing the eclectic nature of the area in general.

A2: Lighting

- Surface mounted fixtures on both sides of the Canal should complement each other and reinforce the relationship and connection across the Canal.

A2: Signage

- Signs should be complementary on both sides of the Canal and consistent with the scale of storefronts. Three-dimensional signs or signs that allude to a three-dimensional affect would be allowed if compatible with the use and articulated in a way that would not be overwhelming in their context.
- Use materials that enhance exterior building finishes, while providing clear identification of the use.
- Metal, glass, acrylic halo or backlit signs should provide a comfortable level of identity and should be secondary to architectural lighting.
- Canvas or metal awnings with integrated signage, if employed, are encouraged at the Canal and street sides. Use of awnings should be consistent along an entire building or group of buildings in a development to create a rhythm (minimum of 3-5 tandem storefronts).
- Neon signs employed in an appropriate manner for the use would be allowed subject to Design Review Board approval.



Waterfront public space

A2: Public Open Spaces

- Providing outdoor spaces along the water, such as plazas, courtyards and patios, is encouraged. Public access should be oriented toward the Canal whenever possible.
- The improvement of **Beach Park** is envisioned as part of the *San Rafael Canalfront Conceptual Design Plan*. Together with the adjacent City-owned land that fronts the Turning Basin, Beach Park has the potential to be a key public gateway to the Canalfront.
 - The unique setting of the park will draw local residents as well as visitors from other City neighborhoods, and the amenities should be designed with this in mind.
 - Conceptually the park design should acknowledge the cultural history and/or natural environment unique to the Canal. Interpretation of such themes is encouraged.
 - The park itself should “face” and safely engage the water’s edge. This edge should not be considered the “back” of the park.
 - A boat launch is strongly encouraged. The inclusion of additional amenities such as a public boat dock and/or ramp should be studied.
 - The facilities currently used by San Rafael High School’s sailing club should be maintained for that use if appropriate and feasible.
 - Connecting and utilizing all of the City-owned property to create one park parcel is encouraged.
 - Picnic areas and other family-friendly activities such as a safe play area for young children are encouraged.
 - Appropriate themes for play areas and activities may relate to water, the Canal and the bay; native flora and fauna; boats and ships, etc.
 - The park has hosted beach volleyball and bocce ball in the past; the community should be surveyed to see if these uses are still pertinent and desirable.
 - Amenities such as permanent rest rooms and parking are encouraged.
 - Careful attention to lighting design and safety should be paid.
- Encourage retail businesses, restaurants and/or other private concessions to locate near Beach Park. This will draw people to the canalfront and support the creation of lively and active public spaces in the area.
- Providing outdoor spaces, such as plazas and courtyards, is encouraged as part of any new public and private development in the area. Public access should be oriented toward the Canal whenever possible.



Waterfront walkway



Waterfront park

- The renovation of the mini-park at the end of **Canal Street** is envisioned as part of the *San Rafael Canalfront Conceptual Design Plan*.
 - Although small, this public space has a unique setting at the mouth of San Rafael Yacht Harbor that should be highlighted as much as possible.
 - This mini-park would function best as a primarily paved, multi-use, flexible gathering area.
 - Public art, related to the culturally diverse history of the neighborhood, is encouraged.
 - Picnic tables, seating for small groups and game tables could be appropriate.
 - The view toward the Canal should be open and free from obstructions as much as possible.
 - The water's edge may include a boat launch area, but should be made safe for visitors.
 - Night time lighting, if desired, should be carefully designed to emphasize safety.

- The City-owned property at the end of **Mill Street** should become a public mini-park where local residents and people who work in the area could come for fresh air or to eat their lunch.
 - Ideally, visual access to the water's edge along the San Rafael Yacht Harbor should be included.
 - The mini-park should be primarily paved and very simply designed with basic site amenities such as benches, trash and recycling receptacles, bicycle racks, etc.
 - Shade could be provided by a trellis, arbor, structure or trees.
 - Parking should be removed to allow pedestrians and cyclists to inhabit the space.

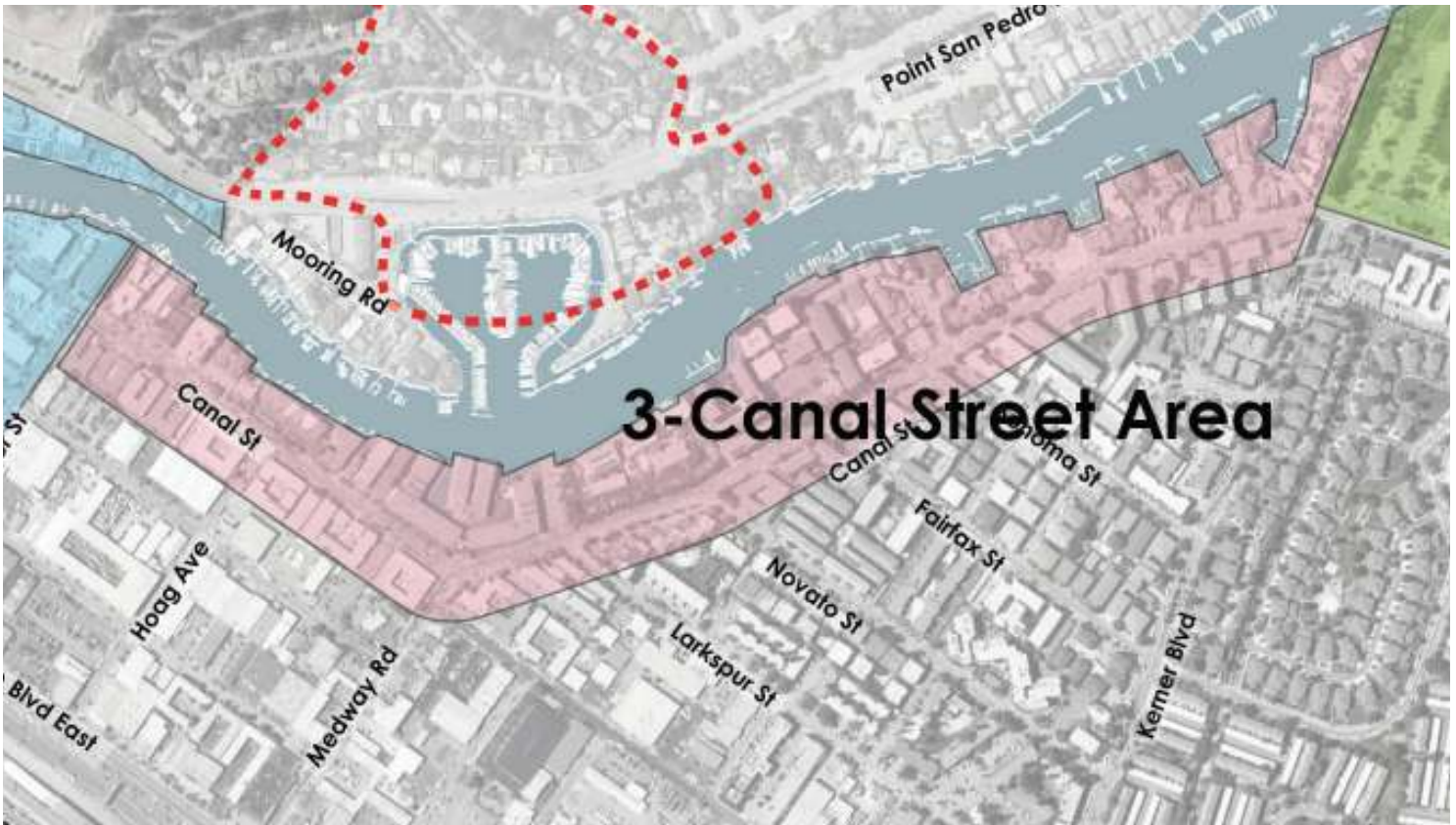
- The City-owned property at the end of **Front Street** should become a public mini-park and water access point for boaters and kayakers.
 - Visual and physical access for boats and kayaks to the water's edge should be maintained and improved for functionality and safety. The design of the mini-park should largely be informed by this use.
 - The mini-park should be primarily paved and very simply designed with basic site amenities such as benches, trash and recycling receptacles, bicycle racks, etc.
 - Shade could be provided by a trellis, arbor, structure or trees if appropriate.
 - The design should also encourage coordinated uses with the adjacent restaurant(s) as much as possible.



Mini-park



Water play



AREA 3: CANAL STREET AREA

The Canal Street Area is composed of predominantly high density residential buildings along Canal Street. The buildings vary in size; the largest are four-stories tall. There are many redevelopment opportunities in this area.

Views toward the Canal and the water’s edge from Canal Street are nearly non-existent. The opportunities for re-imagining Canal Street in the future are many. Pedestrian and bicycle access is in need of improvement and access to the Canal’s edge should be provided.

The following guidelines are to be followed for Canal Street only in addition to the Area-wide guidelines above.

A3: Water’s Edge - Paseo, Boardwalk or Pathway

- The creation of a Canalfront Paseo is envisioned by the *San Rafael Canalfront Conceptual Design Plan*. Creating a walkway along the south side of the Canal, between the residential buildings along Canal Street and the water’s edge, is strongly encouraged.

- Create and/or maintain a 10 -12' wide minimum shared-use pathway along the water's edge for pedestrians and bicycles wherever possible. A 12' wide pathway is ideal and encouraged where possible. This pathway may be a boardwalk, a cantilevered walkway, or on-grade to be determined based on the existing context. All options should endeavor to meet the Bay Trail standards and be fully accessible.
- Per the *San Rafael Canalfront Conceptual Design Plan*, a minimum of two, but preferably three, public access points from Canal Street to the water's edge are encouraged. Ideally, the access points will be located at each end of Canal Street and one centrally located in between (such as near the intersection with Medway Road). Each access pathway should be a minimum of 8' wide, with an ideal width of 12'. It should be clearly identified as public access, well lit at night and kept free of obstacles that would inhibit a clear view and/or passageway to the Canal.

A3: Marine Related Amenities

- Public access to the water should be planned and provided at key points along the Canalfront and accessed easily from Canal Street. Public boat docks and boat launches are encouraged where appropriate and possible. A minimum of one of each is suggested for this area.

A3: Setbacks

- A 25' setback from the top of bank is required. The intent of this setback is to provide space for a walkway, the Canalfront Paseo, and to protect the natural environment along the Canal. This may be modified where site conditions, such as at a narrow or odd-shaped lot, may warrant.
- An 8 - 10' setback from front (street side) lot line for landscaping, sidewalk, and pedestrian amenities is encouraged
- Connection/s between street and canalfront should be incorporated where appropriate.

A3: Building Scale and Mass

- Maintain a maximum 36' height along the Canal waterfront. The intent of this is to provide as much housing as is possible (to enhance the economic viability of redevelopment), while also protecting sunlight and access to the Canal.



Example of a floating and cantilevered walkway

A3: Building Character, Articulation & Color

- Visual Interest and variety are important and encouraged for this area of the canalfront.
- Private decks and patios are encouraged facing both the street and the canalfront to activate the Canal area.
- Street frontage parking at buildings facing the street should be limited and occur only where necessary due to site or project constraints. Under building parking with little exposure is preferred, to enhance the urban context. Alternatively, parking could occur in combination with landscaping or green space along side the building as a break or buffer between development projects. See **Area-wide: Parking** for more information.

A3: Architectural Style & Materials

- Promote a waterfront and marine related stylistic expression. Prevent one-sided buildings articulated on the Canalfront only.
- Decks and patios at the street front and canalfront are encouraged to take advantage of the southern exposure on Canal Street and of views to the north side of the Canal.
- Balcony railings should screen and let light through both to mitigate the visual clutter on individual balconies and to lighten massing of building and balconies.

- Well-defined building or unit entries may be recessed, projected or framed with strong architectural features. Incorporate lighting as appropriate for clear delineation, as well as for safety.
- Flat or gabled roofs are a prevalent pattern of the area however, alternative roof forms with a scale consistent with canalfront patterns, are also encouraged to provide diversity and project a sense of identity.
- Use of natural materials is encouraged, i.e., wood – horizontal, vertical, lap, and/or shingle siding, stone or masonry at the building base. Metal siding and/or roofing may be used if shown to be complementary and enhancing the residential fabric of area.



High-density residential building with “front porches”



High-density residential along waterfront



AREA 4: PICKLEWEED PARK AREA

Area 4 includes Pickleweed Park and Community Center at the eastern end of Canal Street. Renovated in 2006, the community center has been a tremendous success in the neighborhood.

Pickleweed's unique waterfront setting and neighboring wetlands are wonderful assets to the community. A launch for small non-motorized watercraft and accessible pathway along the water's edge is strongly encouraged.

The following guidelines are to be followed in Pickleweed Park only and in addition to the Area-wide guidelines above.

A4: Water's Edge - Paseo, Boardwalk or Pathway

- Create and/or maintain a 12' clear shared pathway, in the same location as the current unimproved trail, for pedestrians and bicycles. This pathway will likely be an on-grade pathway and should be suitable for maintenance vehicle access. It should have a natural appearance, meet the Bay Trail standards, and be fully accessible.

- A launch area for small non-motorized personal watercraft along this pathway is strongly encouraged.

A4: Public Open Spaces

- Any proposed changes or improvements to Pickleweed Park should align with the park's adopted master plan under the guidance of the City's Community Services Department.



Small boat launch



Natural areas