



SAN RAFAEL
THE CITY WITH A MISSION

Community Development Department – Planning
Division

Meeting Date: September 21, 2017

Agenda Item:

Case Numbers:

Project Planner: Barry Miller – (415) 485-3423

REPORT TO PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

SUBJECT: General Plan 2040 – Presentation on upcoming General Plan 2040 and selection of Parks and Recreation Commission representative and alternate to General Plan Steering Committee

The City has initiated an update of its General Plan, the State-mandated document that includes San Rafael's policies for future growth and development. The existing General Plan was adopted in 2004 and has a horizon year of 2020. The new Plan will be adopted in 2020 and will have a horizon year of 2040. The Plan Update process will take approximately 2-1/2 years, and will include extensive community engagement, a full Environmental Impact Report, and public hearings before the Planning Commission and City Council. The Parks and Recreation Commission will be engaged throughout the process.

The San Rafael City Council approved a preliminary work program for the General Plan Update in February 2017. The work program included creation of a 21-member Steering Committee, including representatives of City Boards and Commissions as well as stakeholder groups and the community at large. The Parks and Recreation Commission was specifically listed as one of the Boards to be represented. In addition to nominating one of its members, we are asking the Commission to identify an alternate who can attend meetings in the event the primary member is absent or unable to serve for the duration of the process. The nomination of a member and alternate has been agendaized as an action item at the September 21 meeting.

The Steering Committee will be formally appointed by the City Council in November 2017. Meetings are expected to begin in January 2018 and continue through the end of 2019. Meetings will be held on the second Wednesday of the month from 6 to 9 PM. Committee members will be expected to review agenda packets prior to the meeting, and attend and participate in discussions at the meetings. Agenda packets would typically contain background information on existing conditions, proposed policies and actions, "best practice" examples, and Draft Plan chapters. Meeting discussions will cover long-range planning issues related to land use, transportation, housing, urban design, resource management, and similar topics.

Staff will provide a short overview of the expectations for the General Plan Steering Committee at the September 21 meeting, and ask that the Chair request nominees from the Parks and Recreation Commission at that time (the Chair may also self-nominate).

Parks and Recreation in the General Plan

The General Plan is organized into 16 chapters (called “elements”) addressing topics such as land use, transportation, and housing. Parks and Recreation is one of the elements. Because San Rafael does not have a separate Parks and Recreation Master Plan per se, the contents of this chapter are particularly important in guiding the use of San Rafael’s parks. The focus of the Parks and Recreation Element is on active recreation areas, and recreational facilities. A separate element of the Plan—Open Space—covers natural areas such as hillsides, wetlands, and other non-urbanized land.

The Parks and Recreation Element includes an inventory of existing parks and recreational facilities in San Rafael, an assessment of unmet needs, and a short narrative on anticipated “future” conditions. The text was written in 2001-2002 and the ‘future’ as envisioned by the Plan is already history. The text will need to be updated to reflect current conditions, issues, and forecasts.

The Element also includes park policies and standards (park acres per 1,000 residents, etc.), along with actions related to specific community centers and parks. It also includes directives for creating new parks and recreation facilities. Policies also are included for topics such as park design, park maintenance, recreation programming, joint use agreements with the school districts, and funding. Many of the policies are still current and can be carried forward. Some of the policies may need to be replaced—and new policies may need to be added to address emerging issues. The Commission’s nominee to the General Plan Steering Committee will have an important role in this process, and will work with staff to update the language relating to parks and recreation.