

REPORT TO GENERAL PLAN 2040 STEERING COMMITTEE

Subject: Discussion of Culture and Arts Element Policy Audit

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Agenda Item 5.E addresses the 2040 General Plan Culture and Arts Element. Staff has completed a first-pass “audit” of this element, with recommendations for editing existing policies and programs, and a list of potential topics to be added. The Committee will be invited to weigh in on this topic before staff prepares the first draft of the revised policies and programs.

REPORT

Background

Culture and arts is not a required element of the General Plan. However, San Rafael added a Culture and Arts Element to the Plan in 2004, recognizing the importance of this topic to the community. The Element recognizes the value of the arts to connect people, cross cultural boundaries, and enhance civic life.

What’s in the Culture and Arts Element Now?

The General Plan 2020 Culture and Arts Element can be reviewed [here](#). The Element begins by describing the value of arts to the community. It presents policies to sustain San Rafael as the County’s cultural hub, develop an arts plan, promote cultural arts programming, invest in public art, support community arts projects, encourage special events, and sustain Falkirk Center. The Element also includes policies relating to the public library, followed by a series of policies on historic preservation and protection of San Rafael’s cultural heritage.

“Arts and Culture” will remain a General Plan Element in the 2040 Plan. However, staff is considering moving the historic preservation goal and policies from this chapter to the Community Design Element, where are already historic preservation policies and programs already reside. In addition, staff is considering moving the library policies to the Community Services and Infrastructure Element, where similar topics (schools, police and fire facilities, community centers, etc.) will be addressed.

Policy Audit

The remainder of this report presents the Culture and Arts Element goal, policies, and programs, along with staff recommendations. The matrix includes a column for Committee members to record their thoughts or ideas about the policies, programs, and staff recommendations. Committee members are encouraged to review the matrix before the March meeting and be prepared to discuss the existing policies and programs at the meeting. Staff intends to solicit additional information on arts and culture policies this Spring through a focus group comprised of arts and cultural advocates. Staff is also coordinating with the Library Department on policies that may result from a citywide study of library needs that is now underway.

The policy audit will be provided to Committee members in Word format following the meeting on March 13. Staff will consider Committee input as the policies and programs are revised. The Committee will have an opportunity to review Draft new policies and programs at a future meeting.

CULTURE AND ARTS POLICY MATRIX

| Reference | Statement | Staff Comments | Comments from Committee Members |
|----------------------|---|---|---------------------------------|
| Goal CA-1 | PARKS AND PROGRAMS FOR ALL It is the goal for San Rafael to have quality arts, cultural, historical, and library facilities, services and programs that serve a diverse population. Arts and culture are an integral part of San Rafael's quality of life. The City of San Rafael recognizes the value of cultural heritage and the arts to enrich and inspire its residents, build a sense of community, attract visitors, and revitalize the city, as well as to provide economic opportunity and generate revenue. | <i>Separate out library and historic facilities in separate goals, and keep this goal focused on culture and arts. The last sentence is a better expression of the goal than the first sentence, as it has more aspirational language and expresses why the arts are an essential part of civic life.</i> | |
| Policy CA-1 | Cultural Center of Marin Continue to promote San Rafael as the center of culture and arts in Marin County and strengthen partnerships between the City and local artists, art agencies and organizations, schools, and businesses. | <i>Carry forward</i> | |
| <i>Program CA-1a</i> | Partnerships. Encourage arts groups, schools, and businesses to conduct programs in City venues. | <i>Carry forward, but arts programming in City venues is only one example of partnerships. Perhaps explore others--- and indicate other programs to promote the arts in San Rafael.</i> | |
| Policy CA-2 | Arts Plan Advance an Arts Plan with a vision and strategy that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes effective public participation including San Rafael arts and cultural organizations, residents, and workers in formulation of cultural policies and governance; • Encourage programs to enhance the missions of San Rafael arts and cultural organizations; • Maximizes use of City venues for cultural and arts events and programs. | <i>Reframe as a program under Policy CA-1. Need to update to reflect the fact that Marin County is doing an arts plan that is countywide in its focus. Is a San Rafael-specific Cultural Arts Plan still desired? The work on the Downtown Cultural District should be tied in.</i> | |

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| <i>Program CA-2a</i> | Funding. Identify funding to prepare an Arts Plan for San Rafael. | <i>Perhaps suggest possible sources—grants, etc.?</i> | |
| <i>Program CA-2b</i> | Arts Plan. Prepare an Arts Plan in partnership with the community, evaluating the current state of community arts and culture, incorporating, as feasible, vision plans developed by local organizations for culture and arts in San Rafael, conducting a needs assessment, setting goals and writing a strategic plan. | <i>Merge with Policy CA-2 (which will be reframed as a program)—avoid redundancy. See earlier comments on the Countywide Plan now underway.</i> | |
| Policy CA-3 | Cultural and Arts Programs and Activities Encourage and provide an array of both public and private cultural arts programs and activities addressing the needs and interests of the whole community. | <i>Carry forward</i> | |
| <i>Program CA-3a</i> | Youth Programs. Develop additional programming for children and youth. | <i>Carry forward, seek input from “Youth In Arts” to get more specific direction</i> | |
| <i>Program CA-3b</i> | Art Classes and Cultural Activities. Continue to provide arts classes and cultural activities. | <i>Through the Community Services Department?</i> | |
| <i>Program CA-3c</i> | Educational Programs. Promote cooperative educational cultural programs enlisting the aid of public and private institutions. | <i>Carry forward—although this is more of a policy than a program. Is there something more specific we can recommend? Or specific populations that should be reached? Link to equity?</i> | |
| <i>Program CA-3d</i> | City Facilities. Use City facilities, including Falkirk, for art exhibits and cultural performances by youth groups. | <i>OK to carry forward—are there other City facilities (besides Falkirk) that should be listed? Encourage these activities in non-City facilities also.</i> | |
| <i>Program CA-3e</i> | Funding Source. Seek a consistent funding source for arts and cultural activities. | <i>Carry forward—identify possible funding sources in the Program?</i> | |

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| Policy CA-4 | Ethnic and Cultural Activities Encourage and develop activities, entertainment and events that reflect a diverse ethnic and cultural heritage. Encourage participation in the arts as another method to promote intercultural understanding. | <i>Carry forward—also encourage new (public, private, non-profit) facilities where these activities can take place.</i> | |
| Program CA-4a | Ethnic Activities, Cultural Performers and Diversity Programs. Provide venues and support for programs that enable members of the community to participate in diverse cultural activities. | <i>This is very similar to the policy. Is there a specific program or initiative that can be advanced through the General Plan?</i> | |
| Policy CA-5 | Public Art Promote a stimulating and engaging environment through the greater display of artwork in public places. | <i>Carry forward—potentially make stronger.</i> | |
| Program CA-5a | Art in Public Places. Seek a long-term source of funding for public art, such as an endowment fund, community partnerships, or an Art in Public Places Ordinance. | <i>Good. Has the time come for the City to go a step further and endorse a future Art in Public Places Ordinance? Or a set-aside from the CIP that is used for art? Several cities in the Bay Area already do this.</i> | |
| Policy CA-6 | Community Art Encourage community art projects that create a greater understanding and appreciation of art and artists through community involvement. | <i>Carry forward. Also note City should encourage community arts and cultural spaces and opportunities for the arts. For example, building lobbies that can serve as display space, etc..</i> | |
| Program CA-6a | Neighborhood Arts Program. Develop neighborhood arts programs at the community centers. | <i>“Continue to provide neighborhood arts programs...”</i> | |

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| <i>Program CA-6b</i> | Mural Review. Review and modify, as needed, the Planning Commission’s resolution regarding mural review and approval. | <i>Replace with a more current program addressing murals and other outdoor art activities. Integrate Youth-In-Arts student feedback about adding color to the City—also add a program to consider “tactical urbanism” and street painting projects (temporary and permanent)</i> | |
| Policy CA-7 | Event Participation Encourage public and private participation in and support of arts and cultural events. | <i>Carry forward</i> | |
| <i>Program CA-7a</i> | Sponsorship of Events. Continue to sponsor arts and cultural events for public and private participation. | <i>Very similar to the policy—is there a more specific program to advance?</i> | |
| <i>Policy CA-8 was deleted in 2016. Programs CA-8a and 9a also were deleted</i> | | | |
| Policy CA-9 | Falkirk Cultural Center Use the Falkirk Cultural Center as a venue to support and foster the arts and to celebrate local culture. Rehabilitate, expand and develop, as appropriate, the Falkirk building and grounds in keeping with its listing on the National Register of Historic Places. | <i>Carry forward. Are there other facilities that should be similarly acknowledged (perhaps acknowledge the role of County facilities located in San Rafael like the Marin Center)</i> | |
| <i>Program CA-9b</i> | Funding for Falkirk Cultural Center. Seek funding to sustain Falkirk’s facilities and programs through expansion and income producing activities. | <i>Carry forward</i> | |
| <i>Program CA-9c</i> | Community Support of Falkirk. Establish organization(s) to support Falkirk’s activities. | <i>Potentially reword--“Continue to solicit support for Falkirk’s maintenance and programming through local foundations and organizations.”</i> | |

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| Policy CA-10 | Library Services Provide library services to meet the information and recreational needs of the community. | MOVE TO COMMUNITY SERVICES ELEMENT. Also, expand the policy to recognize the changing role of libraries and their function as community centers. Consider more than one policy, building on the facilities assessment work being done now. | |
| Program CA-10a | Library Collections. Expand and adapt the collection to meet the changing needs of the community for different formats and interests while preserving a core collection of materials of continuing value. | <i>Carry forward, augment with recommendations from the study now underway.</i> | |
| Program CA-10b | Children’s and Youth Services. Emphasize programming and services for children and teens. | <i>Carry forward.</i> | |
| Program CA-10c | Senior Services. Develop programming and services for older adults. | <i>Develop “additional” programming and services...</i> | |
| Program CA-10d | Marin Literacy Program. Continue to build on the success of the Marin Literacy Program that provides tutoring for adults as well as support and training for volunteer tutors. | <i>Carry forward</i> | |
| Policy CA-11 | San Rafael Public Library Because the present library is too small to adequately provide the collection and services needed for a community of San Rafael’s size, renovate and expand or replace the San Rafael Public Library in Downtown. | <i>This is an action program, but it should follow a policy about having modern library facilities that meet the needs of all San Rafael residents</i> | |

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| Program CA-11a | <p>Facility Needs. Complete the library facility study of space needs for library services citywide. Consider potential new funding options to finance needed expansion of library facilities. Needs include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Meeting Rooms. Provide public meeting rooms, large and small, within the library renovation and expansion • Seating. Provide adequate seating for quiet reading and study in new library facilities. • Children and Youth Services. Upgrade and expand space for children’s services, and dedicate space to teen services, to enhance collections, technology and programming. | <p><i>Delete this program and replace with a new program (to be developed) based on the recommendations of the library study that is now underway</i></p> | |
| Program CA-11b | <p>Communications Infrastructure and Technology Access. Develop and maintain state-of-the-art electrical and telecommunications infrastructure throughout the Library building. Expand public access to the Internet and word processing as well as instruction in online research through library subscription to online databases.</p> | <p><i>Carry forward, but update based on the recommendations of the library study (and changes in technology since the policy was written)</i></p> | |
| Policy CA-12 | <p>Community-Based Libraries Expand community-based library services in east and north San Rafael to assure that library services are provided throughout the city.</p> | <p><i>Carry forward and modify as needed to incorporate the recommendations of the facility evaluation now underway</i></p> | |

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| Program CA-12a | Opportunities for Community-Based Libraries. Look for opportunities, such as the expansion of Pickleweed Park Community Center and The Mall at Northgate, for community-based libraries. Consider partnerships with the school districts to make high school libraries available to the public. | <i>Carry forward, to the extent this is consistent with the findings of the facility evaluation now underway. Potentially a new policy supporting public private partnerships to develop new library facilities on the ground floor of future mixed use development?</i> | |
| Goal CA-2 | PROTECTED CULTURAL HERITAGE It is the goal for San Rafael to have protected and maintained historic buildings and archaeological resources as part of San Rafael’s cultural heritage. A mission city established in 1817, San Rafael values its history and the people and buildings that have shaped it. | <i>The goal should also address the importance of having living reminders of San Rafael’s heritage and respect for the people who shaped it. Preservation provides a strong sense of place and civic identity, helps grow the City’s economy, and supports the City’s sustainability programs.</i> | |
| Policy CA-13 | Historic Buildings and Areas Preserve buildings and areas with special and recognized historic, architectural or aesthetic value including but not limited to those on the San Rafael Historical/Architectural Survey. New development and redevelopment should respect architecturally and historically significant buildings and areas. | <i>Carry forward—this is a critical policy that lays the foundation for all preservation activities.</i> | |
| Program CA-13a | Inventory Update. Update the City’s Historical/Architecture Survey, which is an inventory of buildings of architectural value, historic buildings and/or districts and historic elements such as signs, monuments and gates. Maximize the use of volunteers in updating the survey with professional assistance as needed. | <i>Some of this will be done through the Downtown Precise Plan. Funding is still needed to do this outside of Downtown. Revisit this language with the input of San Rafael Heritage and other preservation entities to ensure that it captures what is needed.</i> | |

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| Program CA-13b | Preservation Ordinance. Continue to implement the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance through the design review process. Update the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance and review the development application review procedures for the various classifications of buildings on the Historical Architecture Survey, including effective ways to review proposed changes to historic properties. | <i>Carry forward. Potentially note specific changes to the Ordinance that could be beneficial.</i> | |
| Program CA-13c | Historic Preservation Advisory Committee. Establish a technical advisory committee or contract with an architectural historian, to provide the Design Review Board and Planning Commission with advice in design matters and policies related to the preservation and/or modification of historic structures. | <i>Creation of a new Committee is unlikely but the idea of providing specialized advice or resources to the PC and DRB is valid and should be carried forward.</i> | |
| Program CA-13d | Public Education. Encourage historic preservation activities and the formation of historic preservation groups in neighborhoods to heighten awareness of historic landmarks and how architecture and landscape define the character of an area. Encourage schools to incorporate units about local history into their school programs. Continue to support efforts to install plaques recognizing historic locations in San Rafael. | <i>Carry forward. More specific educational/ awareness strategies for Downtown may emerge during the Precise Plan.</i> | |
| Program CA-13e | Preservation Reference Materials. Maintain at Falkirk a special collection of preservation materials and resources. Enhance public awareness of the collection and include a photographic record of local preservation efforts. | <i>Carry forward. What is the status of the photographic record?</i> | |
| Program CA-13f | Public Events. Encourage organizations such as the Marin Historical Society to produce events, publications, and exhibits about the historic resources that exist in San Rafael. | <i>Carry forward.</i> | |

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| Program CA-13g | Public Recognition. Through the annual Design Awards program, publicly recognize property owners who have done an exceptional job of preserving an historical property. | <i>Carry forward.</i> | |
| Policy CA-14 | Reuse of Historic Buildings Encourage the adaptation and reuse of historic buildings in order to preserve the historic resources that are a part of San Rafael's heritage. | <i>Carry forward (potentially mention other benefits of preservation in the policy)</i> | |
| Program CA-14a | Historical Building Code. Use the State historical building code to encourage adaptive reuse of historic buildings. | <i>Carry forward</i> | |
| Program CA-14b | Zoning. Investigate possible zoning exemptions to regulations such as on-site parking, signs, and setbacks in order to encourage adaptive reuse. | <i>Carry forward</i> | |
| Program CA-14c | Incentives. Investigate the use of incentives such as transfer of development rights, easements, and property tax relief to encourage preservation of historic buildings. | <i>Carry forward. Should we specifically mention the Mills Act?</i> | |
| Policy CA-15 | Protection of Archaeological Resources. Recognize the importance of protecting significant archaeological resources by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying, when possible, archaeological resources and potential impacts on such resources. • Providing information and direction to property owners in order to make them aware of these resources. • Implementing measures to preserve and protect archaeological resources. | <i>Need to specifically mention tribal cultural resources per SB 18. The City is currently working with Native American groups (Graton Rancheria) on Plan language addressing how human remains and other cultural resources will be treated if they are discovered.</i> | |

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| Program CA-15a | Archeological Resources Ordinance. Continue to implement the existing Archeological Resources Ordinance. | <i>Carry forward. Add a program referencing San Rafael's existing data base on archaeological resources.</i> | |
| <p><i>Potential topics to add:</i></p> <p>ARTS AND CULTURE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Creation of a Downtown Arts District</i> • <i>Support for arts venues (galleries, indoor and outdoor performing spaces, theaters, cultural centers, etc.) in the city</i> • <i>Recognizing and leveraging the economic value of arts/ cultural tourism/ entertainment</i> • <i>Need for artist housing and affordable space for artists</i> • <i>Incentives to include arts/public space in new development (height or floor area bonuses?)</i> • <i>Use of color to enliven the cityscape</i> • <i>Support for neighborhood fairs and gatherings</i> • <i>Marketing and promotion of cultural events</i> • <i>Access to funding and arts opportunities by disadvantaged communities</i> • <i>Engaging the arts community in planning</i> <p>HISTORIC PRESERVATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Add a policy that clarifies what should be considered "historic" (thresholds, etc.).</i> • <i>Add a policy on economic benefits and opportunities related to historic preservation</i> • <i>Address potential future nomination of properties to state and national registers?</i> • <i>Add a policy on the sustainability benefits of preservation</i> • <i>Engaging communities of color in documenting their histories in San Rafael/ places of importance</i> • <i>Action program: Heritage trails or walking route?</i> • <i>Add tribal resources policy (including treatment of sensitive resources, consultation with tribes, etc.)</i> • <i>Address issues related to context-sensitive design adjacent to historic buildings (or cross-reference policies in Community Design Element on this topic)—what is "compatible" with historic context?</i> • <i>There is nothing specific to the Civic Center—even though it's County property, it's still a City historic resource</i> • <i>Recognition/ preservation of the "recent past" (1950s-60s)</i> • <i>Historic landscapes and heritage trees?</i> • <i>Enforcement (avoiding demolition by neglect)</i> | | | |