



# COMMUNITY SERVICES BACKGROUND REPORT

San Rafael General Plan 2040

## Abstract

This report provides “existing conditions” information on fire/ems, law enforcement, education, and library services in San Rafael. It will be used to inform long-range planning policies in General Plan 2040, and the EIR for the General Plan Update.

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## **PURPOSE OF COMMUNITY SERVICES REPORT**

The purpose of this report is to provide background information on fire/ EMS, law enforcement, education, and library services in San Rafael, California. The report includes factual data about these services and the facilities they require, along with issues related to long range planning and growth. This information underpins General Plan 2040 policies and action programs on these topics, and provides the necessary context for evaluating the impacts of planned development on each service area in the next 20 years. The information provides the “Setting” section for the Environmental Impact Report that is required for the General Plan Update.

Separate reports have been prepared for parks and recreation services, arts and cultural services, and transportation services. Background information on infrastructure and utilities is included in the EIR, and in a “profile” report prepared for Downtown San Rafael.

## **FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES**

### **Introduction**

Fire services in the San Rafael Planning Area are provided by the City of San Rafael, the County of Marin, and the California Division of Forestry and Fire Protection (in China Camp Park). The City Fire Department provides primary fire protection to the unincorporated areas of Country Club, Bayside Acres, Los Ranchitos, the small area adjacent to the Mount Tamalpais Cemetery in Sun Valley, California Park and Santa Venetia (through County Service Area 19). The City also serves as the Fire Department for the Marinwood Community Services District. Additionally, the various fire departments in Marin County have joint powers agreements and standard mutual aid agreements which minimize response time in fire emergencies. The San Rafael Fire Department also provides paramedic services under a joint powers agreement to the entire Planning Area.

Fire prevention techniques differ for structural fires and wildfires, but successful fire control and extinguishment in all cases depends on rapid response. Fire codes, prevention, and inspection programs ensure that standards are met when structures are built, when there is a change in occupancy for commercial buildings, and over the life of each structure.

### **Facilities**

Table 1 indicates the location of San Rafael’s six fire stations. At the time this report was prepared, Station 51 was operating out a temporary facility at 1151 C Street. The new Station 51 will be located in the new Public Safety Center (PSC) at 1375 Fifth Avenue and is scheduled to open in 2020. The PSC is the cornerstone of an Essential Facilities upgrade that includes a total of seven projects to address San Rafael’s aging police and fire facilities. Other projects include the replacement of Stations 52 and 57, which were completed in 2019. Stations 54 and 55 are scheduled for rehabilitation in the coming years. Station 56 is relatively new and requires only minor upgrades.

As the Table indicates, there is no Station 53. The building (previously referred to as Station 3) is located on Joseph Court in the Northgate Business Park and is not operational. Fire Department administrative facilities are located at 1600 Los Gamos Drive, a County-owned building that also houses the County Fire and Sheriff’s offices. Dispatch is handled by a Regional Dispatch Center located in the Sheriff’s Department Communication Center.

**Table 1: Fire Stations in San Rafael (\*)**

Station	Address
Station 51	1375 Fifth Avenue (Public Safety Center) Temporary location: 1151 C Street (between 5 <sup>th</sup> and Mission)
Station 52	52 Union Street
Station 54	46 Castro Avenue
Station 55	955 Pt San Pedro Road
Station 56	650 Del Ganado Road
Station 57	3530 Civic Center Drive

Source: City of San Rafael Fire Department, 2020

(\*) The City of San Rafael also staffs the Marinwood Fire Station (Station 58) at 777 Miller Creek Road.

### Staffing and Responsibilities

There are 69 uniformed emergency shift personnel, a fire chief, two administrative staff, an emergency manager, a household hazardous waste coordinator, and four part-time inspectors. The Department includes a Fire Prevention Bureau that issues fire permits for construction, operations, and inspections. The Fire Marshal works closely with the City’s Code Enforcement Officer to ensure all structures meet State Fire Code Standards. The Bureau also manages the City’s Vegetation Management Program. This program is designed in cooperation with local businesses and homeowners to ensure vegetation is adequately cleared and fire risk is reduced throughout the City.

The Fire Department also is responsible for monitoring the storage and use of hazardous materials. The Department issues permits for hazardous materials use and requires a written Hazardous Materials Management Plan as part of the permitting process. The Plan must demonstrate the safe storage and handling of hazardous materials. Hazardous materials inspections are included in the program. Household hazardous waste management is handled by the City through a joint powers agreement with the County of Marin. San Rafael manages the HHW program for every city in the County except Novato. It jointly operates an HHW disposal facility at 565 Jacoby Street in southeast San Rafael.

The Department also delivers fire response and rescue services for both urban and wildland fires. Preventing and extinguishing structural fires, protecting life and property safety, and reducing fire losses, is an essential part of the Department’s mission. Fire services accounted for roughly 24 percent of the City’s municipal General Fund expenditures in FY 2019-20.

Governance is facilitated by a five-member Fire Commission. In concert with the Fire Chief, Commissioners contribute their experience and expertise to advance departmental initiatives. The Commission meets on the second Wednesday of each month.

## **Standards**

Specific activities subject to permitting requirements and standards are specified in the Municipal Code. Title 4 adopts the 2016 California Fire Code and 2015 International Fire Code and establishes the authority of the fire chief. A number of local amendments to the Fire Code have been adopted, including requirements for properties in the Wildland-Urban Interface, vegetation clearance standards, prohibitions on parking on private access ways, requirements for visible address numbers on all buildings, and requirements for hydrant upgrades.

The risk of damage from fire has been, and continues to be, reduced through requirements for built-in fire detection and extinguishment features (smoke alarms, sprinkler and standpipe systems); requirements for fire retardant materials in high risk areas (Class A roof assemblies in wooded areas, fire retardant materials on the underside of exposed elevated decks); and provision of fire equipment access (primarily adequate road widths, grade and surface). The Fire Department typically requires a minimum 20' clear roadway width, an all-weather surface and maximum 18 percent roadway grade for fire equipment access.

The Fire Department further coordinates with Marin Municipal Water District (MMWD) and City Departments through the City's development review process to ensure that water supply necessary for fire safety and other Fire Department concerns are met for new development. The City maintains local hydrants, while the MMWD is responsible for fire flow. An annual \$75 fire flow parcel tax was approved by voters in 1996 to raise funds to improve fire flow and ensure the integrity of the water transmission system after an earthquake. In 2012, this fee was extended through 2031, allowing for the replacement of inadequate pipes as well as seismic improvements.

The Fire Department typically calculates required fire flow in accordance with Uniform Fire Code and Insurance Services Office guidelines. Peakload requirements vary based on building construction, size, type and location, and may be modified by the addition of fire alarm or sprinkler systems. Requirements are met in most of the city but several areas, including parts of the West End neighborhood, presently require improvement. Fire truck access is also constrained on several streets, particularly in steep hillside areas. The City does not currently collect impact fees for public safety facilities but does require that infrastructure is upgraded as needed when new development occurs. Typical developer improvements include road widening and hydrants.

The Fire Department's Insurance Service Office (ISO) rating is Class 1, the highest rating possible. The Department has a response time goal consistent with the National Fire Protection Association Standard 1710. The goal is to be on scene within five to seven minutes following a call for service, 90 percent of the time. New equipment and vehicles are periodically acquired to meet these standards, replace aging equipment, and utilize new technology.

## **Paramedic Services**

A major role of the Fire Department is emergency medical response. Every firefighter is a certified Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) and many of the City's firefighters have taken more advanced training and are Paramedic certified. In 1979, San Rafael voters approved a special parcel assessment to have paramedic services provided through the Fire Department. The number of certified Paramedics has increased since that time, in response to population growth, the aging of the population, and increased demand. Additional ambulances will be needed as the City grows and its emergency response case load increases.

## **Emergency Preparedness**

The City's Emergency Services Coordinator (ESC) has local responsibilities for managing the City's Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), and Public Safety Power Shutoff (PSPS) Plan. These are typically developed and administered at a Countywide level by the Marin County Office of Emergency Services, with the City's ESC serving as the local point of contact. The City has identified the need for an update of its EOP and preparation of a Continuity of Government / Operations Plan, both of which may be developed in collaboration with the County.

## **Indicators**

During calendar year 2019, the Department reported that it responded to 27 residential structure fires and 27 non-residential structure fires. It also responded to 22 vehicle fires, 16 outdoor property fires, 16 wildland fires, and 28 dumpster/rubbish fires. There were a total of 10,980 calls for service, including 7,048 for rescue, EMS, ambulances, and similar services. There were also 664 false alarms, 39 mutual aid responses, 185 hazardous response incidents, and 2,885 other incidents (animal rescue, smoke, etc.).

# **LAW ENFORCEMENT**

## **Introduction**

Law enforcement services in the San Rafael Planning Area are provided by a number of agencies. The City of San Rafael has primary responsibility for areas within the City limits. The Marin County Sheriff's Department is located at 1600 Los Gamos Drive in San Rafael. It provides services to unincorporated neighborhoods. The California Highway Patrol provides traffic enforcement in the unincorporated areas and on local freeways. Mutual aid agreements allow for joint responses to major incidents.

The San Rafael Police Department has adopted the following mission, vision, and values statements:

*Mission: The San Rafael Police Department is engaged with our community to provide fair, compassionate, and dedicated law enforcement with integrity and respect.*

*Vision: We are committed to working with and enhancing the quality of life for our residents and our local businesses in a problem-solving partnership with our communities, our public safety partners, service groups, and other city resources and individuals in San Rafael.*

*Values Statement: The “San Rafael Way.” We Value ethics, the law, diversity, flexibility, each other, partnerships, performance, and our community.*

As of October 19, 2019, the Department has a total of 60 full-time sworn personnel and 22 full-time non-sworn personnel, for a total staff of 82. This equates to 10.2 sworn personnel per 10,000 residents and 13.9 total personnel per 10,000 residents. The national average for cities of 50,000-100,000 is 16.1 for sworn personnel and 20.7 for total personnel. Ratios for nearby cities include 10.0 (sworn)/ 14.2 (total) in Novato, 9.5 (sworn)/ 13.5 (total) in Petaluma, and 16.0 (sworn)/ 21.8 (total) in Richmond.

## **Department Organization**

The Police Department is organized into two divisions. The **Operations Division** includes patrol, park ranger, downtown foot beat, and traffic enforcement. The **Administrative Services Division** includes records, dispatch personnel, training, crime prevention, community engagement, and detective units. Some police services are provided with field patrols on a geographic (or “beat”) basis and other functions are organized on a citywide basis. Citywide services include crime prevention, investigations, community engagement, and traffic.

### *Operations Division*

The Operations Division provides uniformed police services 24 hours a day. The division includes four patrol teams, generally comprised of eight officers each. Each team is led by a sergeant. A lieutenant supervises the two day-shift teams and another lieutenant supervises the two night-shift teams. Two canine units and their partners are included on the teams. The patrols are primarily engaged in emergency response, crime suppression, traffic enforcement, and preliminary criminal investigation.

A Special Operations Unit handles Downtown, open space and marine areas, and street crimes. This unit includes:

- The Downtown Footbeat Team, which consists of three Officers and a Mental Health Liaison, under the supervision of a Police Sergeant. The team is responsible for enforcing all laws and ordinances in the Downtown area, with an emphasis on peace disturbances, harassment, littering, illegal loitering, and substance abuse violations. The team also emphasizes personal contact with residents and business owners and working with all segments of the community to solve problems in the Downtown area.
- The Ranger/Marine Program includes a Ranger who patrols City parks and open spaces, specifically looking for unlawful encampments. The Marine Unit patrols San Rafael waterways on weekends and on an on-call basis during the week. The unit is supplemented by Marine Auxiliary Volunteers.

- The Street Crimes Unit is engaged primarily in crime suppression and investigation of street level drug sales, gang violence and human trafficking. The unit works closely with allied law enforcement agencies with similar missions. It is staffed by two Police Offices and is under the direction of the Unit Sergeant.

Traffic Enforcement is also part of the Operations Division. The program currently has two Police Motorcycle Officers under the supervision of a Police Sergeant. Their duties include traffic enforcement, investigation of serious collisions, investigation of hit and run accidents, and public awareness programs. The Sergeant conducts vehicle tow hearings and is responsible for planning and handling traffic issues related to special events in the City.

### *Administration Division*

The Administration Division is responsible for a variety of tasks including recruitment, employment testing, background investigations, volunteers, the chaplain program, internal investigations, workers compensation claims, facility management, cost recovery, and crime analysis. Specific functions performed by this department are described below:

- The Training Unit is responsible for internal and external training, maintenance of training records, and compliance with State-mandated training requirements. Among other training programs, a Field Training Officer Program is mandated by the State for new officers. This includes four phases, followed by an 18-month probationary period with monthly evaluations.
- The Criminal Investigations Unit is responsible for coordination and follow-up of major crimes, such as homicide, robbery, sexual assault, fraud, and burglary, and for tracking registered narcotics- and sex-offenders. This Unit also includes two School Resource Officers.
- The Records section is responsible for answering non-emergency telephone inquiries; inputting non-emergency calls into the Computer-Aided Dispatch System, greeting and assisting the public at the front desk, staffing the business office, and processing, preserving and updating records and automated information systems.
- The Dispatch Unit coordinates responses to emergency and non-emergency calls for police service. This includes the initial 9-1-1 telephone calls for both police and fire, 24 hours a day. Dispatchers maintain communications with officers and other law enforcement agencies using a variety of computer systems. Many of these calls result in officers being dispatched, while others are provided with information, or direction and referral to other agencies or service providers.
- The Property and Evidence Unit is responsible for the proper, safe storage of all property and evidence collected by the Police Department; the maintenance, processing, and return of all property and evidence; and the purging of property and evidence in a timely and lawful manner.



- The Community Engagement Unit is comprised of a Sergeant and a Community Service Officer. It coordinates the yearly National Night Out, community events such as Coffee with a Cop, tours for school children, scheduling of community events involving officers and staff, coordination of the Citizens Police Academy (in both English and Spanish), and oversight and planning of Camp Chance, a summer residential camp for underserved youth ages 11-13.

## **Facilities**

The San Rafael Police Department occupies the ground level of City Hall at 1400 Fifth Avenue. City Hall was built in 1966 and was designed to meet the office and technological needs of that time period. The existing Police Department facilities are outdated and crowded. A new 44,000 square foot public safety facility is scheduled to open in late 2020 across the street from the existing facility. The new facility will include a temporary holding facility designed to separate detainees from civilian staff, as well as expanded storage, evidence, crime lab, classroom, dispatch, and communication facilities. The project was made possible by Measure E, a 20-year sales tax extension and increase approved by voters in 2013. While the Police Department has small field offices in North San Rafael and the Canal (at the Albert Boro Community Center), there are no substations or other ancillary facilities.

## **Public Safety Data and Trends**

### *Calls for Service*

In 2019, the San Rafael Police Department received 21,735 9-1-1 calls and 76,874 administrative calls.<sup>1</sup> This equates to an average of 1,035 9-1-1 calls a month or about 60 per day. In total, the Department receives between 800 and 1,000 calls daily. The Department received a total of 38,877 calls for service in 2019, which was a 0.2% decrease from 2018.

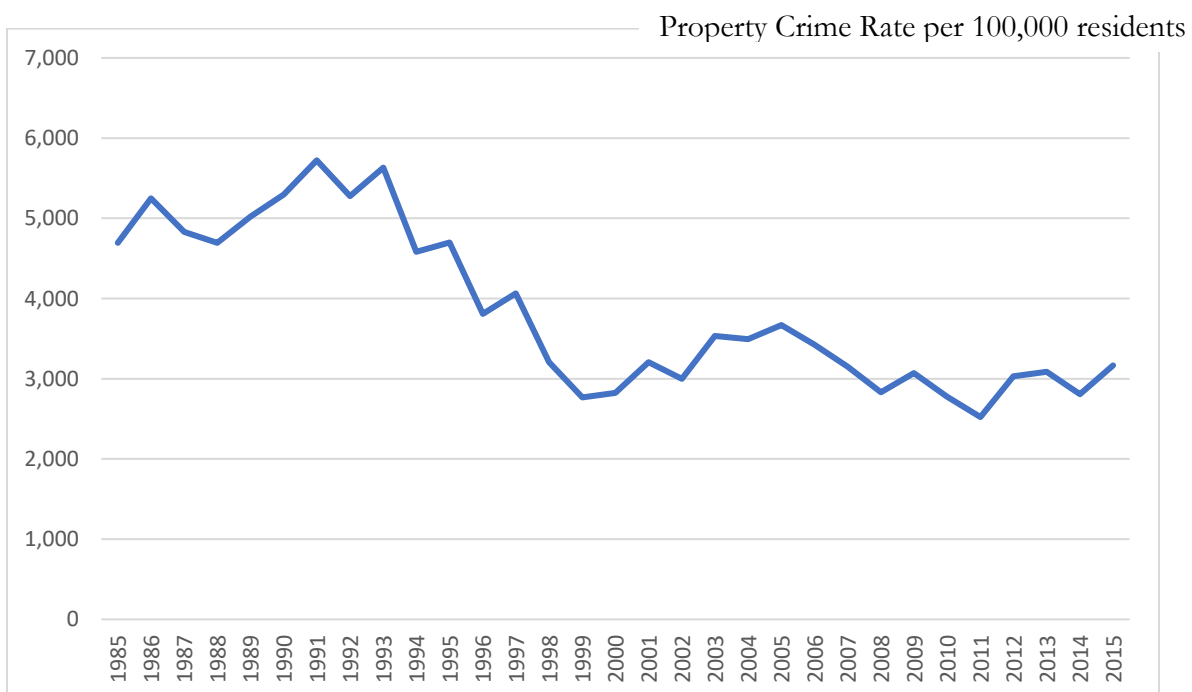
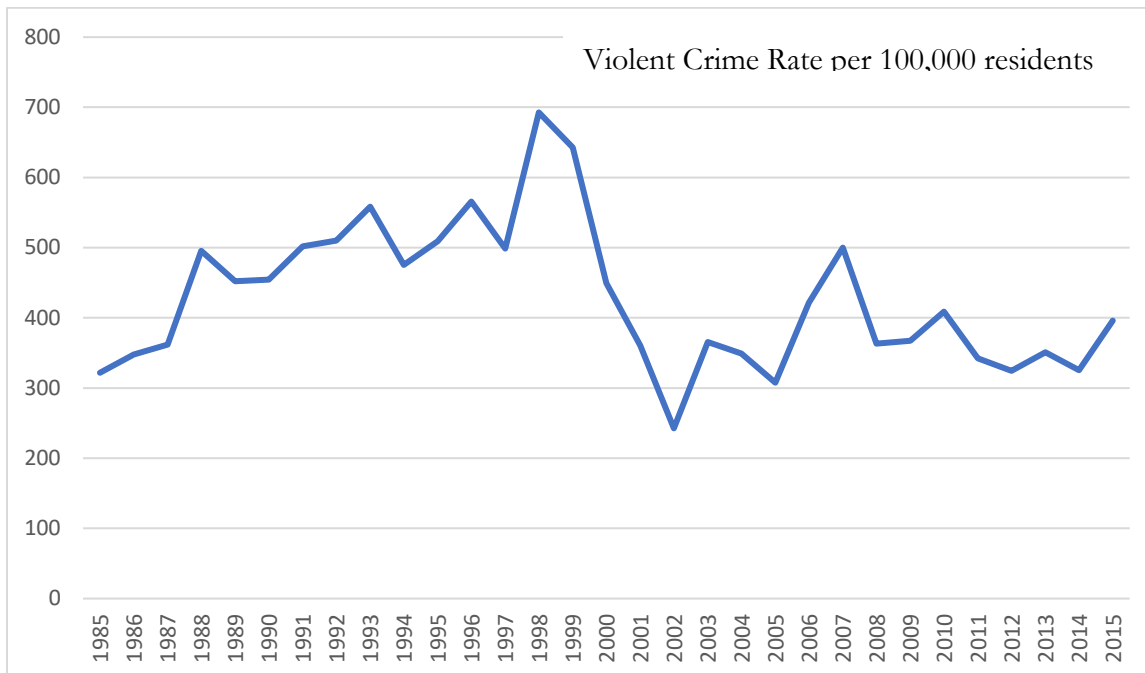
### *Crime Statistics*

Relative to comparably sized communities, San Rafael is a safe city. Figure 1 shows the violent crime rate and the property crime rate in San Rafael for the 1985-2015 period, based on data tracked by the FBI in its Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Statistics program. Violent crime trended downward following a peak in the late 1990s. The rate increased during the great recession (2007-09), declined during the economic recovery and has been relatively stable since 2011. Property crime peaked in the early 1990s and has been declining overall, with slight increases some years and decreases in others. Burglary and larceny-theft rates in 2015 were less than half of what they were in the early 1990s.

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<sup>1</sup> Excludes abandoned 9-1-1 calls.

**Figure 1: Crime Rates in San Rafael, 1985-2015<sup>2</sup>**



<sup>2</sup>Violent crimes include murder/non-negligent manslaughter, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. Property crimes include burglary, larceny-theft, and motor vehicle theft.

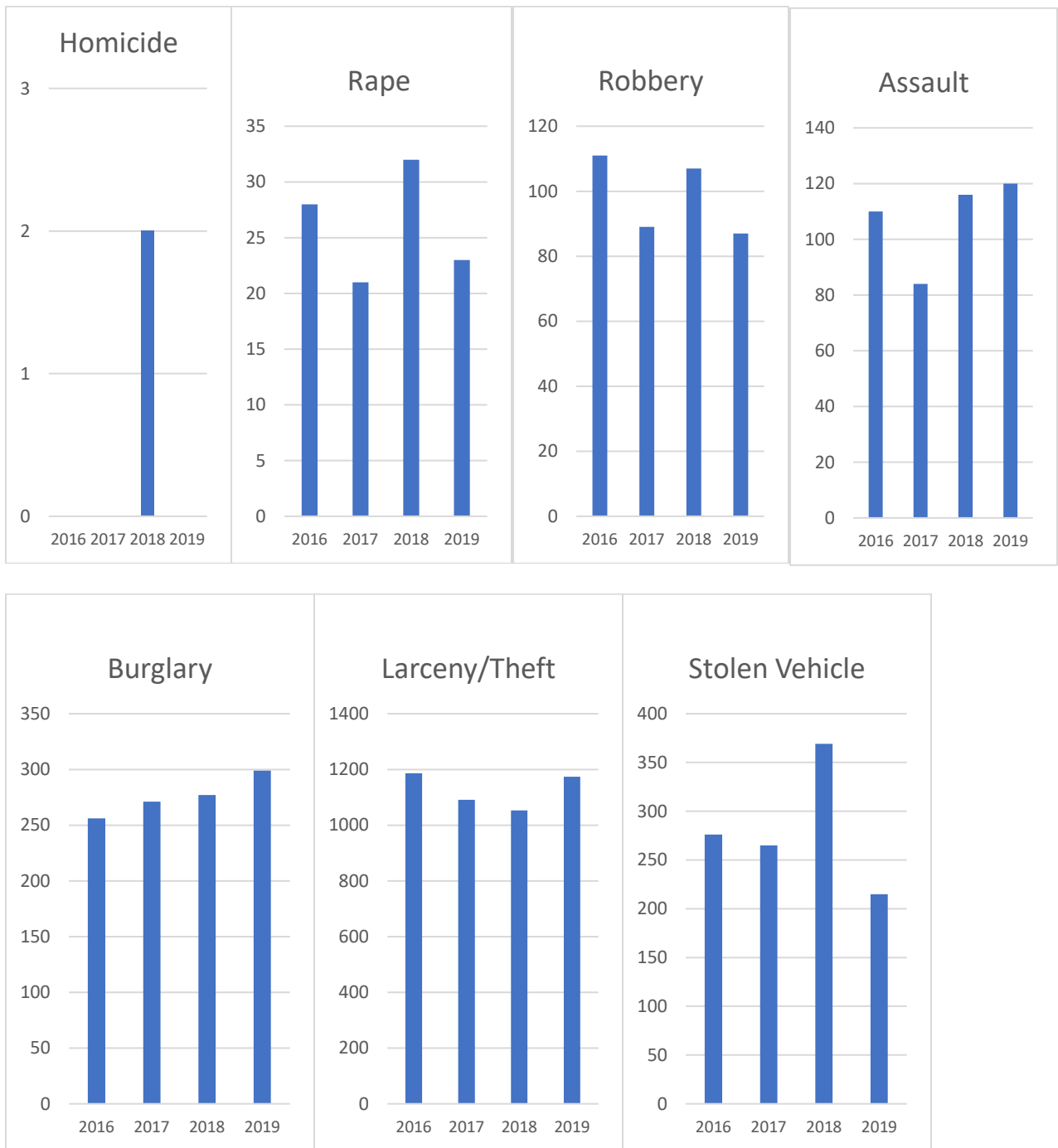
Figure 2 shows crime data for more a recent period, extending from 2016 to 2019. The City recorded just two homicides during this time period (in 2018). The violent crime rate was comparable to the rate seen in the early 2010s, with slight increases in 2016 and 2018 and decreases in 2017 and 2019. Property crime rates likewise were relatively stable over this period, although larceny/theft showed a slight increase. Motor vehicle theft dropped sharply in 2019 after rising significantly from 2017 to 2018. A majority of the property crimes in the city are larceny-theft, which includes car break-ins, theft of bicycles, shoplifting, and theft from buildings, among other things. There were 1,174 such incidents in 2019, up from 1,053 in 2018 but down from over 2,000 in 1991.

## **Future Needs**

The new Public Safety Center has been designed to meet the long-term needs of the City. Additional facilities are not envisioned at this time, although the opportunity to include field offices in other parts of the City (especially the Northgate area and the Canal area) should continue to be explored. Staffing needs will continue to grow and evolve in response to additional population and employment, as well as changing law enforcement practices. There is an ongoing need for training, new equipment and technology, and resources to support crime prevention, response capacity, and investigations.

The Police Department continues to devote resources to residents experiencing mental health challenges and homelessness, and other initiatives focused on preserving the “quality of life” and ensuring public safety. Traffic enforcement and transportation-related issues may present the need for additional services in the future, particularly as new modes of travel are introduced (electric bicycles, e-scooters, autonomous vehicles, etc.) and as the circulation system becomes more multi-modal. The Police Department currently works collaboratively with the Community Development, Public Works, and Fire Departments to review development proposals and ensure that issues related to traffic, lighting, and safety are addressed. An important part of crime prevention is to provide “eyes on the street” in new development and ensure that lighting, architecture, and landscapes are designed to maximize public safety.

**Figure 2: San Rafael Crime Data for 2016-2019**



Source: City of San Rafael Police Department, Part 1 Crime Stats, 2020. Columns show total number of reported incidents per year.

# SCHOOLS

## Introduction

San Rafael is served by three school districts. Under the City Charter, San Rafael City Schools (SRCS) was created with a separate elementary school district and high school district. The elementary school district covers the southern part of the city, while the high school district covers the entire city. Both of these districts also encompass portions of unincorporated Marin County.<sup>3</sup> The elementary and high school districts are governed by the same five-member Board of Trustees.

A separate elementary-middle school district dating back to 1864 serves K-8 students in the northern part of the city and in nearby unincorporated Los Ranchitos, Lucas Valley, and Marinwood. Originally known as the Dixie School District, the district was renamed the Miller Creek School District (MCSD) in 2019. Students graduating from MCSD matriculate to Terra Linda High School, which is operated by SRCS.

SRCS has a total of eleven K-8 properties with a cumulative total of 462,892 square feet on about 75 acres of land. This total includes seven elementary schools (Bahia Vista, Coleman, Glenwood, Laurel, Dell, San Pedro, Short, and Sun Valley), one middle school (Davidson), one K-8 school (Venetia Valley), and two closed campuses. One of the two closed campuses (Old Gallinas) has been repurposed as a children's center and the other (McPhail) is unoccupied. SRCS also operates three high schools (Grades 9-12) with a total of 487,783 square feet on about 60 acres of land. Two of these high schools (San Rafael High and Madrone Continuation School) share a campus in the Montecito area. The District's Corporation Yard and maintenance building are located on this campus. The third high school (Terra Linda) is located in North San Rafael. It includes the District's administrative offices.

MCSD has a total of three active K-5 elementary schools (Vallecito, Mary Silveira, and Lucas Valley) and one middle school (Miller Creek). Of these four campuses, only Vallecito is located within the San Rafael city limits. MCSD also owns three elementary schools that are leased to third parties and a fourth former school that includes the District's administrative offices. Three of these four facilities are located in the city limits and one is in unincorporated Lucas Valley. Waldorf School (in Lucas Valley) and Mark Day School are privately operated. Santa Margarita School is used as a Children's Center and includes space leased to educational organizations. District headquarters are located in a former elementary school on Nova Albion Way.

Total enrollment for the 2018-19 school year was 4,614 for the SRCS elementary-middle schools, 2,640 for the SRCS high schools, and 1,982 for the MCSD. The total number of K-12 public school students was 9,235. This includes students residing in unincorporated San Rafael (e.g., Lucas Valley, Santa Venetia, etc.) as well as those in the City. It excludes Mark Day and Waldorf students, as well as those attending religious schools and other private schools. The 9,235 students represented 28 percent of the total K-12 public school population in Marin County.

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<sup>3</sup> *The San Rafael City Schools Elementary School District also serves unincorporated neighborhoods, including Santa Venetia, Country Club, and Bayside Acres. It also serves San Quentin Village and a small portion of Larkspur. The High School District serves these areas and also serves Terra Linda, Marinwood, and other parts of Northern San Rafael.*

Figure 3 shows the boundaries of the SRCS and Miller Creek districts, as well as the location of each school campus.

### Enrollment Trends

Table 2 shows enrollment trends at SRCS Elementary Schools and High Schools, and at MCSD Schools between 2014 and 2019. Over the last five years, enrollment has been stable at the elementary-middle school level and has gradually increased at the high school level. The number of students in the SRCS elementary schools and MCSD declined by less than one percent over the five-year period. The number of high school students increased by 11.6 percent. Very little residential development occurred during the period; changes were primarily driven by demographics rather than by housing construction.

Enrollment in San Rafael’s public schools includes a significantly larger percentage of Hispanic residents than the City as a whole. Figure 4 indicates the ethnicity of San Rafael’s students compared to the City as a whole. Hispanic residents represent 30% of the City’s population but 54% of student enrollment. In the SRCS elementary schools, 68.9% of the students are Hispanic. Approximately 56% of the K-5 student body in SRCS elementary schools are classified as “English learners,” with 96% of that population speaking Spanish upon entering school. The California School Dashboard website indicates that 64.2% of the K-5 student body in SRCS schools is considered “economically disadvantaged.”

**Table 2: Enrollment by District, 2014-2019**

School Year	San Rafael Elementary School District	San Rafael High School District	Miller Creek School District
2014-15	4,635	2,365	1,999
2015-16	4,749	2,420	1,989
2016-17	4,758	2,519	1,982
2017-18	4,730	2,648	1,984
2018-19	4,614	2,640	1,982

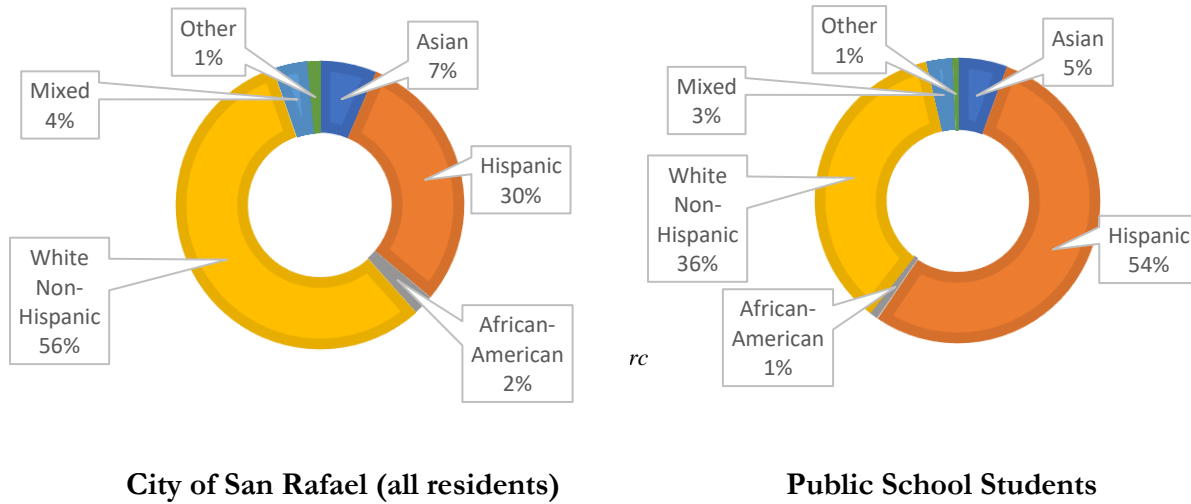
Source: California Department of Education Data Quest, 2020

Figure 5 shows longer-range trends in enrollment, beginning at the time the last San Rafael General Plan was adopted in 2004. SRCS Elementary Schools saw a 29 percent increase in enrollment between the 2004-05 school year and the 2013-14 school year. Growth at the high school level was slower, increasing by 6 percent during this same period (the “bubble” in elementary school enrollment experienced in 2007-2014 drove the increase in high school enrollment during 2014-2018). In the Miller Creek School District, enrollment increased by 9 percent over the 2004-2014 period, with most of the growth occurring in 2011-13.

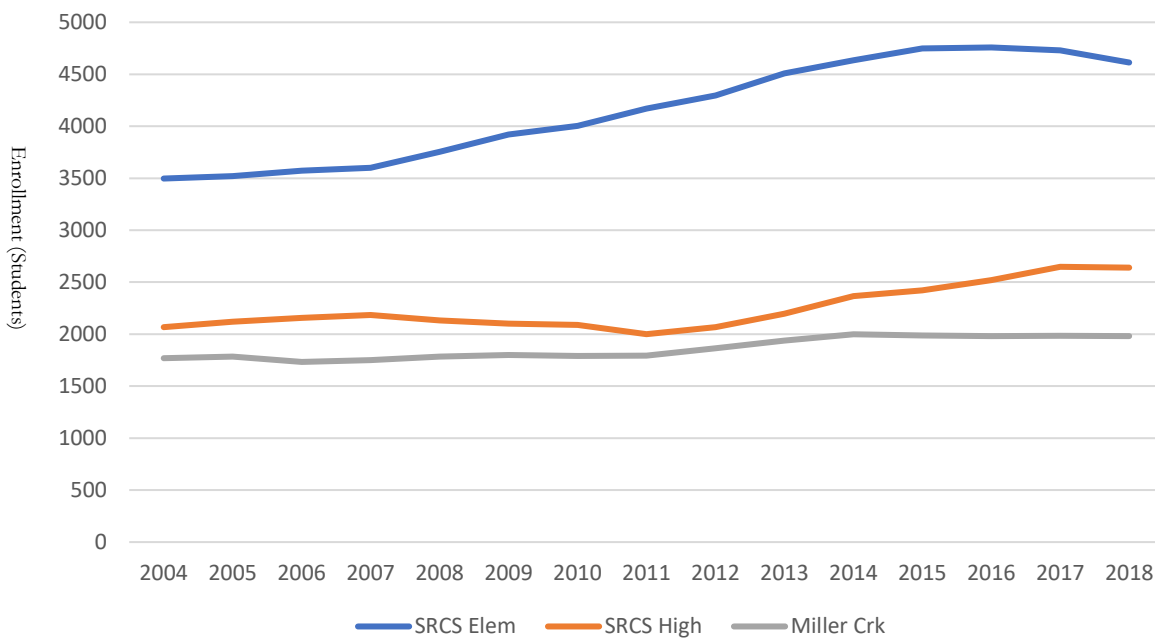
In 1984, the student body in the three districts was 6% Hispanic/Latino. By 2004-05, the student body in the three districts was 40.2% Hispanic/Latino. As noted above, enrollment became majority Hispanic/Latino over the 2004-2018 time period.



**Figure 3: Public Schools**



**Figure 4: Demographic Comparison of San Rafael Public School Students and City as a Whole**



**Figure 5: Public School Enrollment Trends in San Rafael, 2004-2018\***

\* Year shown corresponds to fall semester  
 Source: California Department of Education, 2020



## **Academic Mission**

All three local School Districts have long-standing records of serving students well, providing rigorous instruction on core academic subjects, and fostering critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, and communication skills. The Districts are committed to providing safe, well-maintained classrooms, labs, libraries, and media centers, as well as the technology necessary to support a modern education. Modernization and expansion programs now underway will provide additional capacity and will provide the facilities necessary for educational excellence.

## **Overview of Facility Conditions: San Rafael City Schools**

Facility conditions in both SRCS and MCSD schools were assessed through Master Facilities Plans (MFPs) prepared in 2014. The MFPs provided the foundation for voter-approved bond measures that are now facilitating capital improvements in all three Districts.

The MFP analysis found that San Rafael City Schools had the capacity for 4,755 students in 187 standard classrooms serving Grades K-8 and 2,244 students in 96 classrooms serving Grades 9-12. Based on current enrollment, the elementary/middle are operating at slightly below capacity while the high schools are operating above capacity. The Master Plan explored different options for balancing enrollment and expanding campuses to avoid overcrowding, such as reopening closed schools, expanding schools, and shifting students between campuses.

In preparing its MFP, the District also evaluated the condition of its facilities and the need for replacement and modernization. It also looked at the need for administrative and operational space, common spaces such as cafeterias, and space for students with special needs. Sustainability, technology, efficiency, and equity goals also were considered. An important objective of SRCS' facility plan is to establish parity among schools and recognize that some schools may be in greater need of amenities and new facilities than others.

The total program budget for capital improvements identified by the 2014 MFP was \$272.5 million for the elementary schools and \$181.2 million for the high schools. The District identified a number of ways to meet these costs, including local general obligation bonds, proceeds from State of California bonds, grants, developer fees, and other sources. A priorities-based implementation plan was created.

In November 2015, San Rafael voters approved Measures A & B, two bonds intended to meet the needs identified by the Master Facilities Plan. Measure A included \$108 million for updates to the elementary and middle schools and passed with 66 percent of the vote. Measure B included \$161 million for the high schools and passed with 67 percent of the vote. The measures needed a 55 percent margin to pass. Among the funded projects are new high school science labs, updated core academic facilities, new classrooms, dedicated art and music spaces, and upgraded technology infrastructure. As of January 2020, most of these projects have been completed, with the remainder expected to be finished by early 2021.

## *Elementary and Middle Schools*

**Bahia Vista Elementary School** is located in the Canal neighborhood. It was completely reconstructed in 2006 using proceeds from a bond measure approved in 2002. The school has 24 classrooms and serves Grades K-5. The school includes a multi-purpose room/ cafeteria building and two two-story classroom buildings connected by covered walkways. A parking lot shade structure is planned. Enrollment was 557 in 2019 and estimated school capacity was 578 students.

**Coleman Elementary School** was initially established in 1909. It moved to its current location in 1941 and was completely rebuilt in 2004 using funds from a bond measure approved in 2002. Outdoor field spaces also were improved. The campus is comprised of several one-story buildings surrounding a central courtyard and library. It is located in the Dominican neighborhood. Enrollment was 405 in 2019 and estimated school capacity was 426 students.

**James B. Davidson Middle School** accommodates 80 percent of all SRCS students in Grades 6-8 (the remaining 20 percent are at Venetia Valley). The school is located just south of Downtown on a 21-acre campus. Substantial modernization and expansion is underway, including new science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) classrooms and labs. Davidson also includes an annex that until recently was used as a temporary campus for Laurel Dell. The expanded campus is being designed for an ultimate population of 1,400 students. Enrollment was 1,204 in 2019.

**Glenwood Elementary** is located on the San Pedro Peninsula and was originally built in the early 1960s. Parts of the campus were modernized in 2003 and the multi-purpose building was replaced in 2019. At almost 11 acres, the campus is the District's largest K-5 property and has the capacity for additional classrooms. Glenwood's playfields and play areas serve as both a school resource and a community resource. Enrollment was 383 in 2019 and estimated school capacity was 476.

**Laurel Dell Elementary** is located just south of Downtown San Rafael. It was built in 1961 and designed to handle a relatively small number of students. The campus is just 1.76 acres, some of which is unusable due to terrain. Most of the campus was replaced in 2018-2019 through Measure A funds, with eight new state-of-the art classrooms, a new multi-purpose room, office, student support area, and extended learning space. Enrollment was 183 in 2019 and estimated school capacity was 226.

**San Pedro Elementary School** was built in 1956. By the mid 2010's, the school had exceeded its capacity and included a dozen portable classrooms and many outdated facilities. The campus was extensively modernized following the passage of Measure A (2014) and has new classrooms, offices, and upgraded student support space. Although San Pedro School is located on the Point San Pedro Peninsula, a majority of the student population lives in the Canal area. Enrollment was 522 in 2019. Estimated school capacity prior to the renovation was 552.

**Short Elementary School** is the smallest campus in the SRCS system and was initially built in 1904. The school sits on 1.29 acres in the Gerstle Park neighborhood and has just eight classrooms. In October 2019, SRCS trustees voted to close Short School at the end of the 2019-20 school year. Enrollment was

170 in 2019 and estimated capacity was 200. The site will remain in school ownership and may be used for administrative purposes or leased for educational or similar activities.

**Sun Valley Elementary School** was built in 1951. The school was modernized in 2003-2004 using funds from a bond measure approved in 2002. The modernization added a new two-story classroom, multi-purpose room, and expanded student service area. Outdoor field spaces also were improved. The Master Facilities Plan indicates that the school has moderate potential for expanded capacity, given the existing number of classrooms and the campus size. Enrollment was 501 in 2019 and estimated school capacity was 552.

**Venetia Valley School** is located in unincorporated Santa Venetia. It is the only active SRCS elementary school located north of Puerto Suelo Hill. It is also the only K-8 facility in the District. The school was originally built as a middle school in 1950 and has seen incremental expansion over the last 70 years. Portions of the campus were expanded in modernized in In 2004, but more substantial improvements are occurring in 2019-20 as part of the Measure A bond program. A new 2-story building with 20 classrooms is under construction. A new multi-purpose room, kitchen, office space, and outdoor classroom are also under construction. These improvements will create a more functional campus that meets 21<sup>st</sup> Century educational needs. Enrollment was 677 in 2019 and estimated school capacity was 857.

In addition to the facilities described above, the Gallinas Children’s Center in Santa Venetia also was evaluated in the MFP. The site was developed as a 12-classroom elementary school in 1958 but was repurposed due to declining enrollment. The building is outdated and would require modernization or replacement in the event it is needed in the future. The District could reopen the campus if needed to respond to future enrollment increases.

### *High Schools*

**San Rafael High School (SRHS)** is the largest public school in the city and one of the oldest, with the original buildings dating from 1939. The campus enrolls 1,333 students and occupies 30 acres. Estimated capacity prior to the recent renovation was 1,152 students. SRHS has been expanded and modernized several times, particularly during the late 1950s and early 1960s when San Rafael’s growth was at its peak. In the early 2000s, music and physical education facilities were renovated and the science wing was upgraded, but a number of facilities remained in poor condition. Measure B is addressing most of these deficiencies. Current projects are adding a two-story administrative and student services building and a STEM building with state of the art science labs, a physics academy, and a new ceramics studio. The stadium and athletic facilities also were recently improved.

**Madrone High School** currently shares a campus with San Rafael High School, although it is fully self-contained. The Madrone building is being replaced with new classrooms, offices, a kitchen, and student commons. There are currently 62 students enrolled and capacity is estimated at 60. As a “continuation” school, Madrone primarily serves students who are behind in credits or require additional guidance and career counseling.

**Terra Linda High School (TLHS)** opened its 28-acre campus on Nova Albion Way in 1960. The campus was expanded throughout the early 1960s and added a performing arts building in 2003. A facilities assessment in 2013 identified the cafeteria and music building as needing major renovation. Improvements funded by Measure B are providing additional science labs, updating STEM, arts/music, and core academic classrooms, upgrading wiring, and adding classroom capacity. A new 2-story commons building is being added, with a cafeteria, kitchen, library, theater, staff lounge, and other facilities. Enrollment was 1,230 in the most recent school year and capacity prior to renovation was estimated at 1,032.

### **Overview of Facility Conditions: Miller Creek Schools**

MCS D's most recent Facility Master Plan (FMP) was adopted in February 2014. The Plan included an assessment of Silveira, Vallecito, and Dixie (now Lucas Valley) Elementary Schools and Miller Creek Middle School. Issues were identified for each campus, and for the District as a whole. Districtwide issues included deficient clock, bell, intercom, and alarm systems; aging utility services; and outdated data networks and technology. Modernization programs in the early 2000s alleviated these deficiencies to some extent, but additional work was deemed necessary. The District also had a large number of portable classrooms.

Voters in the MCS D approved Measure C in 2014. The measure authorized \$30 million in general obligation bonds to address deficiencies identified in the FMP. Funds have been used to update aging classrooms and instructional technology; provide updated middle school science classrooms; upgrade electrical wiring, improve campus safety and security; and repair, construct, acquire, and equip classrooms, sites, and facilities.

**Lucas Valley (formerly Dixie) Elementary** was modernized in 2003-04 and again in 2015-19 through Measure C. The 2014 facility assessment identified a need for site improvements and classrooms to replace portables. Recent improvements have included renovation of the multi-purpose room, modernization, and lighting improvements. The school has a capacity of 426 students and its current enrollment is 419 students.

**Mary Silveira Elementary** was modernized in 2003-04 and again in 2015-19 through Measure C. A new multi-purpose facility was added in 2016. Enrollment was 440 students in 2019, which was below the estimated capacity of roughly 500 students.

**Vallecito Elementary** was modernized in 2003-04 and again in 2015-19 through Measure C. A number of site and building deficiencies were identified in the 2014 assessment; most have been corrected through recent modernization and improvements. The campus was built as a middle school and has more expansive outdoor spaces and fields than the other elementary schools. Recent projects have included a new playground, a refurbished courtyard, and modernization of classrooms. The school has a capacity of 512 students and currently enrolls 476.

**Miller Creek Middle School** was modernized in 2003-04 and again in 2015-19 through Measure C. Recent improvements include roof replacement, refurbishment of Lohwasser Field, HVAC

improvements, and new modular classrooms. The school has a capacity of 809 students and currently enrolls 647 students.

### **Private Schools**

Approximately 1,800 students in Grades K-12 attend private schools in San Rafael. Private school campuses include:

- Mark Day School (K-8), located in a former public elementary school in Terra Linda, with 380 students
- Waldorf School (K-8), located in a former public elementary school in Lucas Valley, with 182 students
- Montessori Terra Linda (K-6) on Del Ganado Avenue, with 131 students
- St. Isabella (K-8) in Terra Linda, with 248 students
- St. Raphael (K-8) in Downtown San Rafael, with 194 students
- Gate Academy (K-8) on St. Vincent Drive, with 56 students. Marin Montessori also operates a junior high school at this location.
- Marin Academy (9-12) in Downtown San Rafael, with 406 students
- Brandeis Marin (K-8), a Jewish Day School on North San Pedro Road with 186 students

### **Student Generation Factors**

Student generation rates (or “yields”) are used by school districts to estimate the probable number of students in a “typical” single family or multi-family home. This data is used to estimate the expected impact of new housing units on school enrollment, which in turn helps inform facility planning and fee collection. The rates are typically based on data on student yields from existing homes in each district, or on State of California standards.

Statewide, the student generation factors are 0.7 students per dwelling unit, including 0.5 students in K-8 and 0.2 students in Grades 9-12. The statewide rates tend to be higher in single family homes than in multi-family units due to the larger number of bedrooms. However, the opposite is true in San Rafael, with multi-family housing yielding nearly twice the number of students per unit as single family housing. Overall, the number of students per dwelling unit in San Rafael is below the State multiplier, averaging roughly 0.3 students per unit compared to 0.7 statewide.

Table 3 shows the student yields used in the most recent fee justification study prepared by SRCS (8/31/18). The rates reflect high household sizes and large numbers of children living in existing apartment complexes like those in the Canal district. It is possible that new multi-family development would generate lower yields (than 0.43 students per unit) while new single family homes would generate higher yields (than 0.23 students per unit).

**Table 3: Student Generation Factors for San Rafael City Schools**

	Single Family Units (students per new unit)	Multi-Family Units (students per new unit)
SRCS Elementary School (K-5)	0.1069	0.2273
SRCS Middle School (6-8)	0.0453	0.0980
SRCS High School (9-12)	0.0769	0.1108
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.2291</b>	<b>0.4361</b>

Source: San Rafael City Schools, 2018. Residential Development School Fee Justification Studies

### Impact Fees

Senate Bill 50 (1998) authorizes local school districts to impose impact fees on private development to mitigate their impacts on school facilities. The maximum allowable fee is \$3.79 per square foot (SF) for residential development and \$0.61 per SF for commercial and industrial development. In setting the fees, school districts must prepare nexus studies to demonstrate a reasonable connection between new development and the need for school improvements. The fees may only be used is to finance the construction or modernization of school facilities.

In its 2018 fee justification study, SRCS applied the student generation rates shown in Table 2 to the projected increment of growth between 2018 and 2040. The study identified the potential for 2,350 new residential units in the High School District (e.g. citywide) by 2040 based on ABAG/MTC projections, including 966 single family units and 1,384 multi-family units. This increment of growth was projected to yield 227 new high school students. A separate study identified the potential K-8 yield for the portion of the District served by SRCS K-8 schools. This represented a smaller number of dwelling units (660 single family and 946 multi-family), yielding 286 K-5 students and 123 students in Grades 6-8. Applying the same multipliers to the growth increment forecasted by SRCS for the Miller Creek School District would yield 132 K-5 students and 62 Grades 6-8 students in that District. All told, the 2,350 homes evaluated would yield 830 new students citywide (including the unincorporated areas).

San Rafael City Schools and the Miller Creek School District collect impact fees based on these forecasts. For residential uses, fees are collected for new residential units and for residential additions of 500 square feet or more.

The fees collected by SRCS are bifurcated into elementary school fees and high school fees. As of 2018, the elementary/middle school fees for both SRCS and MCSDD are \$2.62 per SF for residential development and \$0.42 per SF for commercial and industrial development. In the SRCS, developers pay a reduced fee of \$0.245 per SF for hotels/motels and \$0.14 per SF for self-storage. The high school fees are \$1.17 per square foot for residential development, \$0.19 per SF for commercial and industrial development, \$0.124 per SF for hotels/motels; and \$.06 per SF for self-storage. Taken together these fees represent the maximum allowable amounts for residential and commercial/industrial development.

The actual cost of constructing facilities to serve new students exceeds the amount that would be generated by these fees. Other funding sources, such as local bond measures and state grants, are

essential to cover capital costs. Moreover, student enrollment is dynamic and depends on many factors besides new construction. This is particularly true in San Rafael, where enrollment declined dramatically in the 1980s, even as housing construction was robust. Enrollment has increased since 2010, largely due to an increase in household sizes and not because of new construction.

### **Enrollment Projections**

Projections prepared by San Rafael City Schools in March 2014 anticipated a 15 percent enrollment increase in the elementary schools between 2014 and 2019 (about 700 students). This increase did not materialize, in part due to changing federal immigration policy and a decrease in the number of children moving into the city over the five-year period. The District forecast an increase of 12 percent in the high schools, which did occur. Much of the increase was likely a result of a demographic “bubble” of students matriculating from the elementary to high school grades over the period.

Forecasts prepared by SRCS in 2014 anticipate an increase of about 400 K-5 students, 400 Grades 6-8 students, and 200 high school students between 2019 and 2026. As trends of the last five years suggest, these forecasts are dependent on many factors besides birth rates and the existing student population, including immigration patterns. The forecasts assumed continued immigration of foreign-born students and a moderate amount of new housing construction.

The Miller Creek School District prepared its latest projections in 2017. The District anticipated relatively flat enrollment through 2020, which is consistent with the actual outcome. The forecast for the 2019-20 school year was within one percent of current enrollment. Miller Creek’s forecasts extend to the 2026-2027 school year. No significant change is expected during this period, with 1,971 students projected in the horizon year compared to 1,987 today.

### **Planning and Operational Issues**

Schools are an essential land use and valued community institution in San Rafael. Each campus serves not only as a center for education but also as a gathering place and a focal point for the community around it. Each school also exists within the context of an established neighborhood, creating the potential for conflicts and opportunities related to the types of activities that take place on campus. Common planning and operational issues include congestion related to student drop-off and pick-up, faculty and staff parking on residential streets, student parking around the high schools, and the safety of students walking and bicycling to school. Safe Routes to School Programs have been developed to address student safety. The Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM) has a school crossing guard program to facilitate its implementation.

The School Districts and City work collaboratively to address facility planning and operational issues. Community engagement has been a hallmark of the recent modernization and expansion program, with great consideration given to construction impacts on neighbors. The Districts also have adopted operating procedures and policies for community use of their facilities, including athletic fields, swimming pools, and multi-purpose rooms. The School Boards and City Council convene periodic joint meetings to address issues of mutual concern.

## **LIBRARIES**

San Rafael is served by a City-operated public library system that includes a main branch on E Street at Fifth Avenue and satellite branches at the Albert J Boro Community Center (Pickleweed) and Northgate Mall. The libraries are managed by a Library and Recreation Department that is also responsible for recreation programming, childcare, and arts services. In addition to the City Library system, the County of Marin operates a library facility on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of the Marin County Civic Center Administration Building.

The original Downtown Library opened in 1909 as a 5,160 square foot facility. It is one of 40 libraries in the Bay Area developed with donated funds from philanthropist Andrew Carnegie in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century and one of only a handful in the region that is still operating as a municipal public library today. The library was expanded in 1960 with a 6,000 square foot new wing added to its north side. It was expanded again in 1976 to its current size of 14,800 square feet. While the City's population has grown substantially in the last 45 years, the library has not. A 2017 assessment of library conditions concluded that the existing building has struggled not only to keep up with a growing population but with more diversity in collection formats and the accelerating use of new technologies.

The two branch libraries are similarly constrained. The Pickleweed Branch occupies 2,185 square feet of the Albert J Boro Community Center. It primarily serves the Canal neighborhood, an area with a large population of children, English learners, and lower income families. The library was established in the 1980s and expanded in 2006 but it remains small and has not kept pace with neighborhood needs. The Terra Linda Branch is a "pop-up" facility that occupies 3,000 square feet of interior storefront space at Northgate Mall. This branch was established in December 2018 in partnership with the Marin County Free Library and Merlone Geier Partners, owners of the Northgate Mall.

In 2017, the City completed a comprehensive evaluation of its library facilities and developed a vision for improvement. The process included extensive community input and a comparison of San Rafael's libraries relative to similarly sized Bay Area cities. Today, San Rafael has just 0.30 square feet of library space per resident. By contrast, South San Francisco has 0.64, Alameda has 0.68, Mountain View has 0.77, and Palo Alto has 1.35. Based on national standards of roughly 0.7 square feet per capita, San Rafael should have 40,000-45,000 square feet of library space today. By 2040, approximately 50,000 square feet may be required.

The community's vision for its libraries was articulated through a public process that engaged more than 1,400 people. Major themes included expanded core resources, increased access to services and programs, and a place for people. Core resources relates to the collection and materials in the library. This not only includes books, but also computers and digital materials and the accessibility and functionality of the library itself. Access to services and programs includes the hours of operation, meeting space, activities for children, library events, and cultural events. A "place for people" refers to the facility itself, including the desire for a clean, beautiful, modern, welcoming environment with comfortable seating and places to read, learn, and socialize.



Without sufficient space, the library's ability to fulfill this vision is limited. The existing library has no capacity for expanding its collection and suffers from limited seating, an inadequate number of computers, functionally obsolete meeting rooms, an inefficient layout, limited staff space, and a small circulation work room. The current collection includes roughly 120,000 physical volumes and 490,000 digital items. National best practices recommend a physical collection of between 220,000 to 260,000 items. There are 115 seats, when over 350 are needed.

Additional studies of library needs, and options for meeting those needs, were completed in 2019. The existing Downtown facility was assessed for code compliance and the cost of essential improvements. Alternatives for meeting long-range needs were also evaluated. These included three potential sites for the Downtown Library, an expansion of the Pickleweed branch, and three potential sites for a new Terra Linda branch.

Options for Downtown included three potential sites: expansion of the current Carnegie facility, a new facility at Boyd Park, and a renovated joint community center and library at Albert Park. All these sites are centrally located and relatively easy to access by a variety of travel modes. Regardless of the option, the outcomes included retention of the original Carnegie library for community use, recognizing its historic and cultural importance. More than 1,000 residents took part in a community survey to weigh in on these choices.

The Carnegie expansion and remodel option would result in a 27,000 square foot (SF) facility (roughly double the current facility) at a cost of \$34 million. The Boyd Park option would result in a 20,000 SF facility for \$23 million. It would require demolition of the tennis court and construction of underground parking. The Albert Park option, which was recommended by staff, would result in a 26,000 SF facility (plus another 17,700 SF of renovated community center space) and would cost \$43 million. Staff recommended this location was determined to have the greatest potential to benefit the community and would enable "economies of scale" due to its co-location with the community center and recreation program space.

The three options for Terra Linda included Northgate Mall, the Miller Creek School District administrative offices site, and the Terra Linda Community Center. The latter two options would likely require construction of a new building, whereas the former would repurpose existing space in the Mall. The Mall option has been identified as the preferred option, as a permanent library of up to 11,000 square feet could be constructed for an estimated \$1 to \$5 million.

The Pickleweed improvements could occur either by expanding the existing Albert J Boro Community Center by approximately 5,000 square feet, creating a 7,000 square foot library. The expanded facility would include program space for children, teen, and senior activities. An additional 36 parking spaces would be provided. The cost of this option was estimated to be \$7.4 million. A more cost-effective option, which was recommended by staff, was to explore options to repurpose space in the existing Albert J. Boro Community Center for shared library and recreation use. This would be more affordable and would preserve a barbecue and picnic area in Pickleweed Park that would otherwise be displaced by the expanded building.

