

**Summary of San Rafael General Plan 2040 Steering Committee Meeting
Meeting #6 July 11, 2018
6:00-9:00 PM at 750 Lindaro Avenue**

Attendance

- **Members Present:** *DJ Allison, Jenny Broering, Maribeth Bushey, Bill Carney, Omar Carrera, Berenice Davidson, Richard Hall, Linda Jackson, Margaret Johnston, Bonnie Marmor, Drew Norton, Stephanie Plante, Kate Powers, Jeff Rhoads, Jackie Schmidt, Roger Smith, Sparkie Spaeth, Eric Spielman, Karen Strolia, Cecilia Zamora*
- **Members Absent:** *Bella Bromberg (excused), Jeff Jones (excused)*
- **Alternates Participating:** *Jack McGinn (for Bella Bromberg)*
- **Alternates Present in Audience:** *Robert Miller*
- **Staff Present:** *Raffi Boloyan, Anne Derrick, Allison Giffin, Paul Jensen, Barry Miller*
- **Public:** *Eric Holm, Jim Geraghty, and Shirl Buss*

Welcome/ Roll Call

Chair Plante called the meeting to order at 6:10 PM. Project Manager (PM) Miller took roll call and reviewed the agenda.

Acceptance of Meeting Summaries

A Motion and Second (Jackson/Strolia) was made to approve the Minutes from May 9, 2018 and June 13, 2018. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment on Items Not on the Agenda

None

Bus Tour Debrief

PM Miller requested the Committee to share their observations and ideas about the sites visited on the bus tour on June 13, 2018. The following comments were made:

- A member was surprised by how “built-out” the City is and that what may have been initially viewed as a potential buildable site turned out to not be buildable based on certain restrictions or constraints.
- Another member said his impression was different, and that there were many “underutilized” buildings that could enable the City to accommodate more development.
- A member observed that a lot of the building stock is “low quality” and could be replaced. He noted that he would have liked to see more of the Downtown area. *PM Miller mentioned that there will be a walking tour of Downtown later this year.*
- A member indicated she was surprised that Marin Square was proposed to remain a retail shopping center when the trend was for less brick and mortar retail.

- A member observed that despite San Rafael’s large park acreage, the creeks and waterfronts are difficult to access and are not fully appreciated as the amenities that they are.
- A member noted that she saw a lot of opportunity for projects in which housing could be placed above existing retail space. She noted that this may require zoning changes.
- A member noted that a Canal waterfront redesign plan had been done in the past. She remarked that it may be a good time to reintroduce this plan.
- A member noted that the term “East San Rafael” was used frequently, but meant different things to different people. She remarked that it would be nice to have a clearer definition. In response to the prior commenter, she noted that the Canal Shoreline Plan didn’t specify what the City would actually do after the plan was finished—it was more of a vision to be considered, in the event private development took place.
- A member observed that the we didn’t visit all of the potential development sites in the city, and that there were development opportunities on Windward Way in the Canal area.
- A member indicated support for roundabouts in San Rafael as a way to alleviate traffic.
- A member indicated that the presentation by the Northgate Mall owners was insightful, and that he appreciated that they were thinking “outside the box.”
- A member observed that development issues in the Canal’s residential and commercial areas are dominated by the lack of parking. He also stated that he noticed on the tour how outdated many of our buildings are (both commercial and residential).
- A member observed that much of the tour featured low-lying areas, highlighting the importance of a comprehensive Sea Level Rise Plan.
- A member indicated that the tour highlighted how dry the hillsides are, and the vulnerability of many San Rafael neighborhoods to wildfire.
- A member stated that she was struck by the high density of the Loch Lomond Marina (Strand) project, and felt it did not blend well with surrounding neighborhoods. She indicated this should be a lesson for the City to ensure projects have densities compatible with the community.
- Another member disagreed, indicating that the project looks great and that many residents are happy with the outcome.

B. Discussion of General Plan Table of Contents

PM Miller gave a presentation of the Table of Contents for the General Plan (see agenda materials for content). He then asked for questions and comments from the Committee.

The following questions/comments were raised:

- Housing doesn’t fit well under the meta-heading of “Opportunity for All”—it is more appropriate under “Built Environment” since it deals with Land Use and conservation of existing housing. Also, Table of Contents Item # 13 Health - perhaps this belongs under the Quality of Life rather than Opportunity for All. Noise is also a health issue.
- I agree that Noise is a health issue, and perhaps should be in the same place as Environmental Justice. How was Noise was dealt with in previous General Plan? *PM Miller remarked that the Noise Element requirements are set by the State—the Element identifies the sources of noise and includes numeric standards, i.e., for the maximum level of noise that is acceptable for certain uses, like day care centers, nursing homes, schools and parks, for example.*
- I like the way the Outline is organized but we could still look at the semantics for how major sections are organized.
- I like the Outline, as it does not box things into silos, allows for permeability between sections and has a nice flow. How will the Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan and Climate Action Plan be incorporated? *PM Miller responded that the Bike and Pedestrian Plan would technically not be*

part of the General Plan but would be cross-referenced in the Mobility Element. Aspects of the Climate Action Plan also will be integrated. All of these documents will be internally consistent.

- Equity applies to more than just disadvantaged populations, and should be a document-wide thread rather than something just in the section on “Opportunity for All.”
- Where will the “Air and Water Quality” policies go – “Conservation” or “Resilience”? *PM Miller responded that this had not yet been determined but it would be one of these two.*
- Perhaps “Quality of Life” and “Opportunity” should be combined into one section. I don’t like to see them separated.
- The “Opportunity for All” section is extremely important, as it says I should have access to the same things, regardless of my income. I like the organization as is.
- Perhaps replace “The Built Environment” with “Our Use of Land,” like the current plan.
- Opportunity for All is a universal principle that should apply throughout the Plan. General Plan health policies need to interface with Countywide plans on similar topics.
- I am comfortable with the Table of Contents as proposed. With respect to the conservation of existing housing (raised by an earlier speaker), that is the purpose of the Neighborhoods Element. Noise should be dealt with in the same manner as Air and Water Quality. Perhaps move it to Resilience? Also, what is the relationship is between Conservation and Open Space in the General Plan? *PM Miller responded that in many General Plans, noise is treated as an environmental hazard (e.g., it is part of the Safety Element).*
- Adding noise to the Conservation or Safety Element could make sense. With respect to housing, I like leaving it in the “Opportunity for All” section as opposed to moving it to “Built Environment” since Housing is a huge equity issue and will continue to impact the city’s diversity. However, I don’t like the term “Quality of Life” as a heading. Also, I think Community Design should be moved to Built Environment, and Arts and Culture should be moved to Opportunity for All.
- I like the way it is organized and defer to staff on this matter.
- I suggest making Opportunity for All the first chapter, since it’s where we want to be as a community. Also, change “health” to “wellness” because that’s what we’re really talking about in this context.
- Education should be explicitly addressed as a heading in “Opportunity for All”. Perhaps the heading becomes “Health, Education, and Environmental Justice”
- Not sure we need a “Quality of Life” global heading, since the whole document is about quality of life. Another committee member disagreed, and felt that quality of life was an important Plan heading as well as a goal of this process. Also, it would be awkward to lead the document with Opportunity for All—so keep the flow as shown.

PM Miller thanked Committee members for their input and indicated the Table of Contents would be revised based on the feedback.

C. Guiding Principles 2.0

Planning Manager Raffi Boloyan introduced the revised Guiding Principles and noted that staff had created a diagram in lieu of the narrative, incorporating the Committee’s prior feedback on what should be included. Chair Plante noted that the Committee would be moving beyond the Guiding Principles after this meeting, on to the next phases of the project (map and policies).

The following comments on the Guiding Principles were made by Committee members:

- It is unclear from the bubble diagram how the “foundational” items in the top “bubble” are incorporated in the other five bubbles. These qualities feed into the “thriving city” but they don’t appear to be reflected in the outcomes listed under the other themes. It was suggested that the top

bubble be shown as a literal “foundation” at the base of the thriving city in the diagram, rather than as a one-directional bubble like the others (it had previously been suggested that the directional arrow to this bubble could be reversed, and that the color of the bubble could be blue instead of green).

- The diagram concept is great. However, under “Opportunity for All”, the first bullet and the second to last bullet say the same thing. Come up with one term that combines both.
- The statement “Anticipate the New Economy” is unclear and should be re-worded. Also, the bullet under Housing our Growing Community – Encourage Aging in Place should read “Encourage Aging in Community.” Also, the transit bullet under Mobility should change from Expand Public Transit to Enhance Public Transit. Also, some of the statements sound more like policies than principles—for example, “support higher densities on appropriate sites.” Also, “increase traffic safety” should focus on pedestrians and bikes. The statement “Plan for new technology” is too vague and should be reworded—perhaps reference innovation.
- The term “workforce housing” should be avoided in these principles and in the General Plan as a whole. This is a politicized term, and if we are talking about subsidized housing that’s what we should call it. Another committee member felt this was an appropriate term and indicated housing was needed for local workers who can’t afford to live here and travel long distances from other cities.
- The bulleted statements sound more like goals and objectives rather than principles.
- In addition to workforce housing, the principles should speak to fair housing and affordable housing. Also, education should be included under Economic Vitality/ Workforce Development.
- I preferred the first version, where this was spelled out in narrative. If these are principles, they should provide more guidance on our aspirations and where we want to go.
- I like this a lot, and think it’s a good start. This does capture the essence of where we want to go.
- The diagram is useful; I recommend adding “Accommodating Change” to the heading “Adapting to the Future”, as many people are resistant to change. Under Economic Vitality, I would like to see “healthy tax base” placed further down the list as it should not drive our planning. I’d also like to see this section address getting people to work in an efficient manner. Also, the section on Housing our Growing Community should reference “modernizing our existing housing stock” to have it meet changing needs, i.e. living in smaller spaces.

A Committee member expressed concerns with the process for communicating feedback and asked how staff would be incorporating such divergent comments. This led to a broader discussion about the role of the Committee, how their feedback would be used, and if the goal was to achieve consensus or merely listen to different perspectives without debating them. Councilmember Bushey addressed this issue, describing the role of the Steering Committee as a vetting body and source of ideas, rather than a decision-making entity that votes on each issue. The Committee is part of a bigger effort to involve the community at-large. Moreover, the task is not to rewrite the entire General Plan, but rather to improve an already effective document by adding new ideas to it. This is not about groups or individuals articulating their positions and then tallying up the votes.

PM Miller and Planning Manager Boloyan also addressed this issue. Miller remarked that discussions of core values are often the most difficult part of a planning process, as we may all have different ideas of where the City should be heading in 20 years. At the moment, Staff is doing its best to listen to all perspectives and capture what reflects the “sense” of the group. Boloyan remarked that Committee members were intentionally selected to represent divergent groups, and that it is inevitable that we are not all in agreement on each issue.

Councilmember Bushey emphasized that the Guiding Principles were essentially a statement of what it would take to make San Rafael a thriving city in 20 years. The foundation for a thriving city is San Rafael’s history, character, and existing context, as expressed in the diagram. Moving forward, we must

adhere to the different principles shown to stay successful. Miller noted that the Committee might want to focus on the major headings in each of the bubbles rather than the individual bullet points. These are meant to express San Rafael's core values.

A Committee member expressed support for the work done to date, indicating that staff was being responsive to Committee feedback in the materials provided. Another Committee member indicated that we were still early in the process, and that the Guiding Principles were a living document that would keep evolving over the course of the project. Another Committee member suggested that the Principles provide a great set of objectives and goals. He recommended having four or five overarching principles that guide the Committee's decision-making process and act as a lens through which we look at all things. A Committee member suggested that these principles could be put on a poster that is displayed at each meeting.

Chair Plante asked for a "straw vote" of the Committee regarding the Guiding Principles, confirming that staff was moving in the right direction. Eighteen of the 21 members present indicated their support.

PM Miller noted that the protocol for Committee votes was included in the bylaws. A Committee member reiterated his concern about the decision-making process, and expressed his hope that the Committee process would be more than just a random regurgitation of ideas. In response, a Committee member noted that this was an iterative process, and everything was still a work in progress. Another Committee member expressed his view that we are moving in the right direction.

Chair Plante called for a five-minute break.

D. Demographics Presentation

PM Miller gave a presentation on San Rafael's demographics. He requested that the Committee members ask questions during the presentation, and that each Committee member write down the most interesting thing that they learned during this presentation.

The following questions and comments were made during the presentation:

- TAM recently released data on work trip origins and destinations using anonymous cell phone tracking. Staff should obtain that data, as it shows most home to work trips are within Marin County.
- How do the ABAG projections compared to actual growth rates?
- Can we get the 5-year annualized growth rate in a table showing numbers as opposed to a graph?
- What was behind the recent increase in household size? Are family sizes increasing, or are there more families sharing homes? PM Miller responded that it is likely a combination of both, given the high cost of housing.
- It may be better to look at some demographic variables with a finer grain, because there may be distinct differences among neighborhoods in terms of family size, i.e., trends are different in the Canal than they are in Country Club. *PM Miller responded that Census "block" group data can be used to show certain data sets at a finer level.*
- Part of the reason job creation has far exceeded housing production in recent years is that the City was recovering jobs lost during the 2008-2011 recession. Vacancy rates are still higher now than they were before the recession, so be careful when drawing conclusions that don't recognize longer-term (pre 2010) trends.
- Please clarify the data on the average number of housing units per year built since 2010, as I heard it was more like 100 units per year. *PM Miller replied that in 2000 -2010 there were about 90 new housing units added each year, but since 2010 it has been less than 30—although*

this does not include Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). Planning Manager Boloyan noted that there were 30 ADUs approved in 2017, and 27 had already been approved in 2018.

- Does new housing induce residents to move to San Rafael, or is it absorbed by residents already living here? A Committee member responded that the number of units added each year is tiny when compared to the units already here.
- It seems like some of the neighborhoods are experiencing turnover, with retirees moving out and young families are moving in. This is important in thinking about our future.
- Please clarify the definition of a “non-family” household. *PM Miller responded that it refers to unrelated individuals living together.*
- Please clarify that 70% of San Rafael’s household have no kids. *PM Miller responded that is correct, 72% of the City’s households have no kids (under 18) living at home. However, as indicated on the map, this varies greatly by neighborhood. The percentage of households with kids is highest in the Canal area.*
- The location of households with kids is critical in evaluating school needs and capacity issues.
- The income limit figures imply that perhaps half of all San Rafael households are lower income. Are taxes collected from San Rafael residents being used to create new “affordable” housing that attracts residents from other cities? *PM Miller replied that the number was less than 50%--and that the \$117,000 low income threshold applied only to a family of four.*
- The data in income among seniors is very misleading, as it only considers “earned” income and not savings. This could skew the numbers because a large percentage of the low income seniors may be wealthy individuals with investments but no earned income. Other committee members agreed.
- Does the Census indicate if the increase in housing cost is related to foreign investment? *PM Miller responded that the Census data does not track foreign investment.*
- Does the Census indicate how many people are on live-aboard boats? *Staff responded that the number of households living in mobile homes, RVs and boats is around one percent of the total in the city, but boats are not specifically broken out.*
- The number of tech jobs in San Francisco has increased significantly and some of those workers likely live in San Rafael. Another committee member noted that our tech industry has not increased nearly as much as San Francisco’s.
- The graph showing projections suggests an increase from 2010 to 2040 of 2,786 units, which assumes a growth rate more than three times of what the City has experienced since 2010. We need to recognize that forecasts may not match reality. *PM Miller commented that there are many housing projects in the pipeline and that could increase the production rate.*
- It appears from the data that most of the job growth in San Rafael will be outside of the Downtown area. PM Miller indicated that is correct according to the ABAG forecast.

PM Miller asked Committee Members to share the most interesting thing they learned in the presentation. The following comments were made:

- The fact that 18% of San Rafael’s population did not speak English very well.
- The Latino community has grown 14% since 2010, but the increase is from births and not from net migration. This trend will continue.
- The fastest growing age cohort in the next 20 years will be senior citizens.
- 72% of San Rafael households have no kids.
- San Rafael data tracks Marin County more closely than I would have expected.
- Who will care for all the seniors? Many caregivers commute from the East Bay.
- There were 15 times more residents added than housing units in the last eight years, which explains the low vacancy rate. It would be good to hear from the Marin Association of Realtors

about who is moving in, and where they are coming from. It would also be good to hear from the Marin Economic Forum on commute data.

- The commute data prepared by TAM is important. Building housing doesn't necessarily mean people will live close to work. There are many people who live in Terra Linda commuting to San Francisco, while many of the people working in San Rafael live elsewhere. Where are they commuting in from?
- The data is helpful for making informed decisions. But avoid the assumption that current data can be extrapolated into the future.

6. Committee Alternate Comments

Bob Miller provided a brief comment on the presentation.

7. General Business Items

A. The next meeting will be September 12. There will not be a meeting in August.

B. Staff Announcements

a. Steering Committee Membership Changes. PM Miller noted that the City Council was scheduled to consider changes to the Steering Committee membership in August, primarily to replace Alternates who have left the Commissions they represented or have moved out of San Rafael.

B. Recent Outreach Meetings. PM Miller noted staff had met with the Terra Linda Residents Association in June.

c. Bettini Transit Center Relocation Process. A community workshop occurred on June 12. Another is planned for the Fall.

d. Update on On-line Engagement Platform. Committee members will be invited to try out the new on-line General Plan engagement program in the next few weeks.

e. Fall 2018 General Plan Workshops. Workshops are planned for October 3, 17, and 27.

C. Member Announcements. It was announced that the Mayor was hosting a discussion of the Climate Change Action Plan at City Hall on July 19.

8 Public Comments (1-3 minute time limit per speaker)

There were no public comments.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:05 PM.