

REPORT TO GENERAL PLAN 2040 STEERING COMMITTEE

Subject: Proposed General Plan Outline

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the May meeting, the Steering Committee discussed options for organizing the General Plan. A proposed table of contents has been developed based on Committee feedback, State requirements, the existing General Plan, and best practices.

REPORT

Every California General Plan is made up of a series of topical “elements.” The content of these elements is set by the California Government Code, but cities may add “optional” elements that address issues of local importance. Cities also may organize their plan elements as they choose. There are eight mandatory elements (land use, circulation, housing, open space, conservation, safety, noise, and environmental justice). San Rafael’s current plan addresses seven of these—the requirement to include an environmental justice element was only recently added. The existing General Plan also includes nine “optional” elements, for a total of 16 elements.

At the May 2018 Steering Committee meeting, the Committee discussed alternative ways to organize the General Plan. Staff has taken the feedback provided to develop a proposed outline. The outline includes the eight mandatory elements and six optional elements.

The proposed elements are organized under five major headings as follows:

- Our Built Environment
- Our Natural Environment
- Connecting the City
- Opportunity for All
- Quality of Life

In addition, the elements would be preceded by an Introduction and Framework, including the Guiding Principles. The Plan would conclude with an Implementation Chapter (“From Plan to Action”).

The major changes between the proposed outline and the existing General Plan (e.g., General Plan 2020) are listed below:

- A “Planning Framework” chapter will be added, describing the accomplishments of prior General Plans, the forces driving change in the City, and the Guiding Principles.
- The Governance Element will be rewritten as a “Health, Equity, and Environmental Justice” Element, meeting new State requirements and reflecting a new focus for this element.
- The Safety Element will become the “Resilience” Element and will address not only hazard mitigation, but also adaptation (to sea level rise and a warming climate).
- Air and water quality will be addressed in the Conservation Element rather than as a freestanding element.
- The Infrastructure Element will become part of a broader “Community Facilities and Infrastructure” element that addresses other public facilities such as libraries, schools, and fire stations.
- A Downtown Element will be added, capturing major policy recommendations of the Downtown Precise Plan (to be prepared concurrently with the General Plan).
- The Community Design Element will become the “Community Design and Preservation” Element and include a greater focus on historic preservation.
- The Parks and Recreation Element and the Open Space Element will be combined as a single chapter.
- Policies in what is now the Sustainability Element will be located throughout the Plan (particularly in Land Use, Transportation, Conservation, and Resilience) and noted with an icon.
- An Implementation chapter will be added at the end of the Plan.

The proposed table of contents is presented below. This is a Discussion Draft for Committee consideration only.

San Rafael General Plan 2040: Draft Table of Contents

#	Section	Chapters
1	Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Introduction• Planning Framework• Guiding Principles
2	Our Built Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Land Use Element• Downtown Element• Neighborhoods Element
3	Our Natural Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conservation Element• Resilience Element
4	Connecting the City	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mobility Element• Community Facilities and Infrastructure Element
5	Opportunity for All	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Housing Element• Economic Vitality Element• Health, Equity, and Environmental Justice Element
6	Quality of Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community Design and Preservation Element• Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element• Arts and Culture Element• Noise Element
7	From Plan to Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implementation