

ATTACHMENT 2: DRAFT GENERAL PLAN 2040 LAND USE CATEGORIES

RESIDENTIAL CATEGORIES

There are six residential designations used on the General Plan Map. Five of these correspond to traditional residential neighborhoods while the sixth is applied to constrained, mostly undeveloped lands with very limited development potential. In all residential areas, the following general conditions apply:

1. Some of the categories on the General Plan Map have multiple corresponding zoning districts. The designation of an area with a particular category does not mean that the most intense zoning district consistent with that category is automatically permitted.
2. The maximum density stated in each case is subject to State density bonus laws. These laws allow a 35 percent increase in the number of permitted units for projects meeting specific criteria with respect to the inclusion of affordable housing units.
3. Pursuant to state law, accessory dwelling units may not be counted as a dwelling unit when calculating the number of units permitted on a property under the General Plan.
4. Other compatible uses, such as schools, child care centers, parks, and religious facilities, may also locate in areas with this designation, subject to a Floor Area Ratio limit of 1.0.

Hillside Resource Residential (Maximum 0.5 units per net acre)

This designation is intended for privately owned land, typically with geologic or seismic constraints that limit development potential. Such areas are often located on steep hillsides that are visually significant and have been identified as having very limited potential through prior development proposals. Hillside Resource Residential Areas include single family homes on very large acreage tracts, as well as undeveloped properties.

Hillside Residential (0.5 to 2.2 units per net acre)

Hillside Residential areas are residential neighborhoods characterized by moderate to steep slopes, with lots that generally exceed 20,000 square feet. These areas may have geologic and seismic constraints, local visual significance, and access constraints that limit their suitability for development at greater densities. Many of these areas are in unincorporated Marin County, within the San Rafael sphere of influence. Examples include the Country Club and Los Ranchitos neighborhoods.

Very Low Density Residential (0.5 to 2.2 units per net acre)

These areas are similar in density to Hillside Residential areas, but are on flat or gently sloping terrain. Lots are generally larger than 20,000 square feet and are developed with single family detached homes. Subdivision potential is limited. Land with this designation is concentrated in the Dominican area and Peacock Gap.

Low Density Residential (2.2 to 8.7 units/net acre)

This designation permits detached single family homes and is characterized by lots of 5,000 to 20,000 square feet. This is the predominant residential development type in San Rafael and includes most of the city's single family neighborhoods. Multiple zoning districts apply within Low Density Residential areas, distinguishing areas with different minimum lot sizes.

Medium Density Residential (8.7-21.8 units/net acre)

This designation applies to patio home and small lot subdivisions, townhomes, mobile home parks, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, attached units in planned developments, and areas characterized by a mix of single family homes and small multi-unit buildings. A variety of lot sizes may be present, but overall net densities may not exceed one unit per 2,000 square feet of lot area (21.8 units/acre). Many areas with this designation possess the qualities of single family neighborhoods, including landscaped yards, off-street parking, and low building heights.

High Density Residential (21.8-43.6 units/net acre)

This is the highest density category that applies in residential areas. Densities above this range may be permitted in the Downtown Mixed Use area only, or where otherwise allowed as a result of density bonuses. The designation applies to multi-family residential areas and includes a mix of housing types, including apartments, flats, condominiums, and townhomes. Overall net densities may not exceed one unit per 1,000 square feet of lot area (43.6 units per acre). On larger parcels with this designation, amenities such as swimming pools, community rooms, and common open space are often included.

MIXED USE CATEGORIES

There are five mixed use categories on the map. Each category allows a mix of residential and non-residential uses, although the primary intent is to support employment and revenue generating activities. Residential uses in these areas may be subject to specific requirements or findings related to compatibility with adjacent commercial uses and the City's desire to sustain retail, service, office, and similar economically-productive uses. Multiple zoning districts may be used in each category to differentiate the intensity or mix of activities allowed. The most intense zoning district deemed consistent with a given category is not automatically permitted. As in residential areas, projects incorporating affordable housing are subject to a State density bonus allowance of up to 35 percent. Other compatible uses, such as schools, child care centers, parks, and religious facilities, may locate in each designation, subject to specific requirements codified through zoning.

Downtown Mixed Use (Maximum FAR 2.0)

This category corresponds to properties in Downtown San Rafael. It includes the highest development densities and intensities in the city, and contains a mix of housing, office, retail, service, and public land uses. Development in this area is guided by the Downtown San Rafael Precise Plan, which includes further detail on building form, development intensity, and allowable uses. The maximum FAR of 2.0 applies only where shown in the Downtown Precise Plan; lower FAR and density limits apply on most parcels within the Precise Plan boundaries. There is no residential density limit in the Downtown Mixed Use area; however, height and FAR limits define the maximum building envelope on each site with this designation. Moreover, the total number of net new residential units added within the Downtown Precise Plan boundary between 2020 and 2040 shall not exceed 2,200.

Community Commercial Mixed Use (21.8-43.6 units/net acre; maximum non-residential FAR 0.30)

This category corresponds to general retail and service uses, restaurants, automobile sales and service uses, hotels/ motels, and other commercial activities. Offices are also permitted, subject to General Plan policies regarding priority uses in specific areas. Housing is also permitted, ideally as ancillary to commercial uses and other activities generating sales tax, jobs, and local service opportunities. Mixed use projects that combine housing and commercial uses are encouraged. Residential development is subject to a maximum net density of 43.6 units per acre, as well as General Plan policies that may

further guide the use of key opportunity sites or corridors. The FAR limit of 0.3 applies to non-residential square footage only, and excludes square footage associated with housing in mixed use projects. Lower FAR limits may apply on some parcels, as indicated on Figures # and # (Floor Area Ratio maps). Areas with this designation include the Northgate Town Center, Merrydale Road area, and portions of Francisco Boulevard East and West.

Neighborhood Commercial Mixed Use (8.7 to 24.2 units/net acre; maximum non-residential FAR 0.32)

This category corresponds to neighborhood-serving retail and service uses such as pharmacies, supermarkets, and dry cleaners. Residential and ancillary office uses are allowed, subject to policies in the General Plan and zoning standards establishing the conditions for these uses. A maximum net density of 24.2 units per acre applies to projects that include residential uses. The FAR limit of 0.32 applies to non-residential square footage only, and excludes square footage associated with housing in mixed use projects. Lower FAR limits may apply on some parcels, as indicated on Figures # and # (Floor Area Ratio maps). Areas with this designation include small neighborhood shopping centers, and pockets of local retailers, the Regency Theater, and the B Street corridor south of Downtown.

Office Mixed Use (21.8-43.6 units/net acre; maximum non-residential FAR 0.40)

This category corresponds to areas where office is the prevailing land use. Typical activities include general offices, medical and professional offices, and administrative or headquarters offices. Different zoning districts have been developed to reflect the specific combinations of uses that are desired in each area. These include office-residential areas and office-retail areas, as well as a general office district. Residential uses are allowed in all of these areas, subject to specific zoning standards and permitting requirements as well as policies in the General Plan. A maximum net density of 43.6 units per acre applies to projects that include residential uses. The non-residential portion of such properties is subject to an FAR limit of 0.4. Lower FAR limits may apply on some parcels, as indicated on Figures # and # (Floor Area Ratio maps).

Marine Related Mixed Use (8.7 to 21.8 units/net acre; maximum non-residential FAR 0.32)

This category includes water dependent businesses such as boat building; boat repair, sales and service uses; and boat charter services. Other uses that draw people to the waterfront are allowed, including shopping centers, restaurants, hotels/ motels; retail and parks. Residential use and non-marine related office is allowed on the second floor and above. Where residential uses are included, they are subject to a maximum density of 21.8 units per net acre. The non-residential square footage on any given site is subject to a FAR limit of 0.32. Lower FAR limits may apply on some parcels, as indicated on Figures # and # (Floor Area Ratio maps).

INDUSTRIAL CATEGORIES

There are two industrial categories on the General Plan Map. Residential uses are generally not permitted in these areas, so a density standard is not included.

General Industrial (Maximum FAR 0.33)

This is the broader of the two industrial categories, with a variety of production, distribution, and repair uses allowed. These areas play an essential role in the Marin County economy, create local jobs, and provide a high volume of tax revenue for San Rafael. General Industrial areas include activities such as manufacturing, storage and warehouse facilities, motor vehicle service and repair, contractor uses and yards, wholesalers, sand and gravel plants, solid waste management and recycling facilities, and trucking

yards or terminals. Uses that are incidental or ancillary to these activities also may occur, including offices related to the primary use and employee-oriented retail uses. Given the potentially impactful nature of these uses, buffering and screening may be required to enhance public rights of way and ensure land use compatibility. A maximum FAR of 0.33 applies, although lower limits may apply on some parcels as indicated on Figures # and # (Floor Area Ratio maps).

Light Industrial/Office (Maximum FAR 0.38)

Like the General Industrial areas, the Light Industrial/ Office (LI/O) areas are characterized by a variety of production, distribution, and repair activities. However, the range of industrial uses is more limited than in General Industrial areas, reflecting the design of these areas as business parks or their proximity to more sensitive uses such as housing. Typical uses include repair and servicing, “maker” activities (woodworking and carpentry shops, creative businesses, etc.), research and development, e-commerce activities, light manufacturing, and tech-related activities. On sites larger than 10 acres with this designation, and in buildings of 50,000 square feet or greater, region-serving specialty retail uses (including “big box” type uses) may be appropriate. Other specialty retail uses may be allowed to occupy minor portions of the LI/O districts provided that intensity and traffic standards are met and the integrity of the district is not threatened. LI/O districts are subject to a maximum FAR of 0.38, although lower limits may apply on some parcels as indicated on Figures # and # (Floor Area Ratio maps). Multiple zoning districts apply within LI/O areas. At least one of these districts, mapped in the Lindaro Street/ Jordan Road area, includes allowances for live-work development.

PUBLIC, OPEN SPACE, AND MISCELLANEOUS CATEGORIES

Public/ Quasi Public (Maximum FAR 1.0)

This designation denotes public schools, libraries, post offices, churches, public hospitals, and institutional facilities such as Dominican University and Marin Academy. It also is applied to major utility properties and public facilities. The maximum FAR is 1.0, although this level of intensity is not appropriate in all instances. Additionally, exemptions from development standards may be granted if findings are made that a higher FAR is necessary for public health or safety purposes. While housing is not envisioned on land with this designation, it may be acceptable in circumstances prescribed by the General Plan or zoning regulations. In such instances, net densities should be compatible with prevailing allowable densities in the vicinity and existing improved open space should be retained for public use.

Mineral Resources (Maximum FAR 0.02)

This designation applies to quarry and brick yard uses which utilize mineral resources of regional significance. It applies only to the San Rafael Rock Quarry and McNear Brick and Block properties on the San Pedro Peninsula. Future activities on these lands are subject to further policy guidance as provided by the General Plan.

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

This designation denotes land which is used for parks, recreation, and open space (PROS), including City parks, County and State Parks, common open space within private development, cemeteries, and areas acquired for resource conservation, hazard reduction, and passive recreation such as hiking. Permitted uses include athletic fields, sports facilities, civic buildings with a primarily recreational or social function, and leisure-oriented uses such as picnic areas, boat slips, and tot lots. Land with this designation is further classified in the PROS Element of the General Plan as “improved” or “natural.”

Conservation

This designation denotes land which is to remain undeveloped due to high environmental sensitivity, exceptional visual resource value, or hazards such as wildfire, slope instability, and flooding, including inundation related to sea level rise. Areas with this designation include a combination of privately owned properties and areas owned by utilities and conservation groups. On private properties, this designation is generally applied to the portion of the site that has been determined to be undevelopable due to the factors listed above. The primary objective in Conservation areas is to manage and restore natural resources, and to minimize environmental hazards and associated threats to life and property. Where appropriate, compatible activities such as agriculture and recreation may be considered.

Airport/Recreation

This designation applies to the San Rafael Airport. Land uses are governed by a covenant agreed to by the City, Marin County, and the property owner. The agreement recognizes the unique and valuable recreational and environmental characteristics of the airport site and identifies a limited range of uses including airport and ancillary airport services, light industry, utilities, and private and public recreation.

Water

This designation applies to the navigable waters of San Francisco and San Pablo Bays, the San Rafael Canal, and associated marinas along the San Rafael shoreline. The designation provides an opportunity for a limited number of water dependent uses which require water access as a central element of their function and which contribute to the maritime character of the area.

Undesignated Areas

“Undesignated” areas include street rights-of-way and State property associated with US Highway 101 and Interstate 580. In the event that such land is leased or otherwise used for purposes other than transportation, the activities should be consistent with the General Plan designations on adjoining private properties.