

San Pedro Peninsula

The San Pedro Peninsula is a beautiful part of San Rafael combining residential neighborhoods, marinas, local retail uses, an active rock quarry, wetlands, and large hillside open spaces. It is also one of San Rafael's defining geographic features, extending roughly three miles eastward along the spine of San Pedro Ridge to form the divide between San Pablo Bay to the north and San Francisco Bay to the south. Today the Peninsula is home to roughly 6,500 residents, most along its southern shore. The northern shore is largely contained within China Camp State Park and Santa Venetia (both unincorporated).¹

Neighborhoods on the San Pedro Peninsula are connected by Point San Pedro Road, the sole arterial street providing local access to Highway 101 and Downtown San Rafael. Point San Pedro Road also serves as the access route to the San Rafael Rock Quarry. The Point San Pedro Road Coalition, a non-profit organization representing the interests of residents and homeowner associations along the Point San Pedro Road corridor, was formed in 1999 to represent the community on matters related to the Quarry and associated transportation issues. Over the past two decades, the Coalition's role has expanded to include advocacy and education on environmental, land use, emergency preparedness, and other issues.

The San Pedro Peninsula has played an important role in San Rafael history. When George and John McNear purchased the land in 1869, they envisioned a shipping terminal and railroad there. Ultimately, the McNears developed a brickyard, quarry, beach resort, and dairy. Suburban development started with the Marin Golf and Country Club (1908) and Bayside Acres (1911). The country club closed in 1939 and was redeveloped as the Country Club neighborhood beginning in 1948. Most of the peninsula was developed in the late 1950s and early 1960s, with Loch Lomond starting construction in 1956, Glenwood in 1957 and Peacock Gap in 1959. The northern side of the peninsula has its own legacy, described later in this chapter (see China Camp State Park, page 9).

General Plan 2040 does not envision major changes on the San Pedro Peninsula during the time horizon of this Plan. A strong focus should be placed on emergency preparedness, adaptation to sea level rise, and wildfire prevention. As noted in the text on pages 7-8, the Quarry presents long-term opportunities for reuse. However, General Plan 2040 assumes continuation of existing uses and activities for the foreseeable future. Ongoing dialogue between the Quarry operators and neighbors is important to ensure that Quarry operations remain compatible with permit conditions and neighborhood well-being.

The neighborhood discussions below cover the following sub-areas:

- Peacock Gap
- Glenwood
- Loch Lomond / Canal North Shore

The final part of this section addresses unincorporated areas, including:

- San Rafael Rock Quarry
- Country Club
- Bayside Acres
- China Camp

¹ Santa Venetia is addressed in the North San Rafael section of this Element.

The following overarching policies apply to the entire peninsula:

Policy SPP-1: San Pedro Peninsula

Maintain the San Pedro Peninsula as an attractive, residential area with scenic waterfront and open space amenities, quality community services and facilities, protected environmental resources, and continued improvements to public safety and emergency preparedness. Work with Marin County to holistically address issues of mutual concern to the City, County, and residents of incorporated and unincorporated areas, including flooding, speed enforcement, and sidewalk and median maintenance on Point San Pedro Road.

Program SPP-1A: Hazard Mitigation. *Implement programs to improve the resilience of the San Pedro Peninsula to natural hazards, including:*

- a) *Reinforcing the shoreline to reduce flooding and sea level rise hazards and explore other mitigations.*
- b) *Managing wildfire hazards, particularly through vegetation management on hillside open space, replacement of hazardous trees with native species when possible, and coordination with the State and other open space stewards to reduce hazards in China Camp State Park and McNear Beach.*
- c) *Working with utility operators to ensure a reliable power supply and telecommunication services at all times (i.e., before, during, and after an emergency).*
- d) *Continuing emergency preparedness efforts, including evacuation procedures and identification of short-term and longer-term shelter locations, medical services, and supplies.*
- e) *Identification of alternate emergency evacuation routes via China Camp and North San Pedro Road.*
- f) *Support for micro-grids to improve the reliability and sustainability of electrical service and minimize the impacts of outages.*
- g) *Innovative solutions to flooding and sea level rise, such as creation of artificial beaches, reworking rip rap to attenuate wave energy, and improving the promenade west of the McNear Brickyard, among others.*

Program SPP-1B: Community Center. *Explore opportunities to create a public community center that can serve as a location for programs, recreational services, community events, and emergency preparedness/response. This should include opportunities created at such time that the San Rafael Rock Quarry/McNear Brickyard ceases operations and is planned for reuse.*

Program SPP-1C: Wetlands. *Explore forward-thinking and sustainable ways to maintain and improve the vitality of the wetlands along the Peninsula shoreline. Work cooperatively with the County to manage wetlands in the unincorporated area.*

Policy SPP-2: Point San Pedro Road

Maintain Point San Pedro Road as a safe, attractive, well-maintained transportation route serving San Pedro Peninsula neighborhoods.

Program SPP-2A: Point San Pedro Road Improvements. *Continue efforts to maintain Point San Pedro Road as a vital community lifeline. This should include long-term plans to raise the road elevation and increase the height of the rock wall along the shoreline. It should also include maintaining traffic capacity and flow, exploring opportunities for public transit, reducing vehicle noise through special pavement, providing safer conditions for bicyclists and pedestrians, ensuring emergency vehicle access, and maintaining the median and roadside areas.*

PEACOCK GAP²

The Peacock Gap neighborhood is developed with single family homes, townhomes, and the Peacock Gap Golf Club. The Golf Club, which is privately owned but open to the public, includes an 18-hole golf course, driving range, clubhouse, restaurant and pro shop. The neighborhood includes two City parks (Peacock and Riviera) as well as San Rafael Fire Station 55. The hills above the neighborhood provide a scenic visual backdrop as well as trail access to China Camp State Park. The community has recreational access to San Pablo Bay at McNears Beach and also includes Peacock Gap Lagoon, an aquatic area with native and migratory waterfowl.

Peacock Gap was initially developed as a master planned community. There is a distinct and open feel to the neighborhood that residents have worked hard to maintain. Other subdivisions in the vicinity, including Marin Bay Park, Chapel Cove, and Ridge of San Rafael, have similar characteristics, creating a cohesive quality that is valued by residents.

Other than upgrades by individual homeowners, little change is expected in the residential portion of the neighborhood over the next 20 years. Emergency preparedness remains a priority. Peacock Gap is vulnerable to wildfire and flooding, and lower portions of the neighborhood and lagoon area will be more susceptible to sea level rise in the future. Residents have also expressed a need for park maintenance and reinvestment, improved utility reliability, water quality improvements at the Lagoon, and improved vegetation management and hazard reduction. The future of the San Rafael Rock Quarry and McNear Brickworks, located just south of Peacock Gap at Point San Pedro, is of critical importance to the neighborhood. Residents should be closely involved in future planning activities (see pages 7-8).



² (see “Unincorporated Neighborhoods” section for Rock Quarry Discussion)

Policy SPP-3: Maintenance of Public Facilities and Infrastructure

Maintain and enhance City infrastructure and public facilities serving the Peacock Gap neighborhood.

Program SPP-3A: Environmental Quality Improvements. *Ensure that City properties and infrastructure are maintained in a way that protects environmental quality, reduces hazards, and protects the quality of life. This should include maintenance of stormwater pumps at Riviera Drive and Point San Pedro Road, implementing best practices for reducing siltation and improving water quality in the Peacock Gap Lagoon, renovating and maintaining Peacock and Riviera Parks, and continuing efforts to improve roads and other infrastructure.*

GLENWOOD

Glenwood is a neighborhood of approximately 650 single family homes located along on the southern slopes and valleys of San Pedro Ridge. The neighborhood was developed in the late 1950s and 1960s on land surrounding the Erskine B. McNear house, a 1906 mansion that is now a National Register Historic Landmark. The neighborhood includes a mix of architectural styles, but is fairly consistent in scale, lot size, and character. Larger lots and a few newer custom homes are located in the hillier portions of the neighborhood. Knight Drive serves as the primary access road to the neighborhood.

Although Glenwood is mostly residential, it includes Glenwood Elementary School, Church of the Redeemer, and Victor Jones Park, all of which are important neighborhood gathering places. The neighborhood also includes an open space reserve, with trail connections to China Camp State Park and other open spaces. The neighborhood is actively working to address wildfire prevention and disaster preparedness. Tidal flooding is a growing concern in lower elevation areas, exacerbated by sea level rise. Glenwood residents also seek improvements to Victor Jones Park and better use of the school for community activities.



**The Point San Pedro Road Median:
The Power of Partnerships**

The Point San Pedro Road Median Assessment District is a testament to the community spirit and creative energy of San Pedro Peninsula residents. In the early 2010s, funding to maintain the medians had evaporated due to the Great Recession, prompting property owners to organize, fund raise, and eventually vote to establish a 20-year special assessment to cover these costs. The Assessment District was created in 2011 and established a reliable funding source to plant and maintain 4.5 miles of roadway median along the length of peninsula.

Through a unique partnership with the City's Department of Public Works, more than 245 new trees and thousands of shrubs were planted and aging irrigation systems were replaced. The special district helped finance the project and established a stable funding source for ongoing operations and maintenance.

LOCH LOMOND/ CANAL NORTH SHORE

The Loch Lomond area includes several neighborhoods along Point San Pedro Road between Country Club and Bayside Acres, including Loch Lomond, Loch Lomond Highlands, The Village at Loch Lomond Marina (including The Strand), and Villa Real. This area also includes adjacent smaller subdivisions on the north shore of the San Rafael Canal such as Harbor Estates, Marina Vista, Porto Bello, Royal Court, San Pedro Cove, and Seastrand. While each neighborhood has its own identity, they share common issues and objectives shaped by their proximity to the shoreline and hillside open spaces.

The neighborhood is home to the 131-acre Loch Lomond Marina, one of the largest marinas in the North Bay. There are 517 berths, including 52 approved for “live-aboards.” Initially established in the early 1950s, the Marina has been extensively renovated, including new docks, a public launch ramp, and a new boardwalk and green along the water’s edge. The newly reinforced breakwater offers pedestrian access along the shoreline and striking views of the Bay, the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge, Mt. Tamalpais, and the Marin Islands. Restoration of seasonal wetlands on the site has recently been completed, with fencing to ensure protection of wildlife.

In 2007, the City approved a development plan for the area between the Marina and Point San Pedro Road. Construction on The Village at Loch Lomond Marina began in 2013. The neighborhood will ultimately have 81 residential units, including detached residences, cottages, and townhomes, as well as condominiums in a mixed-use building to be developed on Loch Lomond Drive. Andy’s Market has been rebuilt as a full-service grocery store and re-opened in 2017. The Village project includes numerous publicly accessible recreation amenities, all of which were privately constructed. These are maintained through a Community Facilities District (CFD), with an annual assessment levied on property owners within the boundaries.

Beyond Loch Lomond Marina, there are few opportunities for development in the neighborhood. The area is mostly built out and its vacant sites are constrained by steep slopes, flooding, and access. Ongoing efforts should be made to maintain infrastructure and roads, reduce fire hazards, address sea level rise, and ensure the compatibility of new construction with existing development. The community is also interested in working with San Rafael City Schools to address construction, traffic congestion, safety, and drainage issues at San Pedro Elementary School.

Policy PSP-4: Loch Lomond Marina

Maintain and enhance the Loch Lomond Marina and adjacent properties as a community asset, new neighborhood and commercial center, and gathering place and recreational amenity for the San Pedro Peninsula. Conditions of approval and provisions of the amended Master Plan for the Village at Loch Lomond Marina shall be honored as work on the project continues.

Program PSP-4A: Completion of Village Improvements. Pursue timely completion of the Village at Loch Lomond Marina project consistent with approved plans, as amended. This should include:

- a) *Completion of the remaining residential units and mixed-use building.*
- b) *Construction of the Harbormasters office, boat repair facility, fuel storage and pumping facility/fuel dock, and reskinning of the yacht club building.*
- c) *Completion of recreational improvements, including a kayak dock and launch ramp and public access improvements in the center plaza.*
- d) *Flood-related repair work to previously completed areas and further measures to reduce flooding during peak storm events and king tides.*
- e) *Completion of the pedestrian access path.*
- f) *Off-site road and utility improvements along Point San Pedro Road.*
- g) *Installation of a bird viewing area and interpretive signage.*



Program PSP-4B: Parking and Traffic Studies. Consistent with the conditions of approval, monitor traffic and parking conditions at Loch Lomond Marina. A traffic and parking study should be done within one year of completion of the project as required under the permits to determine the need to retain areas currently reserved for future parking.

Program PSP-4C: Common Area Maintenance. Continue to maintain publicly-accessible parks, shoreline areas, and a marina green through a community facilities (Mello-Roos) district.

Program PSP-4D: Community Engagement. Continue to engage the community, including representatives of nearby homeowner and neighborhood associations, in the review of progress and resolution of issues related to the Village development and Marina operations.

Program PSP-4E: Coordination with Regulatory Agencies. Continue coordination of project-related activities with natural resource agencies, including the Bay Conservation and Development Commission, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and other agencies with responsibility for the Bay and wetland areas.

Policy PSP-5: Loch Lomond Area and Canal North Shore Neighborhoods

Sustain the Loch Lomond and Canal North Shore areas as safe and attractive parts of San Rafael featuring waterfront and hillside neighborhoods, accessible open space and shoreline areas, and well-managed roads, infrastructure and public facilities.

Program PSP-5A: Disaster Preparedness. Continue efforts to improve disaster preparedness and reduce hazards, including a fire break along the ridgeline above Loch Lomond Highlands, continued maintenance of storm drainage facilities, and adaptation to sea level rise along San Rafael Bay and the San Rafael Creek shoreline.

UNINCORPORATED NEIGHBORHOODS

While much of the San Pedro Peninsula was annexed to San Rafael as it was developed, several of the older neighborhoods—and the San Rafael Rock Quarry—remain unincorporated. Bayside Acres and Country Club are County “islands” surrounded by the City of San Rafael. Large-scale annexation of these areas is not anticipated, although individual properties or groups of properties could potentially be annexed with property owner support. The unincorporated areas also participate in the Special Tax District funding the upgrade and maintenance of the medians on the roadway and have a vested interest in their upkeep.

SAN RAFAEL ROCK QUARRY AND MCNEAR BRICKYARD

The San Rafael Rock Quarry and McNear Brickworks remain operational and continue to mine, manufacture, and transport aggregate, asphalt, brick, and construction materials via truck and barge to points throughout the San Francisco Bay Area, Sacramento River Delta, and beyond. The Rock Quarry provides vital infrastructure for the region. An Amended Reclamation Plan for the Quarry was approved by the County in 2010 after considerable public input. The 2010 Plan calls for the property to be reclaimed in phases parallel to the completion of mining operations and envisions its future redevelopment with a harbor and marina along with commercial, residential, neighborhood commercial, administrative/professional, and open space uses.

The operator of the Quarry has submitted an application to extend its Reclamation Plan and operations through 2044 to allow access to rock reserves remaining under the existing Quarry entitlements. This application has yet to undergo environmental review and approval by the County. The timing for future activities, including phasing of reclamation, will be assessed as part of the County review process. In 2004, the Quarry was found by a court to have vested (“grandfathered”) rights to mine, subject to limits imposed by its operating permit.

Policy SPP-6: San Rafael Rock Quarry Operations

Continue to work with the County of Marin, the Quarry operator, and area residents to address community concerns and minimize impacts of Quarry operations on surrounding residents, including noise, air quality, vibration, street maintenance, and truck traffic.

***Program SPP-6A: Quarry Impacts.** Seek ongoing input into County code enforcement activities, land use entitlements, and negotiations with Quarry operator that might reduce impacts on City infrastructure or properties in the City of San Rafael.*

***Program SPP-6B: Environmental Review.** If and when the Quarry applies for modifications to its existing Operating Permit, participate in discussions to ensure that:*

- a) Potential environmental impacts and hazards are minimized.*
- b) Public safety and quality of life are protected.*
- c) Traffic and noise impacts are addressed, particularly impacts on Point San Pedro Road.*
- d) Future public costs associated with reclamation, such as long-term environmental restoration and infrastructure repair, are objectively evaluated and considered in decisions about future Quarry operations.*
- e) Collaborate with residents to ensure that any modifications to the existing Operating Permit remain within the restrictions imposed by existing and future court orders.*

Policy SPP-7: San Rafael Rock Quarry and McNear Brickworks Long-Term Plans

If operations cease during the timeframe of this Plan, consider annexation and redevelopment of the San Rafael Rock Quarry and McNear Brickworks, taking into account the following:

- a) Consider the County's Amended Reclamation Plan, as it may be further amended in the future, in land use decisions. The current Reclamation Plan supports a mixture of single family residences, townhomes, and condominium units; a marina; commercial, recreational, hospitality, and other neighborhood-serving uses; and open space. A revised Reclamation Plan is anticipated during the timeframe of this General Plan and could alter the planned post-mining uses. Specific future uses would be determined through a separate entitlement process that would potentially include annexation into the City.
- b) Consider redevelopment of the site to the extent that traffic capacity is available and the project can meet the City's transportation standards, including performance of intersections between the site and US 101. Alternative modes of transportation may be considered to facilitate compliance with City standards. Water transit (including water taxis and potential ferry service) should be considered in any phase of the project and factored into the transportation analysis.
- c) If needed for traffic capacity and to the extent consistent with City traffic standards, Point San Pedro Road should be expanded to four lanes east of Riviera Drive, including traffic calming measures and bicycle lanes consistent with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.
- d) Create a public use park band along the existing shoreline averaging at least 100 feet in width linking McNears Beach with the public walkway along Point San Pedro Road, as approved by the Bay Conservation and Development Commission.
- e) Consider opportunities for multi-use community facilities serving residents of the San Pedro Peninsula and beyond, such as a center for the arts, education, and the environment.
- f) Protect and enhance the freshwater marsh and ponds, taking sea level rise impacts into consideration. Consider restoring the saltwater marsh to tidal action.
- g) Preserve and gradually restore tree species native to the site's woodland areas.
- h) Incorporate some of the historic brickworks into the project's design.
- i) Consider redevelopment of the site in phases as reclamation is completed in specific areas. The McNear Brickyard would likely be the first phase and would require a site access road from Point San Pedro Road that is separate from the road accessing the mining and asphalt operations. Phased redevelopment would require amendments to the existing Quarry entitlements to be approved by the County in coordination with the property owner.

Program SPP-7A: Quarry Planning. Participate, through the County of Marin, in any revisions to the San Rafael Rock Quarry Reclamation Plan, which should form the basis for decisions about future land uses and possible annexation.

Program SPP-7B: Shoreline Use. Use the development review process to establish a bay frontage linear park that connects McNear Beach to the existing shoreline walkway along Point San Pedro Road. The park should incorporate sea level rise adaptation measures.

BAYSIDE ACRES

Bayside Acres is one of the oldest neighborhoods on the peninsula. It includes about 100 homes on the inland (hill) side of Point San Pedro Road and 65 homes on the bay side. Homes on the hill side have a semi-rural quality and are located on larger lots accessed by narrow winding streets. Homes on the bay side are on smaller lots, many with waterfront access. This area includes Chicken Point, which was once a small island surrounded by marshes. Saltwater marshland remains along Beach Drive today.

No land use changes are envisioned in Bayside Acres during the timeframe of General Plan 2040. The City will work with the County and neighborhood residents to address local issues, including sea level rise adaptation and wildfire hazard reduction. The community has expressed interest in installing a back-up generator at the Beach Drive pump station, reducing sedimentation of the inlet between Bayside Acres and Loch Lomond Marina, and continuing efforts to mitigate noise and traffic from the Rock Quarry.

COUNTRY CLUB

Country Club is the largest of the unincorporated pockets surrounded by the City of San Rafael, encompassing roughly 300 acres. While most of the neighborhood consists of larger lots on hillside sites, the area also includes a portion of the Lowrie's Yacht Harbor and nearby suburban development closer to Point San Pedro Road. Almost all of the lots in the community are developed. No land use changes are anticipated during the timeframe of General Plan 2040. Residents share the same concerns as those in nearby City neighborhoods regarding wildfire and landslide hazards, sea level rise and flooding, and traffic congestion along Point San Pedro as it transitions to Third Street.

CHINA CAMP STATE PARK

China Camp State Park includes 1,640 acres along the northern shore of the San Pedro Peninsula, extending up to and over San Pedro Ridge. The park has important cultural resources, including a former Chinese-American fishing village and prehistoric shell midden. In the late 1800s, the village housed nearly 500 people and was a refuge for Chinese residents facing discrimination elsewhere. The village was largely abandoned before the Second World War and by the 1960s, the area was under consideration for a massive real estate development. Following a locally driven effort to acquire the land as open space, the state park was created in 1976.

Today, China Camp includes hiking, biking, and equestrian trails, a campground, picnic areas, and scenic vistas of the Bay and hillsides. The park continues to operate under a Master Plan prepared in 1979. More recent plans have focused on estuarine marshland restoration and sea level rise adaptation.

China Camp was almost closed in 2011 due to the State budget deficit. An agreement was reached to jointly fund operations by the California State Parks Department and the Marin State Park Association. A revised agreement in 2013 transferred most management responsibilities to the non-profit Friends of China Camp.

The shoreline road through China Camp provides the only recreational access to the park and serves as a critical local and regional emergency access corridor. Adapting this road for sea level rise resiliency, marsh ecological integrity, public use, and public safety is critical. Continued maintenance of China Camp State Park is essential. Vegetation management is especially important to reduce fire hazards to nearby developed neighborhoods. The park will remain a recreational resource for San Rafael residents and an important natural and scenic area. Opportunities for trail connections to link the park to San Pedro Open Space, Harry Barbier Memorial Park, and newly acquired open spaces at Bucks Landing and Heron Hill, are strongly encouraged.