



# SAN RAFAEL GENERAL PLAN 2040 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

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Steering Committee Presentation  
February 14, 2018



## Purpose of General Plan

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- Guide land use and development decisions
- Coordinate transportation, infrastructure, and City services with expected growth and available resources
- Articulate local values and priorities
- Address quality of life issues
- Provide framework for future actions, plans and City initiatives (implementation)
- Engage the community in a discussion of its future

## Context



- Required of every City and County in California
- Basic content is set by state law
- 15-25 year horizon
- Periodic updates and amendments (new laws, issues, updated data, etc.)
- Comprehensive in scope and area
- Focus on physical environment
- Subject to CEQA

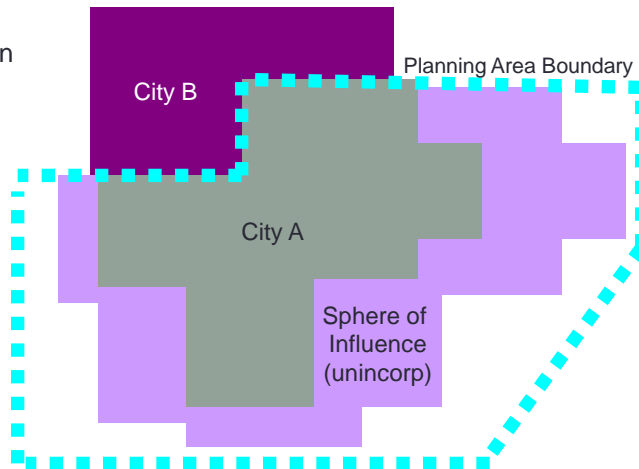
## Consistency Requirements



- Internal consistency across elements
- Many subsequent actions are subject to findings of General Plan consistency
  - Specific Plans
  - Zoning
  - Development Approvals and Use Permits
  - Capital Improvements
  - Open Space Acquisition and Disposal
  - Right-of-way dedication
  - Siting of community facilities
- CEQA requires a General Plan consistency analysis

## General Plan Geography

General Plan must cover the entire area within the City limits and “any area outside its boundaries which bears a relation to its planning”



## Quick History

- 1937** “Master Plans” required for all cities and counties
- 1955** Land Use and Circulation Elements required
- 1967** Housing Element required
- 1970** Conservation and Open Space Elements required
- 1971** Seismic Safety, Safety, Scenic Highways, Noise Elements required
- 1984** Seismic Safety and Scenic Highways dropped
- 2018** Environmental Justice Element required

## Planning Matters



## Our Foundation

- General Plan 2000 (1988)
- General Plan 2020 (2004)
- Housing Element 2015-2023
- Recent Plans
- Plans in Progress
  - Climate Change Action Plan
  - Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan
  - Downtown Station Area Plan
  - Civic Center Station Area Plan
  - Downtown Parking/Wayfinding Study
  - Canal Transportation Plan
  - Canalfront Design Plan and Design Guidelines
  - Local Hazard Mitigation Plan
  - Bay Wave

## Mandatory Elements



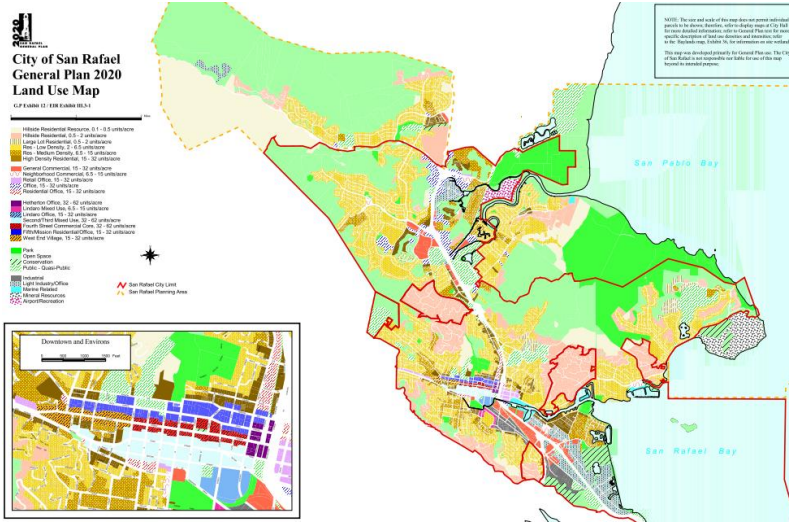
- Land Use
- Circulation
- Housing
- Open Space
- Conservation
- Safety
- Noise
- Environmental Justice (1/1/18)

## Plan Elements Land Use



- Desired pattern of growth
- Annexation and Urban Services
- Density and Intensity of New Development
- Building Height and Floor Area Ratio
- Policies for different uses (shopping, offices, hotels, industry, etc.)
- Land Use Map and categories

# Land Use Map



# Plan Elements Circulation



- Background information on local travel
- Circulation conditions and needs
  - Roads and vehicles
  - Bicycles and Pedestrians
  - Public transit
  - Airports and water transport
- Regional leadership
- Congestion Management (LOS)
- Proposed Improvements
- Traffic safety
- Connectivity
- Parking

## Plan Elements Housing



- Updated on a schedule set by the state (2015-2023)
- Subject to state certification
- Will be updated in 2022-23
- Detailed analysis requirements
  - *Needs Assessment*
  - *Sites Analysis*
  - *Constraints Analysis*
- How will City meet its “fair share” of the region’s housing needs?

## Plan Elements Open Space and Conservation



- Acknowledges importance of open space
- Preservation and management
- Acceptable uses and activities
- Environmental education



- Overview of habitats
- Protection of wetlands
- Creek conservation
- Plants and animals
- Special status species
- *Water, energy, waste policies moved to Sustainability in 2011*

## Plan Elements

# Safety and Noise



Protection of life and property from hazards:

- Earthquakes
- Landslides
- Erosion
- Subsidence
- Hazardous materials
- Flooding
- Fire
- Emergency response



- Sources of Noise
- Negative effects
- Noise standards/measurements
- Noise projections
- Compatibility standards
- Policies for noise sources:
  - Traffic
  - Aircraft
  - Construction/quarrying

## Plan Elements

# Economic Vitality



- Economic vision
- Sustaining a strong economy
- Creating a healthy climate for business
  - Business Assistance
  - Workforce housing
  - Supporting local shopping
  - Partnerships
- Maintaining a strong downtown
- Providing retail and service options
- Distinctive Business Areas
- Encouraging infill development



## Plan Elements

# Neighborhoods



- Broad policies addressing issues in all neighborhoods:
  - *Identity/ Community Standards*
  - *Infill housing*
  - *Circulation*
  - *Economy/ culture*
  - *Design*
- Downtown
- Roll-up of neighborhood plans, 1979-2004
  - *30 neighborhoods covered*

## Plan Elements

# Community Design



- City image
- Neighborhood identity
- Historic resources
- Focal points and views
- Gateways and corridors
- Design quality and compatibility
- Design review
- Public realm

## Plan Elements

# Sustainability



- Added in 2011 as “crosswalk” to Climate Change Action Plan
- Policies from other elements “relocated” here and modified as needed
- Narratives about climate change and sustainability, including GHG reduction targets
  - *Land use and transportation strategies*
  - *Energy conservation and renewables*
  - *Urban forestry*
  - *Equity*
  - *Waste reduction*
  - *Education and outreach*
  - *Green business*

## Plan Elements

# Air and Water Quality



- Land uses near air pollution sources
- Particulate matter/ dust
- Circulation alternatives
- Urban runoff
- Erosion control
- Canal and bay waters
- Education and outreach

## Plan Elements

# Culture & Arts / Parks & Rec



Visual, literary, and performing arts



- Resources for artists
- Cultural arts programs
- Public art
- Cultural heritage and preservation



- Park needs assessment
- Park service levels and gaps
- Specific park improvements
- Coordination with schools
- Funding and financing



## Plan Elements

# Infrastructure/ Governance



- Adequacy of utilities
- Undergrounding



- Street maintenance
- Landscaping and trees
- Water, sewer, and drainage
- Telecom



- Diversity
- Civic engagement
- School quality
- Human services programs
- Special needs populations
- Fiscal health

## Elements Grouped By Theme



### Our Use of Land

- ❖ Land Use
- ❖ Housing
- ❖ Neighborhoods
- ❖ Community Design

### Our Quality of Life

- ❖ Culture and Arts
- ❖ Parks and Recreation
- ❖ Safety
- ❖ Noise

### Our Foundation

- ❖ Economic Vitality
- ❖ Circulation
- ❖ Infrastructure
- ❖ Governance
- ❖ Sustainability

### Our Natural Resources

- ❖ Open Space
- ❖ Conservation
- ❖ Air and Water Quality

## General Plan 2040 Also Includes:



- Introduction
- Vision for 2020
- Appendices
  - Resolution of adoption
  - Full Housing Element
  - Roadway LOS
  - Geotechnical review requirements
  - Noise levels
  - Potential open space sites
- Index

## Environmental Justice in the General Plan

- Identify “disadvantaged communities” and public health problems
- Access to public facilities and health care
- Housing conditions and overcrowding
- Displacement risk
- Opportunities for physical activity (walking, biking, parks)
- Access to healthy food/ community gardening
- Clean air and water
- Vulnerability to natural disaster
- Opportunities for community engagement

## Components



### Narrative

“The major features that give San Rafael its visual character are the hills and valleys, the Bay, creeks, the San Rafael Canal, the highways and other transportation corridors, neighborhoods, and the Downtown.”

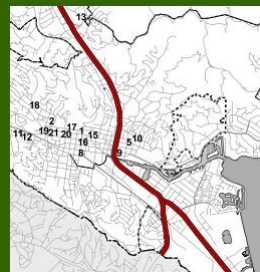
### Goals, Policies, Programs

**Goal: Preserve and strengthen San Rafael's best natural and built features to enhance the attractiveness and livability of the City.**

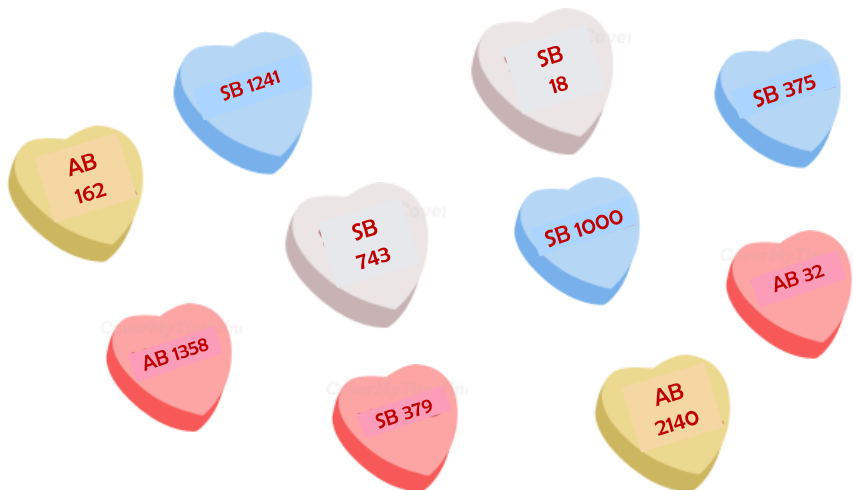
**Policy:** Protect the visual identity of the hillsides and Bay by controlling development within hillside areas, providing setbacks from the Bay, and providing public access along the Bay edge.

**Program:** Continue to implement hillside design guidelines through the design review process. Update the guidelines as needed.

### Maps



## New Laws



## Environmental Impact Report



- General Plan is a “project”
- EIR evaluates possible impacts of Map and policy changes on the environment
- How can these impacts be mitigated?
  - *Goal is to make plan “self-mitigating”*
  - *New policies*
  - *New programs and requirements*
- Alternatives also are evaluated

### CEQA Topics

- Aesthetics
- Agriculture
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Community Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Global Climate Change
- Hazards/ Haz Materials
- Hydrology/Water Quality
- Population/Housing
- Recreation
- Transportation
- Public Services
- Utilities

## Essentials



- This is an update, not a brand new plan
- Plan policies will build off those adopted in 1988 and 2004
- Not anticipating major shifts in City growth patterns
- Focus will be on moving the time horizon forward—what's no longer relevant and needs to change? What new issues have emerged?
- Will also consider best practices statewide and nationally
- Must consider impacts of technology and emerging trends
- Must address ongoing land use issues on key sites

## Community Engagement



- Steering Committee
- Stakeholder group meetings
- Workshops
- City Boards and Commissions
- City Council
- Mobile exhibits
- Interactive Website
- Social Media
- Public Hearings



## At Our Next Meeting

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- General Plan Work Program
- Community Engagement “deep dive”
- Data Collection and Analysis
- Schedule
- Review 2020 Vision



# THANK YOU!

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General Plan Introduction and Overview  
February 14, 2018