



SAN RAFAEL

THE CITY WITH A MISSION

Community Development Department – Planning Division

Meeting Date: February 11, 2020
Agenda Item:
Case Numbers: GPA16-001 & P16-13
Project Planner: Barry Miller, Consulting Project Manager (415) 485-3423

REPORT TO PLANNING COMMISSION

SUBJECT: Preliminary Consideration of General Plan 2040 Land Use Map, Including Proposed Amendments – Review of the Preliminary General Plan 2040 Land Use Map, including proposed amendments in response to new land use categories, staff-initiated changes, and property owner requests. File No(s). GPA16-001 & P16-13

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This staff report is divided into four sections:

- Part 1 provides background information on the 2040 General Plan Update and the General Plan Map
- Part 2 provides a summary of proposed changes to General Plan Map categories
- Part 3 discusses amendments to the Map that are proposed by staff
- Part 4 discusses amendments to the Map that have been requested by property owners, including a staff recommendation for each request

The Planning Commission will be asked for general direction on the General Plan Map during its meeting on February 11. A formal recommendation on the proposed amendments is not requested at this time. Staff will return to the Planning Commission with a Public Review Draft General Plan later in 2020. Action on the Plan (including the Map) will be requested at that time.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Planning Commission take the following actions:

1. Receive a presentation on the General Plan Map
2. Provide comments on staff-initiated amendments
3. Provide comments on property owner-initiated amendments
4. Consider public comments and testimony

PROJECT BACKGROUND

General Plan 2040 Overview:

Every city and county in California is required to develop a General Plan for its future development. San Rafael's current General Plan was adopted in 2004. The Plan has been amended several times since its adoption in response to specific issues, new State laws, and related plans. The Housing Element of the General Plan was comprehensively updated in 2014 to cover 2015-2023, as required by state law.

The General Plan Update was launched in late 2017 with the objective of moving the Plan's time horizon from 2020 to 2040. While the update is primarily a "refresh" of the existing plan rather than a brand new plan, changes are needed to address the evolving state of the city and region, and to cover global issues

such as climate change and transportation technology. Staff has spent the last two years gathering and analyzing data on these issues, auditing each goal, policy, and action in the existing General Plan, drafting new and updated policies, and working with the community to identify issues and vet potential new policies.

State law requires the General Plan to cover eight mandatory “elements.” These are land use, transportation, housing, conservation, open space, safety, noise, and environmental justice. San Rafael’s Plan also includes “optional” elements, addressing such topics as infrastructure, community design, economic vitality, and parks and recreation. The City’s Plan also includes a Neighborhoods Element with narrative and policies addressing 30 distinct subareas of the city.

Community Engagement:

A 24-member Steering Committee was appointed by the City Council in December 2017 to guide this process. The City Council also appointed 22 alternates to backfill Committee positions in the event of an absence. Commissioner Davidson represents the Planning Commission on the Committee, and Commissioner Schoppert is her Alternate. The Steering Committee has met 21 times to date and is expected to wrap up its work in May 2020. The Committee serves as a sounding board for staff on draft policies and programs and is responsible for reviewing and commenting on draft materials and serving as a liaison to the community. Meetings occur on the second Wednesday of each month from 6 to 9 PM.

Staff has also convened community workshops on the General Plan, including formal meetings at community centers and informal “pop-up” workshops at Farmers Markets and the Downtown Art Walk. The outreach program also has included storefront exhibits, youth participation exercises, and attendance at numerous meetings of neighborhood associations, civic organizations, and City boards and commissions. The City maintains two websites for the project — one at www.sanrafael2040.org, and the other at <https://neighborland.com/cities/san-rafael>. Both websites offer opportunities for the public to weigh in on key issues and download information about the project. Staff has also solicited input from other public agencies, such as the County, the School Districts, the Transportation Authority of Marin, and other cities.

Downtown Precise Plan:

In May 2018, the City received a grant to prepare a “Precise Plan” for Downtown San Rafael. The Precise Plan is a critical part of the General Plan Update, as roughly half of the City’s future housing growth is expected to occur Downtown. The Plan covers a 265-acre area extending from the Miracle Mile on the west to Montecito Plaza on the east, with Mission Street on the north and 1st Street/ Albert Park on the south. The Plan will update the 1993 “Our Vision” document and incorporate key recommendations of the 2012 Station Area Plan, as well as the Parking and Wayfinding Study and other recent plans covering Downtown. The Precise Plan will address urban design, placemaking, historic preservation, transportation, parking, economic development, affordable housing, and anti-displacement strategies.

The Downtown Precise Plan will include a Form Based Code that will replace existing zoning regulations for Downtown San Rafael. The Code will focus on the design and form of new construction, rather than the specific activities and uses that may occur in each structure. The intent of the Code is to create a more walkable, attractive Downtown that better integrates public and private space. The Code is also intended to reduce regulatory barriers to Downtown housing development.

Environmental Impact Report (EIR):

The General Plan is considered a “project” under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The City has determined that an EIR is required and has initiated this process. A scoping session with the Planning Commission was held on April 23, 2019. The EIR will cover both the General Plan and the Downtown Precise Plan.

Timeline:

Staff anticipates publication of a Draft General Plan, Precise Plan, and EIR in May 2020. The documents will be considered in public hearings before the Planning Commission during late Spring and early Summer before being forwarded to the City Council for adoption.

OVERVIEW OF THE GENERAL PLAN MAP

Purpose of the Map:

The General Plan Map (also referred to as the Land Use Map) has been a core part of the San Rafael General Plan since the early 1960s. All California cities are required to include such a map in their plans, illustrating the proposed distribution, location, and extent of housing, business, industry, open space, recreation, education, and public buildings in the Plan’s horizon year. Cities are given considerable flexibility in how this information is displayed.

State law also requires that the Land Use Element of the General Plan define the “standards of population density and building intensity recommended for the various districts and other territory covered by the Plan.” (Gov Code Sec 65302(a)) This means that multiple residential categories are shown on the map, each differentiated by the number of housing units allowed per acre (density). Commercial and industrial categories usually include with a metric (such as floor area ratio) that can be used to determine the allowable size of buildings.

The General Plan Map is an expression of the pattern of uses envisioned in the horizon year of the Plan (e.g., 2040). In stable and mature communities such as San Rafael, this pattern matches existing land uses in most locations. However, the designations may allow different uses or more intense uses in locations where change is desired in the next 20 years.

Existing General Plan 2020 Map Categories:

The existing General Plan uses 28 categories to distinguish allowable land uses. This is a large number of categories compared to other general plans for Bay Area cities. For example, the recently completed Novato General Plan includes 20 categories, while the relatively recent Santa Rosa, Hayward, and Richmond General Plans each have 19 categories. One reason for San Rafael’s large number of categories is that the current map incorporates the 1993 Downtown Vision Plan designations, with six separate categories just for the Downtown area.

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED CHANGES TO GENERAL PLAN MAP CATEGORIES

Changes to the General Plan Map categories are summarized below. The intent of these changes is to improve consistency between the General Plan and zoning regulations and to streamline the existing categories. The outcome will be a General Plan Map that is easier to use and administer. Zoning Maps will retain the finer-grained detail that is now shown on the General Plan Map.

Change 1: Residential Categories are Shifting from Gross Density to Net Density

There are two ways to express residential density. Both use “units per acre”—but with a different denominator in the equation:

- Gross density is the total number of units per acre in a given area, including internal streets, easements, common open space, and undevelopable areas.
- Net density is the total number of units per acre in a given area, excluding streets, easements, open space, and undevelopable areas. In other words, net density only considers the portion of a site on which buildings may be constructed.

A “gross” density standard is appropriate in cities that are growing outward through the addition of large single-family subdivision tracts, with new public streets and areas set aside for public parks, schools, and amenities. Cities that are “built out” typically use a net density standard, recognizing that development will occur on infill parcels that already have street access. Most Bay Area cities have shifted their General Plan maps from a gross density standard to a net density standard in the last 20 years, reflecting their focus on infill development. The shift allows the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance to use the same standards for density, making it easier to demonstrate consistency and providing more certainty for property owners, developers, and other stakeholders.

Net density is typically 20 to 30 percent higher than gross density. However, the shift from gross to net density does not increase the allowable number of units on a given site. In fact, the two metrics are roughly equivalent in terms of the number of units that may be built. Net density is simply more predictable, and more appropriate given San Rafael’s developed character.

A comparison of net and gross densities for each residential category is provided below:

Land Use Category	Gross Density (units per acre)	Net Density (units per acre)	Corresponding zones
Hillside Resource Residential	0.1 to 0.5	Less than 0.5	R2a
Hillside Residential	0.5 to 2.0	0.5 to 2.2	R1a, R20
Large Lot Residential	0.5 to 2.0	0.5 to 2.2	R1a, R20
Low Density Residential	2.0 to 6.5	2.2 to 8.7	R10, R7.5, R5
Medium Density Residential	6.5 to 15	8.7 to 21.8	MR5, MR3, MR2.5, MR2
High Density Residential	15 to 32	21.8 to 43.6	HR1.8, HR1.5, HR1

Change 2: Consolidation of Downtown Categories

The six General Plan categories corresponding to Downtown San Rafael are being consolidated into a single category called “Downtown Mixed Use” (DMU). The allowable uses and intensities in DMU will be established by the Precise Plan, which will be adopted concurrently with the General Plan. A single color is used to show this area on the map, in lieu of the six colors that now apply. A small residential neighborhood in the vicinity of Latham Street within the Downtown boundary will retain its existing residential designation.

Change 3: Consolidation of Office Categories

The existing General Plan Map includes three separate categories for “Office,” “Office-Retail,” and “Office-Residential.” These categories are being consolidated into a single category called “Office Mixed Use” (OMU). The definition of OMU states that it includes multiple zoning districts, and that the existing O, R/O, C/O zones should continue to be used on the Zoning Map to distinguish the mix of uses that are appropriate in a given OMU area. Thus, consolidation of these categories on the General Plan Map does not require any changes to the zoning map.

Change 4: Consolidation of Park and Open Space Categories

The existing General Plan includes a “parks” category and an “open space” category. As a result, areas with the same physical characteristics often have different designations. For example, China Camp State Park is designated “park” while the adjacent San Pedro Mountain and Henry Barbier open spaces are designated as “open space.”

The proposed General Plan Map combines parks and open space into a single category. Both categories already have the same zoning designation (P/OS) so no rezoning is required. This

designation applies to roughly 7,000 acres in the San Rafael Planning Area, making it the single largest category on the General Plan Map.

A separate map in the Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element of the General Plan identifies the different types of open space in the city. These include neighborhood parks, community parks, region-serving parks, and open space resource areas, among others.

Change 5: Merging Lindaro Mixed Use into Light Industrial-Office

The 2020 General Plan Map included a separate land use designation for a 13-acre light industrial area along Lindaro and Jordan Streets (Lindaro Mixed Use). Lindaro Mixed Use essentially allows the same uses allowed in the “Light Industrial-Office” (LI/O category, except that live-work development is permitted, whereas live work is not permitted in the other industrial designations (LI/O or Industrial (I) zones.

In General Plan 2040, the two categories have been merged. The definition of Light Industrial-Office states that it includes multiple zoning districts, including one intended for the Jordan and Lindaro areas, where live work is permitted. No rezoning will be required since this distinction is codified in the Plan.

Proposed Categories:

Definitions of the proposed General Plan categories are included in Attachment B. The categories include:

- Six residential categories, carrying forward the six categories used in General Plan 2020 but shifting the density measurement from “gross” to “net”
- Five mixed use categories (reduced from 14), including Downtown, Community Commercial, Neighborhood Commercial, Marine, and Office
- Two industrial categories (General and Light Industrial-Office), the same as General Plan 2020
- Six other categories (Public/Quasi-Public, Mineral Resources, Parks and Open Space, Conservation, Airport/Recreation, and Water)

The Map also includes “undesigned” land, which includes public street rights-of-way, including I-580 and US 101.

The proposed General Plan 2040 land use map also includes a “Sea Level Rise Adaptation Overlay”. The overlay appears on the Map as a solid line showing the extent of the area that would be inundated during a 100-year flood, on top of the Bay Wave forecast of sea level in 2050. Policies in the General Plan will provide direction on ways to mitigate future flood hazards in the overlay area.

MAP AMENDMENTS PROPOSED BY STAFF

Attachment C lists the Map amendments proposed by staff. The Appendix indicates the existing designation, the proposed designation, and the reason for the change. Assessor Parcel Numbers are provided where appropriate.

The changes have been grouped into several categories for discussion below.

Category 1: Correction of Scriveners Errors:

A “Scriveners Error” is a map designation that is incorrect. These changes are minor and likely occurred when the Map was transferred from paper files to a digital format. For example, 999 Las Pavadas and 40 Elena Circle are existing single-family homes that have a General Plan designation of “Parks.” This unintended designation was applied because each of these homes is adjacent to a small city pocket park

in the Freitas Parkway right-of-way. The sites are being changed to Low Density Residential, consistent with their actual use.

Category 2: Expanded Mapping of “Public/Quasi-Public” Land Uses:

General Plan 2020 and General Plan 2040 both have a “Public/Quasi-Public” (P/QP) land use category. The category includes government or quasi-public buildings and facilities, utilities, and similar facilities owned by public and non-profit agencies. Examples include Dominican University, Marin Academy, City Hall, and the Marin Civic Center Complex.

A number of public or quasi-public properties were not mapped as P/QP in General Plan 2020 but will be mapped as such in General Plan 2040. These include:

- All San Rafael City School and Miller Creek School campuses. Most of the campuses were mapped as Low Density Residential in General Plan 2020. Potentially, this provided greater flexibility to reuse these sites for housing in the event they were sold. However, mapping public schools as P/QP is common practice in most General Plans. It identifies these facilities as community assets and recognizes that they are distinct from the land uses around them.
- Several City and County buildings, including the County Sheriff’s Office (1600 Los Gamos), the City Public Works Department (111 Morphew), and Fire Station 53 (30 Joseph Ct)
- All parcels owned by Marin Academy (some, but not all, of Marin Academy’s parcels were previously designated P/QP).
- Marin Tennis Club (similar facilities like the Peacock Gap Golf Course and San Rafael Racquet Club are already shown with the P/QP designation)
- Caltrans properties that are outside the US 101 right-of-way, including properties along the east side of Brookdale Drive in the Lincoln Hill neighborhood and the Smith Ranch Park-And-Ride lot.
- A Marin Municipal Water District reservoir (and adjacent MMWD parcels) near the corner of Ridgewood and Oakwood Drives (Sun Valley area)

Category 3: Expanded Mapping of “Park and Open Space” Land Uses:

Park and permanent open space acreage in San Rafael has expanded since General Plan 2020. There are also a few existing parks and permanent open spaces that were shown with other designations in General Plan 2020. The proposed amendments are summarized below:

- Formerly private properties that are now owned and managed as open space by the County of Marin or the Marinwood Community Services District are being re-designated as “Park and Open Space.” Most of these areas were shown as Hillside Residential or Hillside Resource Residential in General Plan 2020. The affected parcels include the recently acquired Bucks Landing (32 acres) and Heron Hill (16 acres) open spaces east of Santa Venetia, a 12.8-acre site on the west side of Highway 101 in Marinwood (end of Limestone Grade), and the 69.9-acre portion of the “Daphne” property (Marinwood) that was dedicated as open space when the remainder of the site was subdivided. These properties are all in the unincorporated area.
- The 46-acre open space preserve above Loch Lomond Highlands is being mapped as Parks and Open Space (it is currently shown as Hillside Resource Residential).
- Two parcels at the end of Greenwood Avenue (Makin Grade) in the Oakwood Unit 2 subdivision (Upper Gerstle Park) have recently been dedicated as permanent open space. They are being shown as such, instead of Hillside Residential.

- Recently developed parks that did not exist when General Plan was adopted are being shown as Parks and Open Space. These include the “marina green” and playground areas at the Loch Lomond Marina development.
- The 10-acre Lagoon Park (east of the Civic Center) is being shown as a park rather than as “Public/Quasi-Public.” Likewise, the upper (hillside) part of the Falkirk Mansion site is being shown as parkland, similar to the designation at nearby Boyd Park.
- Two cemeteries (Mt Olivet and Mt Tamalpais) are being shown as Open Space in General Plan 2040 (they were shown as Public/Quasi Public in General Plan 2020)

Category 4: Adjustments to Reflect Actual Uses and Densities:

The changes in Category 4 are essentially “housekeeping” amendments that align the Plan with existing conditions.

There are a few recent development areas where the General Plan shows a different land use or density than what now exists. The designation in the 2020 Plan is not inconsistent but may not be the “best fit” for the use. For example, the new 33 North apartment complex (33 San Pablo Ave) near the Civic Center was a residential project built on a parcel designated “Office” (the parcel was formerly an office building) The development did not require a General Plan Amendment, because high density housing is allowed on sites with an Office designation. The General Plan Update provides an opportunity to apply a designation more reflective of the current and future use, which is High Density Residential.

Another example is the Maria B Freitas Senior Housing development at 455 Freitas Parkway. The site is designated as “Low Density Residential” on the existing General Plan. There are 61 apartments on a 2.7-acre site, resulting in a density of 22.5 units per acre. This suggests the site should actually be designated “High Density Residential,” which is what is recommended by General Plan 2040.

A similar situation exists on a site in Santa Venetia (outside the city limits). The Turina House affordable apartments were developed at 33 units per acre on a site at North San Pedro and LaBrea with a “Low Density Residential” designation. The site is proposed for re-designation as High Density Residential in the 2040 Plan to match what was actually built. Just west of this site, the Adrian Terrace subdivision was developed at a density of 11 units per acre on a site designated “High Density Residential.” The site is being re-designated “Medium Density Residential” to match what was actually built.

There are also two cases where clustered housing on relatively small lots is designated “Hillside Residential,” when the correct designation should be “Low Density Residential.” These areas are on Vista Marin Drive near the Civic Center, and on Partridge Drive in Peacock Gap. While “Hillside Residential” was the appropriate designation when these sites were undeveloped, they now consist of permanent common open space areas (shown as Open Space on the Map) and graded areas that have been developed at 6-8 units per net acre. The developed areas should not be Hillside Residential, since that designation is intended for steep hillside lots larger than 20,000 square feet.

Category 5: Fine-Grained Adjustments to reflect Zoning and Parcel Patterns:

Staff recommends minor Map amendments for a few areas along the “seam” where different designations abut each other. The amendments allow the General Plan Map to more accurately reflect existing uses, parcel patterns, and zoning. The changes are summarized below:

- 257 Glen Park is a multi-unit building (zoned for duplexes) on the edge of a medium density area. It is being changed from Low Density to Medium Density to reflect existing land use and zoning.
- One parcel in the Montecito area (between Ridge and Union), and a handful of adjacent parcels on Roberts Avenue block in the Picnic Valley area, are being shifted from “Medium” to “Low” density. The proposed General Plan designations will match existing uses and zoning.

- Toyota of Marin (445 East Francisco) currently has a split General Plan designation, with the area along the San Rafael Canal classified as “Marine-Related Commercial.” The proposed 2040 Plan puts the entire site in the “Community Commercial Mixed Use” designation, which provides greater flexibility for its future use.

Category 6: Changing “Low Density Residential” Parcels to “Hillside Residential”:

There are two parcels proposed for a change from “Low Density Residential” to “Hillside Residential.” One is located at 54 Elda Drive (Terra Linda) and the other is at 38 Sirard Lane. The Elda Drive parcel is a 5.05-acre lot with an existing single family home and is hemmed in by adjacent low-density development on all sides. The average slope on the site is over 40 percent. The property is currently zoned R-20, which is consistent with a Hillside Residential designation. The Sirard Lane parcel is 1.41 acres, has limited access, and an average slope of 25 percent. It is in a Planned Development (PD) zoning district.

Category 7: Civic Station Area Plan Changes:

Two parcels are recommended for a change from “Light Industrial/Office” to “Office Mixed Use,” consistent with the 2012 Civic Center Station Area Plan. One of the parcels is Northgate Security Storage (401 Merrydale) and the other is Public Storage (380 Merrydale). The former site is 0.9 acres and the latter is about 2.0 acres.¹ Both are developed with self-storage facilities. The Office Mixed Use designation would allow office construction and range of commercial uses compatible with office development. High-density residential use is permitted on sites with this designation. Both sites are immediately adjacent to the Civic Center SMART station.

Category 8: Formalizing Previously Approved Changes on the Map:

Several General Plan Map Amendments were adopted through City Council resolutions between 2004 and 2019. Some of the changes already appear on the City’s official General Plan Map and some do not. The 2040 Plan provides an opportunity to correctly show all previously approved amendments. These include:

- Re-designation of 1540 4th (Marin Academy) from 5th/Mission Residential/Office to Public/Quasi Public (Dec 2004)
- Current designations for the Loch Lomond Marina development (which was mostly mapped as “Neighborhood Commercial” and “Marine-Related Commercial” in Aug 2007)
- 226 Magnolia (Dominican University Admissions Office) changed from Large Lot Residential to Public/Quasi-Public
- Several parcels owned by SMART were re-designated as Public/ Quasi Public (2016)
- A “Water” designation was added to the Map (2016)
- 1820 Pt San Pedro Road was re-designated from “Open Space to “Low Density Residential” (2016)

AMENDMENTS REQUESTED BY PROPERTY OWNERS

Process:

The General Plan Update provides an opportunity for property owners to petition the City for changes to their current General Plan Map designations. On April 22, 2019, the City of San Rafael issued a “Call for Amendments” Notice. In addition to sending the Notice to a list of property owners who had previously expressed interest in this opportunity, the City prepared a pamphlet and press release advertising the opportunity. Application materials were posted to the project website. A 10-week deadline was provided for amendment submittals.

¹ 380 Merrydale is technically two parcels, but one is a “sliver” that is less than 5,000 SF.

Four formal Map amendment requests were received. The City also received proposed text changes from the owners of two large sites that are specifically addressed by policies in the General Plan Neighborhoods Element. Staff communicated with the applicants following the June 30, 2019 deadline to discuss each request.

Submitted Applications:

Application 1: 3301 Kerner Boulevard

3301 Kerner is a three-story 25,200 square foot office building constructed in 1983. The parcel is 0.91 acres and is located at the corner of Kerner and Bellam Boulevards. The existing General Plan designation is Light Industrial-Office. The applicant has requested a change to Community Commercial Mixed Use. Office buildings are permitted in both designations, and there would be no change to the status of the existing use if the Amendment is accepted. The zoning for the site could be rezoned to General Commercial (from Core Canal Industrial Office) concurrently with the adoption of the new General Plan.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends incorporating this request in General Plan 2040. Community Commercial is more consistent with the character of the Bellam corridor than Light Industrial. The corridor is characterized by retail shops, restaurants, and customer-facing services. Properties across Bellam Boulevard from the site, and across Belvedere Street to the south, already have commercial designations. The new designation would provide the flexibility to convert the site to housing in the future, which would be a desirable use at this location.

Staff further recommends adding 150 Bellam Boulevard (immediately across Bellam from the Kerner site) to this request. The 0.97-acre parcel currently includes a restaurant, a travel agency, a recording studio, and several small office tenants. Like 3301 Kerner, it is designated Light Industrial-Office but would be better defined as Community Commercial. The change would complete the corridor of commercially-designated properties along both sides of Bellam between the freeway and Kerner Boulevard.

Application 2: Caltrans

Caltrans has requested that the General Plan Map include land use designations on several undesignated slivers of State property that are now being leased for private use. The areas in question are located along the elevated section of US 101 near 2nd and 3rd Streets and on both sides of the Andersen underpass on the east side of Andersen Drive. The sites are used for parking and outdoor storage by nearby businesses. The requested designations would match the designations on adjacent properties, clarifying the allowable uses on these sites.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends leaving the Caltrans properties “undesignated” and adding clarifying language to the General Plan that regarding the appropriate uses of undesignated property. The definition of land use categories (see Appendix B) states that “undesignated” properties include Caltrans freeway right-of-way. The text notes that in the event such properties are leased, the uses should be compatible with those on adjacent properties.

Staff does not believe it is appropriate to designate a few isolated Caltrans properties while leaving the remainder undesignated. Staff has reviewed the General Plans of the other 11 cities in the US 101 corridor extending from San Francisco to Santa Rosa. All of the cities treat the freeway right-of-way as undesignated land on their General Plan Maps.

Application 3: 86 Culloden Park Road

The 1.89-acre property at 86 Culloden Park Road in the Fair Hills neighborhood has a split General Plan designation. The property consists of two legal parcels with the same owner; the larger 1.19-acre parcel has a Low-Density Residential designation and the smaller 0.70-acre parcel has a Hillside Resource

Residential designation. The property is in two zoning districts (R-20 and PD 1729). The owner has requested that the smaller parcel be re-designated to Low Density Residential to match the larger one, giving the site a single General Plan Map designation.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends incorporating this request in General Plan 2040. In this case, the split General Plan designation is not necessary, as both parcels have similar physical characteristics and function as a single homesite.

Application 4: 435 DuBois Street (Jackson's Hardware)

The owner of Jackson's Hardware at 435 DuBois Street has requested that the General Plan Map designate the site as "Community Commercial Mixed Use" (CCMU) instead of "Industrial." The existing hardware store is consistent with both designations. However, the CCMU designation would allow the reuse of this property for housing in the future, either in an entirely residential project or a mixed use project. The site is 2.66 acres and the store is approximately 50,000 square feet. The application notes that the area immediately across Woodland Avenue from the site is already a high-density residential district, and the CCMU designation represents a logical transition.

There is no specific proposal to change the existing use of the site at this time. The application merely recognizes that the General Plan has a 20-year horizon, and that other uses of the site may be viable during that timeframe. The project applicant has cited a number of policies and actions in General Plan 2020 that support additional housing and has noted that this amendment could help the City address its housing needs.

Staff Recommendation: Staff recommends retaining the existing "Industrial" designation on this site. Changing one site alone while leaving the rest of the block in industrial use could result in land use compatibility issues and adversely impact adjacent industrial and heavy commercial businesses. Changing the entire block, or even just the Woodland frontage, would render a large number of uses non-conforming. The site is adjoined on the west by Woodland Center, which includes auto body repair, furniture repair, auto supply, and other industrial businesses. Other adjacent uses include equipment rental (to the north) and window and door glass sales (to the east). The Shamrock materials concrete batch plant and storage yard is about 500 feet to the north.

Staff notes that the site is roughly 4,000 feet (0.75 miles) to the SMART station and transit center, which is beyond the half-mile radius commonly used to identify priority sites for transit-oriented development. It is also designated "Industrial," rather than "Light Industrial-Office", which is the more common designation in the City's business districts. The City has a very limited supply of purely "Industrial" land. General Plan policies support retaining these areas for the essential industrial services that underpin the city's economic base and reduce the need to travel long distances for these services.

Status of Other Key Sites:

Three other sites merit mention in this report and are discussed below.

San Rafael Rock Quarry

The 300-acre Rock Quarry and McNear Brickworks is one of the largest privately held properties in the San Rafael Planning Area. The property is outside the City limits, but within its sphere of influence. Most of the site was designated as "Mineral Resources" in General Plan 2020, with low-lying areas and wetlands designated as "Conservation." No changes to this designation are proposed in General Plan 2040.

The future of the Quarry is addressed in the Neighborhoods Element of the General Plan. The existing 2020 Plan provides general policies about Quarry operations as well as factors to consider in the event the Quarry ceases operation during the planning period. The proposed 2040 Plan will include similar language. The Quarry operators recently applied to the County of Marin to the extend the termination date

of their surface mining agreement by 20 years. This would extend the agreement to 2044, which is beyond the horizon year of General Plan 2040.

Suggested revisions to the Neighborhoods Element text have been proposed by the Quarry operators and by the Peacock Gap Homeowners Association (at the City's request). Staff is evaluating the proposed language from both parties and drafting revisions accordingly.

Canalways

Canalways was the subject of considerable discussion in General Plan 2020. Most of the site was designated for "Conservation" in that Plan, with a "Light Industrial-Office" designation applied to about 10 acres in the southern part of the site. The 2020 Plan also called for an extension of Kerner Boulevard through the site. General Plan 2040 carries the existing Map designations forward, and likewise supports the Kerner extension. The owners of Canalways have submitted proposed revisions to the Neighborhoods Element text for the site. These revisions are under consideration by staff. Updated policy language will be included in the Draft General Plan.

Los Gamos Apartments (Behind 1401 Los Gamos Rd)

As the Planning Commission is aware, the owners of 11 acres behind 1401 Los Gamos Road have submitted conceptual plans for a 180-unit apartment development. The project would require a General Plan Amendment from Hillside Resource Residential to either "Medium" or "High" Density Residential. This project is not included in General Plan 2040 and the amendment is being pursued on a separate track. The current General Plan 2040 Map retains the Hillside Resource Residential designation for this site.

CONCLUSIONS/NEXT STEPS

The Planning Commission will be asked to comment on the amendments proposed by staff and applicants at its February 11 meeting. Staff will consider these comments as it refines the Draft Plan and develops Draft General Plan 2040. Staff anticipates returning to the Planning Commission again *before* the Draft Plan is published to address some of the other issues covered in General Plan 2040, such as climate change adaptation. The Commission also will be briefed on the Downtown Precise Plan.

Once the Draft General Plan, Draft Downtown Precise Plan, and Draft Environmental Impact Report are formally published, the Planning Commission will convene one or more public hearings to receive testimony and provide comments. Following a 45-day public review period, the Commission will be provided with a Draft Resolution recommending approval of these documents (inclusive of any changes made through public review) by the City Council. Once the Commission approves the Resolution, the documents will be forwarded to the City Council for adoption. This process is scheduled to occur during Summer 2020.

CORRESPONDENCE

No correspondence has been received on this Staff Report.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. Draft General Plan 2040 Map (PDF file designed for large format printing)
- B. Land Use Categories
- C. Summary of Staff-Initiated Changes
- D. Summary of Amendment Requests