

REPORT TO GENERAL PLAN 2040 STEERING COMMITTEE

Subject: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Policies

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Staff has prepared Draft Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion policies for the 2040 General Plan. A number of the policies have been adapted from the Governance Element of General Plan 2020. However, most of the policies are new and have been crafted to address recent State General Plan legislation (SB 1000) and to reflect San Rafael's changing demographics and goal of being a more inclusive city. The goals focus on equity in health, housing, community services, and economic opportunity, with a focus on the needs of economically disadvantaged residents. This Element also address the needs of San Rafael's older adults.

This report provides an overview, followed by the proposed goals, policies, and programs. A separate Microsoft Word document (Attachment A) has been included for those who are interested in providing written comments. Written comments from all Committee members are encouraged.

REPORT

Background

In 2016, the State legislature approved Senate Bill 1000 (SB 1000), requiring that general plans include an "Environmental Justice" (EJ) Element. There are several required components, including the identification of "disadvantaged communities" and policies addressing the needs of such communities. EJ Elements must include policies to reduce exposure to pollution and promote public facilities, food access and security, safe and sanitary homes, and physical activity in disadvantaged communities. They also must include policies promoting meaningful community engagement for all persons. The EJ Element also provides an opportunity to address climate change impacts on vulnerable communities.

The requirement for an EJ Element is particularly relevant in San Rafael. Despite the city's location in one of the most affluent counties in California, the city's Canal neighborhood meets many of the disadvantaged community criteria. Data for the census tract corresponding to the "core" Canal area indicates that 57% of the population over 25 has not graduated from high school, 39% of the population lives below the federal poverty line, 66% live in housing units that meet the Census definition of "overcrowded," 26% lack health insurance, and 49% of all households are paying more than half of their incomes on their housing costs. The Canal area also has a lower life expectancy than other parts of the city, and 46% of its residents have limited English language proficiency. The neighborhood has a population of over 10,000, representing roughly one in six residents of San Rafael.

Other reports and studies have addressed the unique conditions and needs of the Canal area. In 2014, [Voces del Canal](#) was prepared through a joint effort by the Canal Alliance, Dominican University, and Data Center. The report engaged community members in developing a vision, analyzing community concerns, and setting priorities for the future. A subsequent report in 2015 (*Canal: An Immigrant Gateway at Risk*) studied gentrification and displacement risks in the community. The Canal is also vulnerable to sea level rise and flooding, as documented by recent initiatives related to climate change and resilience.

While the Canal is specifically addressed as a disadvantaged community in this Element, the document also looks more broadly at the needs of lower income, immigrant, and non-English speaking communities throughout San Rafael. It specifically addresses conditions in the Latino community, given that Latino and Hispanic residents comprise 30% of San Rafael’s residents and represent a majority of the city’s lower income population. Staff has prepared a background report on socio-economic and environmental justice indicators for the entire San Rafael Planning Area to provide a foundation for proposed policies. This report may be reviewed at [this link](#).

In October 2018, the City engaged the services of Communities in Collaboration, an Oakland-based firm specializing in the engagement of under-represented communities in planning and local government processes. In collaboration with Canal Alliance, Communities in Collaboration organized and facilitated a series of Spanish-language stakeholder meetings related to urban planning issues, conducted a “Facebook Live” event on the General Plan in Spanish, and administered a Spanish language survey on community planning issues to 135 participants. The results helped to identify issues and priorities, both for General Plan 2040 and for actions that will follow the General Plan’s adoption.

The policies in this Element are further informed by the SB 1000 Implementation Toolkit developed by the California Environmental Justice Alliance, and by a “best practices” review of other California general plans that have addressed equity, inclusion, and environmental justice issues. Because this is a relatively new requirement, there are only a few jurisdictions in California that have developed “EJ” Elements and an even smaller number that have directly addressed equity as a guiding principle of their plans.

While the focus of the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Element is on lower income and disadvantaged communities, the Element also addresses the unique needs of San Rafael’s older adults. Nearly 20% of the city’s residents are 65 or older, a figure that will grow significantly in the coming years. The Element provides an opportunity to address the unique housing, health care, transportation, and service needs of an aging population, particularly among lower-income older adults and those who are dependent on others for care.

Overview of Goals and Policies

The Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Element is organized into six primary goals.

Goal 1 addresses opportunities for meaningful, authentic participation by all members of the community in public processes. The goal and its policies are derived from a similar goal and policies in the 2020 General Plan Governance Element. However, policies and programs have been edited to focus

specifically on issues of equity and the engagement of disadvantaged and under-represented communities, consistent with SB 1000.

Goal 2 addresses community health and environmental justice, which is the major focus of SB 1000. It includes a policy to enhance public health by creating a safe, walkable city that is conducive to physical activity and fitness. It also includes policies addressing the importance of outdoor play space, awareness of health-related issues, support for neighborhood greening efforts, promotion of access to healthy food, and planning for a more resilient city. All of these policies are framed around the central issue of equity, and giving a greater voice to marginalized and lower income populations within San Rafael. Environmental justice is directly addressed through a policy to avoid creating disparate health impacts on lower income communities through land use and transportation decisions, and to remediate such impacts where they may exist today.

Goal 3 addresses housing, with a focus on improving housing stability, reducing displacement, and lessening the housing cost burden on lower income communities. Because there is an entire General Plan Element on this topic (e.g., the Housing Element), the intent of this goal is to recognize housing security as a fundamental equity and environmental justice issue and provide appropriate cross-references to the Housing Element for more detail. As required by state law, this goal addresses the importance of safe and sanitary homes as well as housing needs and affordability. It includes policies on overcrowding, emergency housing, rehabilitation, and code enforcement.

Goal 4 addresses service delivery. Consistent with SB 1000, the emphasis is on prioritizing service delivery and investment in capital improvements in those areas of San Rafael with the greatest unmet needs. Policies address the equitable maintenance of streets and public space, the importance of public safety and crime prevention efforts in areas with higher rates of crime, access to health care and transportation services, and support for organizations that provide “safety net” services to San Rafael’s lower income and special needs populations.

Goal 5 addresses education and economic opportunity. It includes policies supporting child care and after school services for working parents. It supports School District efforts to reduce achievement gaps and provide the educational services needed to help every child succeed. It addresses the importance of having a diverse economy that provides jobs for entry level workers, along with career “ladders” that provide opportunities to advance to better paying jobs. It also addresses support for small local businesses and start-ups, particularly for lower income and immigrant entrepreneurs who may lack access to capital and traditional financial resources. Programs in this section aim to leverage the Canal’s designation as a State “Opportunity Zone” to generate investment and grants for community improvements.

Goal 6 focuses on the quality of life for San Rafael’s older adult population. It builds on work done through the Age-Friendly San Rafael initiative, including the identification of the “eight domains of livable communities” for older adults developed by the AARP. The policies and programs in this section roughly follow the framework of the Marin County Livable for All Plan, which was released in January 2020. They provide a foundation for the Age Friendly Strategic Plan that is now being developed for San Rafael.

Next Steps

As noted, the Working Draft goals, policies, and programs are included on the following pages. A separate document (labelled Attachment A) has been provided in Microsoft Word format. Attachment A is formatted as a table, with a blank column on the right side for Steering Committee comments. Steering Committee members are encouraged to provide their comments electronically, and return the edited files to staff. The deadline for comments is **April 30, 2020**. Please resave the document so that your name is in the title before sending it back. And please don't worry if your comments cause the table format to change, or result in unintended page breaks.

Per our memo of March 31, the General Plan Steering Committee is being divided into four sub-committees due to the COVID-19 pandemic and shelter-in-place order. A sub-committee of 11 Steering Committee members is being created to discuss the Equity and Inclusion policies during a one-hour conference call. Members of this subcommittee will receive an email within the next few days with further detail on the call time and date. The call will be digitally recorded (audio only) and made available on line for those who are unable to participate.

Whether or not you are on the Equity/Inclusion Subcommittee, we encourage you to provide feedback on the Draft goals, policies, and programs. All comments will be considered provided that they are received by April 30.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION ELEMENT

Goal 1: Authentic and Inclusive Participation

Support opportunities for the meaningful involvement of all residents in local governance and policy making, regardless of their income, language, ethnicity, age, or family status. *Active, authentic, and inclusive public participation is essential to becoming a more just and equitable city. The City of San Rafael will partner with residents and community-based organizations to develop, implement, and evaluate engagement strategies that meet the needs of each community. It will promote shared leadership and decision-making to empower communities that have historically been under-represented in public processes. All residents should be able to participate in government in a meaningful way.*

Policy 1.1: Leadership in Equity and Inclusion

Provide countywide and regional leadership in the incorporation of equity and inclusion into local decision-making.

Program 1.1A: Training and Education. *Provide training and education on issues of equity and inclusion for City staff, Boards and Commissions, and advisory groups. This should include information about best practices in inclusive civic leadership.*

Program 1.1B: Equity Plan. *Prepare a citywide Equity Strategic Plan or similar document that provides guidance on ways to incorporate equity into City practices and procedures. Metrics to measure progress, including goals for public participation, should be developed and monitored after Plan adoption.*

Policy 1.2: Broad-Based Involvement. Partner with community-based organizations to engage populations whose voices have been under-represented in public processes because of language, mobility, citizenship, economic, and other barriers. Engagement should support self-determination and empowerment, as well as input on projects and plans.

Program 1.2A: Community Stakeholders. *Actively provide engagement opportunities through outreach programs specifically aimed at residents who are under-represented in public processes, such as immigrant communities and younger families. Use creative and community-driven methods for reaching under-represented groups, such as markets, churches, home visits, school events, cultural activities, and informal social networks.*

Program 1.2B: San Rafael Website. *Use the City's website and social media presence to improve participation in City government and increase access to City information and documents.*

Program 1.2C: Scheduling of Meetings. *Schedule public meetings and workshops at times and locations convenient to community members. Where feasible, provide child care, food, and other services to make meeting attendance easier.*

Program 1.2D: District Elections. *Optimize the opportunity for district-based elections to increase resident participation in local government, particularly among Latino residents.*

Policy 1.3: Effective and Equitable Communication

Emphasize effective two-way communication between City Hall and the community at large, including multi-lingual and culturally appropriate messaging, and engagement formats that reach all segments of the community.

***Program 1.3A: Removing Language Barriers.** Ensure that Latinx and other non-English-speaking populations may actively participate in the land use decision-making process through such methods as bilingual notices, translation of meeting materials, the use of accessible (non-jargon) language, Spanish language meetings, and having interpreters at public meetings.*

***Program 1.3B: Surveys.** Regularly use multilingual surveys, focus groups, and other outreach methods to solicit input from under-represented communities. Where feasible, outsource survey work to community organizations with engagement grants or stipends for participation.*

***Program 1.3C: Regularly Scheduled Meetings.** Convene regularly scheduled meetings with businesses and residents in the Canal area to address local priorities, and report out on program implementation, and support shared leadership and decision-making.*

Policy 1.4: Supporting Community-Based Organizations

Support community-based organizations and advocacy groups in their efforts to communicate more effectively and formally with the City and other public agencies. At the same time, enhance the City's capacity to improve listening, accountability, and reporting back to these organizations, and to the community at large.

***Program 1.4A: Advocacy Programs.** Support training, education, and advocacy programs by local institutions and social service providers to address the issues facing San Rafael's lower income and immigrant population.*

***Program 1.4B: Collaborations.** Collaborate with local nonprofits to develop and implement strategies to engage under-represented groups, reduce community disparities, and address critical issues.*

Policy 1.5: Advisory Committees

Use boards, commissions, task forces, and committees to assist City staff and the City Council in decision-making processes. Such groups should reflect San Rafael's demographics and be representative of all segments of the community.

***Program 1.5A: Board and Commission Diversity.** Monitor the composition of City Boards and Commissions, making efforts to provide representation that mirrors the City. When filling vacancies, focus recruitment and outreach efforts on under-represented populations.*

Policy 1.6: Youth in Government

Encourage and support the engagement of youth and younger adults in government, particularly on issues that directly affect them such as youth services and education.

Program 1.6A: Youth-Focused Outreach. *Work with local school districts, schools, youth and student groups, colleges, universities, and non-profits to increase youth involvement in local government and public processes. Youth engagement should be inclusive and reflective of San Rafael’s demographics.*

Goal 2: Healthy Communities and Environmental Justice

Support public health and wellness through community design in all parts of the city. *San Rafael’s development pattern and transportation system should support the fitness of its residents. Physical activity such as walking and cycling can reduce rates of obesity, heart disease, diabetes, and other chronic ailments. Land use decisions should avoid further compounding health risks in disadvantaged communities, and should reduce and remediate exposure to unhealthy air, high levels of noise, contaminated soil, smoke, and odors. San Rafael will promote a safe environment for all residents and ensure that people in every part of the city can lead healthy, active lives.*

Policy 2.1: Neighborhood Design for Active Living

Improve the design of San Rafael’s neighborhoods to promote physical activity for all residents, including opportunities for safe walking and cycling, and walkable access to goods and services.

Program 2.1A: Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements. *Implement pedestrian and bicycle improvements, as described in the General Plan Land Use and Mobility Elements and the San Rafael Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. This should include improved safety features, streetscape and landscape improvements, and other improvements that make it safer, easier, and more comfortable to be physically active in San Rafael, particularly in neighborhoods with less access to these features today.*

Program 2.1B: Public Health as an Evaluation Metric. *Consider public health data such as rates of asthma, heart disease, and obesity when prioritizing capital improvements such as bike lanes, new parks, and sidewalk improvements.*

See the Land Use and Mobility Elements for policies on increasing neighborhood walkability and developing “complete” neighborhoods.

Policy 2.2: Safe Space for Physical Activity

Provide safe physical spaces for children and families to play and be physically active in all neighborhoods, particularly in the Canal area and other neighborhoods where a majority of homes lack outdoor living space.

Program 2.2A: Increasing Usable Public Space. *Pursue opportunities for additional programmed public outdoor space, with a priority on higher density neighborhoods. Consider the use of City-owned vacant lots or rights-of-way as improved open space.*

Program 2.3B: Increasing Common Space in Multi-Family Housing. *Consider the conversion of underutilized areas in apartment complexes into shared outdoor amenities such as barbecue and picnic facilities.*

Policy 2.3: Community Health

Increase community awareness about best practices for maintaining physical and mental health. Incorporate such practices in City-sponsored activities and programs.

***Program 2.3A: HEAL Campaign.** Participate in the Marin Countywide Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) campaign, supporting actions that transform the physical environment to improve health, well-being, and physical activity.*

***Program 2.3B: Health Fairs.** Encourage multilingual community health fairs and other events that raise awareness of public health among all residents. Demonstrate best practices for public health and wellness at City-sponsored activities, such as serving healthy foods and encouraging walking and bicycling to the event.*

***Program 2.3C: Municipal Code Review.** Periodically evaluate City codes and ordinances for their impact on health, including provisions for tobacco, vaping, smoke-free multi-family housing, and standards for indoor air quality.*

Policy 2.4: Environmental Justice

Ensure that land use and transportation decisions do not create disparate environmental health conditions, such as air pollution and exposure to hazardous materials, for lower income populations. Work to reduce or eliminate such hazards where they currently exist.

***Program 2.4A: Reducing Exposure to Hazards.** As appropriate, utilize conditional use permit requirements for businesses adjacent to residential neighborhoods to reduce resident exposure to noise, odor, smoke, vibration, and other potentially harmful impacts.*

***Program 2.4B: Reducing Indoor Air Pollution.** Support the distribution of bilingual information on indoor air pollution hazards to vulnerable populations, including lower income renters. Respond to complaints about smoke and odors in multi-family projects and facilitate remediation.*

***Program 2.4C: Environmental Hazard Data.** Maintain data on environmental hazards, such as soil and groundwater contamination and the vulnerability of the population to such hazards, using sources such as Cal Enviroscreen.*

See the Safety Element for policies and programs to (a) require health risk assessments for new development near freeways and (b) reduce exposure to hazardous materials, including contaminated sites and new uses handling hazardous substances.

Policy 2.5: Neighborhood Greening

Encourage the greening of San Rafael's multi-family districts, including tree planting, landscaping, and other improvements that enhance aesthetics, reduce pollutants, and improve climate resilience.

***Program 2.5A: Greening Priorities.** Prioritize City-sponsored urban greening projects in residential areas that currently have lower rates of tree cover, higher residential densities, and limited access to open space.*

Policy 2.6: Responsible Retailing

Encourage responsible retailing of products with the potential to have adverse health impacts, such as tobacco and alcohol. Enforce laws that prohibit the sale or provision of such products to minors and avoid their overconcentration in areas with large numbers of students.

See the Economic Vitality Element for policies and programs on neighborhood business attraction and retention

Policy 2.7: Food Access

Expand access to healthy food and nutritional choices in San Rafael through conveniently located grocery stores, small markets, farmers markets, and community gardens, particularly in lower income areas where existing fresh food options are limited.

***Program 2.7A: Incentives.** Explore incentives for small local markets to offer healthier food options for nearby residents, including fresh produce.*

Policy 2.8: Urban Agriculture

Promote and support small-scale, neighborhood-based, food production and urban agriculture.

***Program 2.8A: Obstacles to Food Production.** Review, and revise as needed, San Rafael’s zoning regulations and codes to identify and remove barriers to urban gardening and small-scale food production in residential neighborhoods.*

Policy 2.9: Resiliency Planning

Improve resiliency planning for climate change, pandemics, and other disasters among non-English speaking and lower-income populations. Increase awareness of sea level rise and flooding risks in the Canal area, and the importance of adaptation measures.

***Program 2.9A: City Training Programs.** Continue City-sponsored programs such as Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training, the Citizens Police Academy, CPR training, and Neighborhood Watch. Create new programs to improve resident preparedness and readiness as resources allow and new issues emerge. Such programs should be tailored for neighborhoods that are particularly vulnerable or face barriers such as language and economic hardship.*

Goal 3: Housing Stability

Improve housing stability for all San Rafael residents, particularly those with low or very low incomes. Residents should live without fear of being displaced by high rents and a shortage of affordable housing options. The City will work to reduce overcrowded and substandard living conditions and will provide additional housing choices for people of all incomes.

Policy 3.1: Preventing Displacement

Prevent the displacement of lower income residents from their homes due to rising housing costs, evictions without cause, and other economic factors that make it difficult for people to stay in San Rafael.

Program 3.1A: Anti-Displacement Strategies. Include an Anti-Displacement Strategy in future plans or programs that could result in the direct removal of affordable housing units, the displacement of tenants, or economic hardships due to rapid rent increases.

Program 3.1B: Renter Protection Measures. Continue to explore and promote measures to protect San Rafael renters and facilitate positive communication between landlords and tenants.

Policy 3.2: Affordable Housing Development

Support the development of affordable rental housing to meet the needs of all San Rafael households.

See the San Rafael Housing Element for program recommendations to facilitate affordable housing construction.

Policy 3.3: Acquisition and Rehabilitation

Support efforts by local non-profits and other housing organizations to acquire private market rate apartment complexes and convert them to affordable housing using state and federal tax credit programs and other financing tools.

See the San Rafael Housing Element for program recommendations to facilitate affordable housing construction.

Policy 3.4: Healthy Homes

Promote and ensure safe and sanitary housing and healthy living conditions for all residents, particularly lower income renters.

Program 3.4A: Healthy Homes. Support programs and regulations that support healthier homes, including the abatement of toxic hazards such as lead and mold, the use of non-toxic materials and finishes, and design features that improve ventilation.

Policy 3.5: Property Maintenance

Improve property maintenance and housing conditions in all parts of the city and encourage the rehabilitation of housing that is substandard or poses a hazard to its occupants.

Program 3.5A: Code Enforcement. Provide effective code enforcement efforts in all communities, with an emphasis on abating unsafe or unsanitary conditions. Ensure that the abatement of violations does not increase housing cost burdens or result in displacement of lower-income households.

Program 3.5B: Rental Inspections. Continue the Periodic Housing Inspection Program and Residential Building Record (RBR) inspections to ensure the safety and habitability of all housing units.

Policy 3.6: Reducing Overcrowding

Work with local advocacy groups to evaluate the housing circumstances of immigrant and refugee populations in San Rafael, including overcrowding. Determine implementation measures to reduce overcrowding and ensure housing security for all.

Program 3.6A: Incentives for Larger Housing Units. Consider density bonuses and other incentives for three-bedroom affordable rental units in new construction to meet the need for housing suitable for larger households.

Policy 3.7: Emergency Housing Services

Support agencies and organizations that provide emergency shelter, housing, and other services related to the needs of vulnerable communities, including temporary housing for displaced persons and persons experiencing homelessness.

Program 3.7A: Emergency Housing for At Risk Groups. Work with community-based organizations to develop alternative funding resources and other emergency measures for immigrant groups and other at-risk groups who may not qualify for financial assistance in an emergency.

Goal 4: Equitable Service Delivery

Improve self-sufficiency and empowerment among lower income and immigrant communities through equitable access to education, health care, public safety, transportation, and social services.
The City will support the equitable distribution of City facilities and delivery of City services and will prioritize improvements in communities with the greatest needs.

Policy 4.1: Prioritizing Public Investment in Disadvantaged Communities

Prioritize public investment in capital projects and public facilities that meet the needs of disadvantaged communities.

Program 4.1A: Equity Metrics. Use benchmarks and indicators such as household income, the presence of children, and past investment patterns, to inform decisions about the location of future public investments.

Policy 4.2: Equitable Maintenance of Streets and Public Space

Ensure that street cleaning, litter removal, abatement of illegal dumping, and the repair of roads, sidewalks, streetlights and public facilities, is performed equitably across the city. Responses to reports of nuisances and violations should be performed without regard to income or tenure.

Program 4.2A: Nuisance Reporting Systems. Support programs that allow residents and businesses to easily report incidences of illegal dumping, roadside garbage and litter, vandalism, graffiti, noise, smoke and fumes, and other nuisances. Maintain data on calls, responses, and follow-up activities.

Program 4.2B: Security and Safety Improvements. Pursue public safety improvements, including street lighting, security cameras, better wayfinding signage, and improved sidewalk

conditions, with a focus on neighborhoods with higher levels of need and fewer available resources.

Policy 4.3: Public Safety in Disadvantaged Communities

Build positive relationships between law enforcement, residents, and businesses in the Canal community to create a stronger sense of trust and confidence. Ensure that the safety concerns of disadvantaged communities are prioritized by law enforcement, with a focus on serious crimes rather than minor infractions.

***Program 4.3A: Neighborhood Safety Partnerships.** Encourage partnerships between Canal area residents and local police to address law enforcement concerns, including organized events such as neighborhood walks and police “walking the beat” to create personal relationships and learn about community issues.*

Policy 4.4: Public Health Equity

Promote community health services, programs, and partnerships that improve outcomes for economically disadvantaged residents, including better access to medical, mental health, and social services.

***Program 4.4A: Mobile Health Care.** Facilitate the use of public buildings such as libraries, community centers, and schools for “pop up” health services and other activities that promote wellness.*

Policy 4.5: Food Security

Improve food security and nutrition, particularly among lower income and senior residents.

***Program 4.5A: Food Assistance Programs.** Support resident access to food assistance programs, including local food banks and WIC and CalFresh (“food stamps”) programs. Encourage the acceptance of food subsidy vouchers at retail food outlets throughout San Rafael.*

***Program 4.5B: Reduced Cost Meals.** Support free and reduced cost meal programs for those with the greatest needs, including low income children, seniors, and persons experiencing homelessness.*

Policy 4.6: A Compassionate City

Support organizations and service providers that help those in need in San Rafael. Non-profit and public entities providing housing, transportation, health care, and other social services to lower income clients are valued community partners and should remain an essential part of San Rafael’s “safety net.”

***Program 4.6A: Connecting Social Service Providers.** Increase awareness of social service programs by improving communication between residents and service providers, facilitating communication between the service providers themselves, and providing more opportunity for interaction between residents and City leaders.*

***Program 4.6B: Collaborative Service Model.** Encourage and support collaborative efforts to address local health care and social service needs, including partnerships with non-*

profits and service providers, partnerships with the County of Marin and other Marin cities, and interdepartmental efforts within the City of San Rafael.

Policy 4.7: Transportation Improvements

Integrate equity into San Rafael’s transportation planning and operations. Work with Caltrans, TAM, and local transit agencies to ensure that their services and improvements recognize the needs of households with more limited travel options and focus on increasing mobility for all residents.

***Program 4.7A: Transit Improvements.** Work with Marin Transit and the GGBHTD to collect and analyze data on the workplace location of San Rafael’s transit-dependent population so that transit routes are responsive to needs, and optimally serve those without cars.*

***Program 4.7B: Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements.** Prioritize pedestrian and bicycle improvements in areas where the concentration of pedestrians and bicycles is highest, and where residents have fewer resources and options to travel. Improve access to bicycles, helmets, and related equipment for lower income families.*

***Program 4.7C: Parking.** Continue to address parking needs in the Canal area, including time-limited parking, shared parking (agreements to use business parking lots for residential parking in the evening), creating additional parking spaces in multi-family complexes, and potential municipal parking facilities.*

Policy 4.8: Community Benefits

Support community benefit programs in which new projects receive development bonuses in exchange for providing facilities and amenities that benefit underserved communities, such as affordable housing, childcare, and recreation facilities.

Goal 5: Access to Education and Economic Opportunity

Reduce barriers to education and economic mobility for all San Rafael residents. *The City will collaborate with private, non-profit, and other public partners to support quality education, affordable childcare and after school programming, vocational training and career advancement, and programs to help residents overcome barriers to employment and economic stability. Every San Rafael resident should have the chance to learn, grow, prosper, and succeed.*

Policy 5.1: Child Care and Early Childhood Development

Support expanded capacity for affordable childcare and early childhood development centers in San Rafael, including City-sponsored programs.

Policy 5.2: After School Activities

Provide safe, affordable after-school opportunities for children, along with information on programs for members of the community who may be unaware of these opportunities. Work with the community to identify gaps and unmet needs, such as extended hours and weekend activities, and to increase access to services.

Policy 5.3: Reducing Academic Achievement Gaps

Support local schools in their commitment to equity and reducing achievement gaps among students from different socio-economic groups. Encourage programs and initiatives to assist students with special educational needs or household circumstances that create barriers to learning.

***Program 5.3A: Financial Aid.** Raise student and family awareness of opportunities for grants, scholarships, internships, and programs that provide financial assistance for education and career development.*

Policy 5.4: Employment Readiness

Improve the bridge between education and employment by helping San Rafael students prepare for jobs in the local and regional economy and promoting career resources for students in a variety of fields.

***Program 5.4A: Youth Employment.** Encourage youth training and employment programs and similar measures to improve career opportunities for younger San Rafael residents.*

Policy 5.5: Career Ladders

Support investment in programs and services that create career ladders for lower income workers and support advancement to better paying jobs and greater financial stability.

See the Economic Vitality Element for relevant programs

Policy 5.6: Workforce Retention

Recognize the economic contribution of San Rafael’s low- and moderate-income workforce to the local and regional economies, and to providing essential services in times of crisis. Preserve existing jobs and ensure that the City continues to provide pathways to employment for persons with a variety of skill and education levels.

***Program 5.6A: Measuring Workforce Contributions.** Develop data to quantify the contribution of San Rafael’s low- and moderate-income workforce to the local and regional economies. Use this data to develop responsive economic development policies and programs and increase the safety net for critical low-income workers.*

See the Economic Vitality Element for Workforce Development policies and programs

Policy 5.7: Small Business Support

Create a supportive environment for small, minority-owned businesses in San Rafael. Effectively respond to small business concerns related to crime, infrastructure, litter, parking, and similar issues.

***Program 5.7A: Business Assistance.** Explore opportunities to assist San Rafael’s small minority-owned businesses and entrepreneurs.*

***Program 5.7B: Hiring Incentives.** Support incentives for contractors and builders to hire local workers, with a focus on increasing business opportunities for lower-income tradespersons.*

Policy 5.8: State and Federal Programs

Identify areas in San Rafael that are eligible for state and federal funding or other financial benefits due to demographic and economic conditions. Pursue grants and participate in programs that address these conditions and improve economic opportunity for local residents and businesses.

Program 5.8A: Opportunity Zone. Continue to evaluate the potential benefits of the designation of the Core Canal Census Tract as an “opportunity zone” by the State of California, including possible funding for transit, affordable housing, and capital improvements. Activities related to the Opportunity Zone designation should include specific provisions to minimize the displacement of residents and businesses.

Policy 5.9: Affordable Commercial Space

Encourage affordable space for community-serving non-profits, supportive service providers, and organizations that assist disadvantaged populations. Avoid the displacement of these businesses due to rising rents.

Program 5.9A: Cooperatives. Encourage cooperative ownership of assets such as housing, vacant land, local energy systems, and incubator business space as a way to reduce business operating costs.

Policy 5.10: Bridging the Digital Divide

Encourage future advances in technology and new technology infrastructure to be equitably distributed so that households of all incomes may benefit. Consider ways to make technology resources more affordable and accessible to lower income households.

Goal 6: An Age-Friendly Community

Enhance the quality of life for older adults in San Rafael. *As an inclusive community, San Rafael is a city that works for everyone, regardless of age or ability. The City will provide access to services and resources that make it easier for older adults to stay active and connected. It will plan and provide appropriately for older adults who need assistance.*

Policy 6.1: Planning for an Aging Population

Proactively address the needs of San Rafael’s aging population through collaboration, planning, and programs.

Program 6.1A: Age Friendly Plan. Prepare an Age-Friendly Strategic Plan for San Rafael that identifies specific actions to ensure that older adults may thrive in the community. Periodically monitor progress on Plan implementation, consistent with WHO Age-Friendly Global Network guidelines.

Policy 6.2: Aging in Community

Improve opportunities for older adults to age in place and continue living independently in their San Rafael homes. At the same time, provide more options for those seeking to “age in community” and relocate to suitable housing in the city that includes supportive services, smaller units, and access for persons with mobility limitations.

Program 6.2A: Aging in Place. Continue to support programs and services that assist older adults with home modifications that facilitate aging in place. Support home sharing programs that pair empty nesters with rental seekers.

Program 6.2B: Affordable Housing Options for Older Adults. Encourage the construction of affordable senior housing, and accessory dwelling units that provide more affordable alternatives for older adults. Also, support programs that provide direct and indirect assistance for older renters.

Policy 6.3: Mobility for Older Adults

Maintain mobility options for San Rafael’s older adults by providing safe streets and flexible, responsive public and private transportation services, including services specifically designed for those with mobility limitations.

Program 6.3A: On-Demand Transportation Services. Improve on-demand transportation options for older adults, including volunteer driver programs.

Program 6.3B: Universal Access. Incorporate principles of universal access in the design of public facilities, sidewalks, and outdoor spaces and buildings. Reduce risks associated with falling and improve lighting and sidewalk conditions in areas where hazards may exist.

Policy 6.4: Accessible Community Services

Provide a range of convenient and accessible services for San Rafael’s older adults, including health and wellness, caregiving, recreation and fitness activities, and social services.

Program 6.4A: Access to Resources. Improve access to community programs and resources for older adults, including increased on-line services and technology training.

Policy 6.5: Disaster Preparedness

Ensure that the needs of older San Rafael residents are specifically considered in disaster preparedness planning, and that barriers and challenges are effectively addressed.

Program 6.5.A: Outreach and Education. Engage older adults in focused disaster preparedness outreach and education, emergency and shelter-in-place drills, wildfire prevention programs, and evacuation plans. Focus on older adults with the greatest needs, including in-home support.

Policy 6.6: Social Connections

Strengthen social connections for older adults living alone by providing accessible community activities, programs that avoid loneliness and social isolation, and demonstrating respect and value for each individual.

Program 6.6A: Inclusion and Participation Initiatives. Provide opportunities for social connections, including discounted or free community events, intergenerational programs, mental health services, and working with organizations such as Marin Villages to engage and empower older adults.