
REPORT TO GENERAL PLAN 2040 STEERING COMMITTEE

Subject: Neighborhoods Element On-Line Tool

When the City adopted the 2020 General Plan in 2004, it included a “Neighborhoods Element.” The Neighborhoods Element provided a repository for policies and actions from neighborhood plans that had been adopted by the City in the 1970s, 80s, and 90s. It also provided a way to express priorities and address issues unique to individual neighborhoods. The Element has been an effective tool for providing site-specific or place-based guidance for neighborhoods with large developable sites. For instance, the Neighborhoods Element provided detailed direction for Loch Lomond Marina; this shaped the project ultimately approved on the site.

The 2040 General Plan will carry the Neighborhoods Element forward and update its policies and programs as needed. Much of the language in the existing Element is dated. Staff is seeking assistance from neighborhood associations, homeowners groups, and other community-based organizations to make it current. We have had a number of meetings with the Federation of San Rafael neighborhoods and specific neighborhood/business organizations (West End Neighborhood Association, Terra Linda Homeowners Association, East San Rafael Working Group, etc.) to discuss the best way to solicit input.

Staff has developed an on-line tool for use by neighborhood groups and will preview the tool with the General Plan 2040 Steering Committee at our next meeting. The attached letter, which will be sent to neighborhood contacts throughout the city very soon, provides more detail on the tool and how it can be used. Neighborhood groups are invited to visit www.sanrafael2040.org, “click” on their neighborhood name, and provide their feedback. Please note that the on-line tool is a “work in progress”—not all neighborhood names are shown yet. We expect the tool will be complete by the time of the Steering Committee meeting on October 9.

Separate from this effort, staff is working on an on-line survey for North San Rafael that will be more broadly advertised and administered, as was discussed at the September 11 Steering Committee meeting.

October 3, 2019

Dear San Rafael Neighborhood Leaders:

The City of San Rafael is in the process of updating its General Plan, the policy document that guides the city's future growth and development. We are writing to request your assistance in updating the "Neighborhoods Element" of the Plan. This is the chapter of the Plan that includes policies for individual San Rafael neighborhoods. The General Plan Update provides an opportunity to identify neighborhood priorities and recognize the issues that are unique to specific parts of the city. This letter includes background information on the project, as well as links to a website where you can provide feedback.

The Draft General Plan is projected to be completed in Spring 2020. Your feedback is requested by December 31, 2019.

Background

Every city and county in California is required to prepare a general plan for its future development. The plan addresses a number of required topics, such as land use, transportation, housing, safety, conservation, and open space. The existing San Rafael General Plan was adopted in 2004 and guided development through 2020. The new General Plan will have a horizon year of 2040. The updated Plan will respond to emerging issues and challenges, new state laws, updated forecasts, and community input. A 24-member Steering Committee appointed by the City Council has been meeting monthly for the last 20 months to guide the Update process.

In 2004, San Rafael added a "Neighborhoods Element" to its General Plan. Although not required by state law, this chapter has proven to be an important part of the Plan. The Neighborhoods Element recognizes 30 distinct neighborhoods in San Rafael (including several outside the city limits). It includes a brief description of each area and identifies priorities for the future in each neighborhood. In many cases, specific policies and action programs are provided for the neighborhood. Much of the content of this element originated in neighborhood plans prepared in the 1970s, 80s, and 90s.

Updating the Neighborhoods Element

The City is not doing a wholesale "rewrite" of the existing General Plan. Rather, we are editing the existing text to ensure that it remains reflective of current conditions and priorities. With respect to the Neighborhoods Element, we believe this task can best be accomplished by working collaboratively with the neighborhoods themselves. Thus, we have developed an on-line tool that can be used by each neighborhood group to provide feedback. Some neighborhood groups have already completed their review, but we hope to hear from many more.

Please visit <http://www.sanrafael2040.org/share-your-ideas> to provide your feedback. Find your neighborhood on the list and click to open a survey form that has been tailored to your neighborhood. The survey form asks for general thoughts about your neighborhood (what you like most, what your concerns are, and what changes or improvements are desired by 2040). It then presents the verbatim

text that appeared in the previous General Plan and asks for desired edits. To facilitate feedback, each policy or program is presented as a separate “question” in the survey.

Although Neighborhood Groups are the target audience for this survey, we welcome input from all residents and local businesses. Those who submit the survey are asked to indicate whether they are doing so on behalf of a specific neighborhood organization, or as individuals.

Next Steps

We encourage each neighborhood group to complete this survey at its next regularly scheduled meeting, or to designate one or more board members who can complete it on the group’s behalf. The survey can be completed in as little as 10 minutes for neighborhoods with minimal text. We think that most neighborhoods will require additional time to thoughtfully consider edits to the prior Plan’s narrative and policies.

Please keep in mind that the intent of this process is not to develop brand new plans for each neighborhood in the city. This is principally an effort to “refresh” the existing text to keep it current and relevant. The neighborhood profiles are typically between one-half page to 2-3 pages in length.

Please note that you may also provide feedback via email or letter or using a format other than the on-line tool. We can make the text available to you in Word, if you wish to create a redlined document. The important thing is that we hear back from you by December 31, 2019 to incorporate your input in the revised plan.

Please contact me at barry.miller@cityofsanrafael.org if you have questions or seek more guidance on the process.

Thank You-

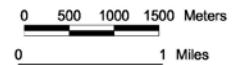
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San Rafael Neighborhoods

1. Bay Islands
2. Lucas Valley
3. Marinwood
4. Canal Waterfront
5. Terra Linda
6. Mont Marin/San Rafael Park
7. North San Rafael Commercial Center
8. Smith Ranch
9. Rafael Meadows/Los Ranchitos
10. Civic Center
11. Santa Venetia
12. China Camp
13. Sun Valley
14. Fairhills
15. Lincoln/San Rafael Hill
16. Dominican/Black Canyon
17. Country Club
18. Loch Lomond
19. Bayside Acres
20. Glenwood
21. Peacock Gap
22. West End
23. Downtown
24. Montecito/Happy Valley
25. Gerstle Park
26. Picnic Valley
27. Francisco Boulevard West
28. Bret Harte
29. California Park
30. Canal



This base map was developed primarily for General Plan usage. The City of San Rafael is not responsible nor liable for use beyond its intended purpose.

