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Photo Credit: Florian Kainz

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Introduction

Mobility is the ability to freely move or be moved. The term is sometimes used interchangeably with “transportation” or “circulation,” but there’s an important distinction. “Circulation” is something you do, while mobility is something you have. To have mobility is to have access—in other words, the ability to easily get to work, school, a park, a store, and so on. Easy access to transit doesn’t provide mobility if the bus only comes once an hour or requires a two-hour journey for a ten-mile trip. Owning a bicycle doesn’t provide mobility if it’s unsafe to ride a bike to your destination—and owning a car doesn’t provide mobility if the roads are too congested to drive or you can’t afford insurance and fuel.

The goal of any transportation project should be to improve mobility, and to do so in ways that are safe, efficient, and affordable. Mobility improvements also must support the City’s climate action and environmental quality goals, economic vitality goals, and social equity goals. Finally, mobility plans must be coordinated with the city’s land use plans, since those plans will determine how travel demand may change in the coming years.

The Mobility Element is rooted in data about how we travel through our city, and the ways we move between San Rafael and the rest of the region. It includes data on traffic volumes and congestion. It also includes data on how far we travel, where we go, and how we get there. Many of the policies are informed by forecasts for 2040, applying data on trends and regional growth to estimate how travel patterns may change in the future. The 2040 forecasts guide local investments in mobility improvements, including projects serving cars, bikes, pedestrians, and transit users. In earlier General Plans for San Rafael, these improvements focused on reducing congestion and increasing vehicle speed. General Plan 2040’s focus is based on a different set of priorities, including improved transportation choices and reduced greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) as well as prior policies on vehicle congestion.

One of the overarching objectives of this element is to align transportation priorities with the City’s Climate Action Plan. Transportation accounts for more than 60 percent of San Rafael’s GHG emissions. Reducing emissions requires shifting to cleaner fuels, improving “active” transportation modes like bicycling and walking, and creating more convenient and reliable public transit.

The reality is that most San Rafael residents will continue to be dependent on their cars, at least for the next decade. Thus, a more impactful way to reduce GHGs may be to reduce the distance that local residents and employees must drive. This can be achieved by making it easier to work at (or near) home, providing a variety of housing types that meet the needs of the local workforce, and maintaining a mix of businesses and services that reduces the need to drive to other communities. The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the viability (and impact) of a large segment of the population working from home. The average number of Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) by all drivers in Marin County was 4.7 million miles per day in January 2020. By March 31, this number was 476,000, a 90 percent reduction. By June 2020, VMT had rebounded to about two million miles per day.

Photo Credit: Frank Johnson



Overview of the Mobility Element

The requirements of the Mobility Element are laid out by the California Government Code (Section 65302(b)). The Element must identify the general location of existing and proposed major thoroughfares, transportation routes, terminals, airports, and ports—and it must correlate plans for these facilities with the Land Use Element. The Element must also plan for a “balanced, multimodal transportation network that meets the needs of all users of streets, roads and highways” (AB 1358). These users include bicyclists and pedestrians, transit riders, children, seniors, movers of commercial goods, and persons with disabilities, among others.

This Element meets these requirements through its goals, policies, and programs. The Element begins with a “mobility profile” of San Rafael based on census data and regional transportation plans. This includes a general description of the City’s transportation system as well as the travel characteristics of San Rafael’s households and workers. Much of the discussion of future conditions is provided beneath the goal statements in this Element. These include:

- **Goal 1 (Regional Leadership)** describes the City of San Rafael’s role in transportation policy making and planning at the countywide and regional levels.
- **Goal 2 (Transportation Efficiency and Access)** addresses the performance of the road system and management of congestion, including Level of Service standards.
- **Goal 3 (Cleaner Transportation)** focuses on the link between transportation and climate change, including strategies to reduce vehicle miles traveled and shift to cleaner fuel vehicles.
- **Goal 4 (High-Quality, Affordable Transit)** seeks to make transit a more viable alternative to driving, by collaborating with service providers and through local land use decisions.

- **Goal 5 (Safe, Attractive Streets)** focuses on traffic calming and safety initiatives, and programs to minimize the potential negative effects of roads and traffic on our neighborhoods.
- **Goal 6 (Safe Walking and Cycling)** addresses improvements to pedestrian and bicycle systems.
- **Goal 7 (Parking)** provides guidance on how to balance parking supply and demand and manage parking in a way that supports economic goals, livability goals, and sustainability goals.

Relationship to Other General Plan Elements

The Mobility Element is related to other elements of the General Plan as follows:

- **Land Use.** Mobility improvements are based on an analysis of growth and travel demand over the next 20 years, which is derived from the Land Use Element. The Land Use Element also guides development to areas with transit infrastructure and promotes a jobs-housing that enables more sustainable travel patterns.
- **Neighborhoods.** Policies throughout the Neighborhoods Element address area-specific transportation issues such as parking and traffic safety, as well as the need for pedestrian and bicycle improvements, roadway improvements, and emergency access.
- **Community Design and Preservation.** Policies in this Element address corridors, gateways, and the overall visual appearance of our streets.
- **Conservation and Climate Change.** Policies recognize the role of transportation in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, along with ways to reduce air and water pollution resulting from transportation.
- **Safety and Resilience.** The Safety and Resilience Element addresses the importance of the transportation system to emergency vehicle access and evacuation. It also considers the impacts of sea level rise on roads and transportation infrastructure.
- **Noise.** The Noise Element recognizes transportation as the primary source of noise in San Rafael and includes measures to reduce noise and ensure that land uses are compatible with ambient noise levels.
- **Community Services and Infrastructure.** The Element acknowledges roads as a component of infrastructure, and notes the relationship between our street and our water, sewer, and drainage systems.
- **Economic Vitality.** The Element recognizes the importance of access and mobility to the well-being of residents, workers, and local businesses.
- **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion.** Affordable, safe, accessible transportation is an important part of being a more inclusive and equitable city. The EDI Element includes policies to focus transportation investments and improvements in neighborhoods where the needs are greatest.
- **Housing.** The focus of the Housing Element is on meeting the needs of San Rafael's residents and workforce, which in turn reduces the need to travel long distances between work and home.



Photo Credit: Youth in Arts/ Y-Plan

Mobility Profile of San Rafael

San Rafael is a regional crossroads. A considerable share of the city's traffic consists of trips with origins and destinations elsewhere, particularly on US 101 and I-580. Prior to the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, traffic volumes in San Rafael and Marin County were moving steadily upward. The average number of trips per household had been increasing, and San Rafael had a growing number of employees commuting in from other counties. Peak period congestion was exacerbated by regional growth as well as local traffic from schools, new development, SMART rail crossings, and other sources. The pandemic has temporarily interrupted these trends, but they are expected to resume in the future.

While the number and length of trips in San Rafael has increased, only minor improvements have been made to our roads and highways. Capacity on freeways and local arterials has not substantially increased. The US 101/ I-580 interchange continues to cause bottlenecks and backups, especially for northbound travelers. The lack of north-south alternatives to US 101 places pressure on the freeway as drivers use it for local trips throughout the day. Conversely, when the freeway is congested, drivers exit and use local streets, creating long delays for residents.

Much of this is beyond San Rafael's control. The region is projected to add two million people in the next 20 years. Even if San Rafael limited new development entirely, congestion would continue to grow as a result of growth in other communities. It might even get worse, as new residents have no local housing options and face longer commutes driving back toward their jobs. Expanding transportation options is essential, but these options must be realistic and affordable. Not everyone can bicycle or walk to work, and not every workplace can be served by transit.

The City has made progress in diversifying its transportation network in the past few decades. There is a growing network of multi-modal (bicycle-pedestrian) facilities, including a new bike bridge across the Canal at Grand Avenue, a bike path over Puerto Suelo Hill, and a new path through the Cal Park Tunnel. SMART Rail initiated service in 2017, with the Larkspur extension opening in 2019. New crosswalks and “Safe Routes to School” improvements are making it safer and easier to walk in some parts of the city. The City has also adopted a “Complete Streets” policy that ensures that streets are designed to meet the needs of all users.

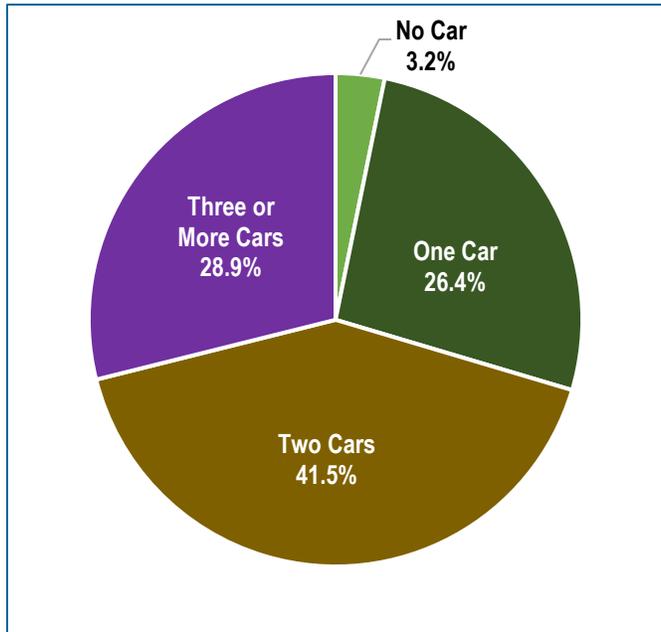
Census data on the mobility characteristics of San Rafael residents is provided below. The data is based on the American Community Survey, which summarizes conditions during the five-year period from 2014-2018.

Mobility Characteristics

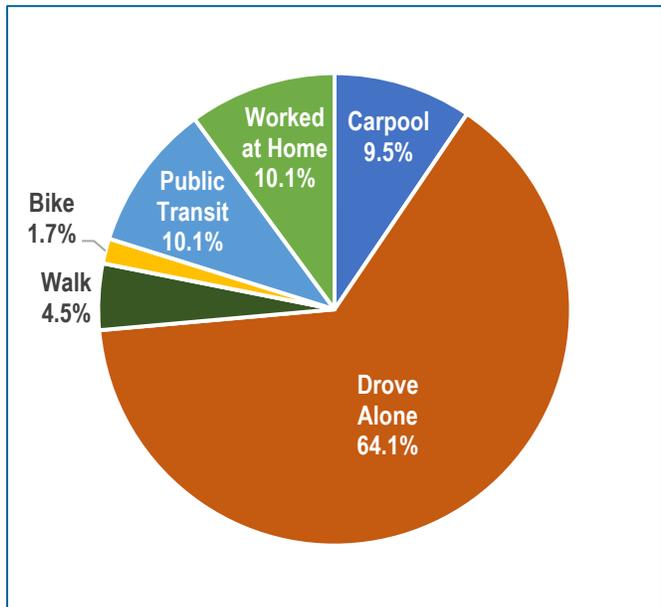
Chart 10-1 indicates vehicle ownership by San Rafael households. Approximately 70 percent of San Rafael’s households own two or more vehicles. The figure is substantially less than than the countywide figure of 77 percent but still indicates a heavily auto-dependent population. In the Bay Area as a whole, 55 percent of all households have two or more cars. Only 3.2 percent of San Rafael’s households have no car, and 26.4 percent own one car.

Chart 10-2 indicates the means of transportation to work for employed San Rafael residents. The table indicates that 64 percent of the City’s employed residents drove alone to work and nine percent carpooled. Another 10 percent used public transit—primarily buses. Just six percent of the city’s residents walked or cycled to work. About 10 percent of employed San Rafael residents worked from home. The local figures are almost identical to the figures for Marin County as a whole. However, relative to the region, a higher percentage of San Rafael households drive alone to work. In the Bay Area as a whole, about 17 percent of the workforce commutes by public transit, and 59 percent drive alone to work.

**Chart 10-1 (top):
Vehicles Owned per Household in San Rafael**

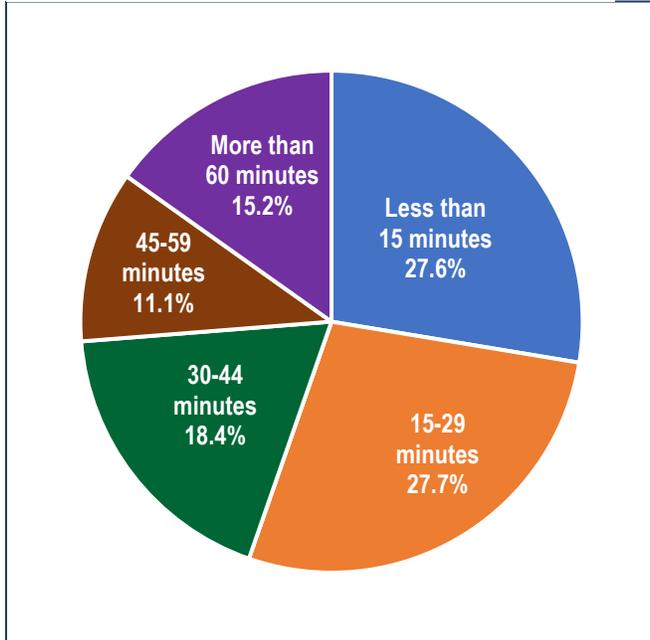


**Chart 10-2 (bottom):
Means of Travel to Work for Employed San Rafael Residents**



Source: US Census American Community Survey, 2014-2018

Chart 10-3:
Travel Time to Work for San Rafael Residents
(excludes persons working at home)

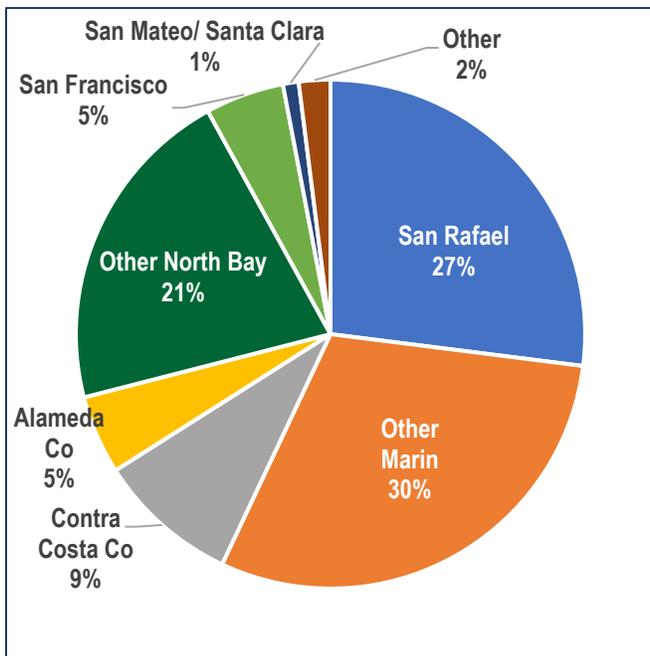


Source: US Census American Community Survey, 2014-2018

Chart 10-3 shows the average travel time to work for employed San Rafael residents, excluding persons working from home. Roughly 28 percent of employed residents had a commute of 15 minutes or less. About 15 percent had a commute of one hour or longer. The mean travel time to work was 28.9 minutes for the city as a whole. Countywide, the figure was 32.5 minutes. For the nine Bay Area counties, the figure was 30.7 minutes.

Travel patterns in San Rafael are complex. The Census indicates that 41 percent of the City’s employed residents work within San Rafael. Another 29 percent work elsewhere in Marin County and 30 percent commute to another County. Of those commuting to jobs outside the County, roughly two thirds work in San Francisco. Only six percent of the city’s employed resident work in the East Bay, while three percent work elsewhere in the North Bay and two percent work on the Peninsula or in Silicon Valley.

Chart 10-4:
Place of Residence for Persons Working in San Rafael



Source: US Census Transportation Planning Package, 2019

Data collected by the Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM) indicates that the average daily trip length in San Rafael is 8.2 miles. This is slightly higher than the county average of 9.1 miles and nearly 20 percent higher than the Bay Area average of 6.9 miles.

Chart 10-4 indicates the place of residence for persons working in San Rafael. While much of San Rafael initially developed as a “bedroom community,” the city has evolved into an employment center that “imports” more workers than it “exports.” Today, the city’s daytime population is larger than its nighttime population. About 27 percent of the city’s workers live in San Rafael and 30 percent commute in from elsewhere in Marin. About 21 percent commute to San Rafael from other North Bay counties (particularly Sonoma County) and 14 percent commute from the East Bay. The flow of residents leaving San Rafael for work—and non-residents arriving in San Rafael for work—means that significant two-directional traffic occurs in both the AM and PM commute periods.

Street System

San Rafael's street system includes 245 miles of City streets and serves as the primary conduit for most modes of travel. Roads are organized using a hierarchical system consisting of highways, major arterials, minor arterials, collectors, and local streets. These classifications define the functional and operational characteristics of each roadway and are used as a tool for planning and design. Figure 10-1 shows the location of highways (US 101 and I-580) as well as major and minor arterials.

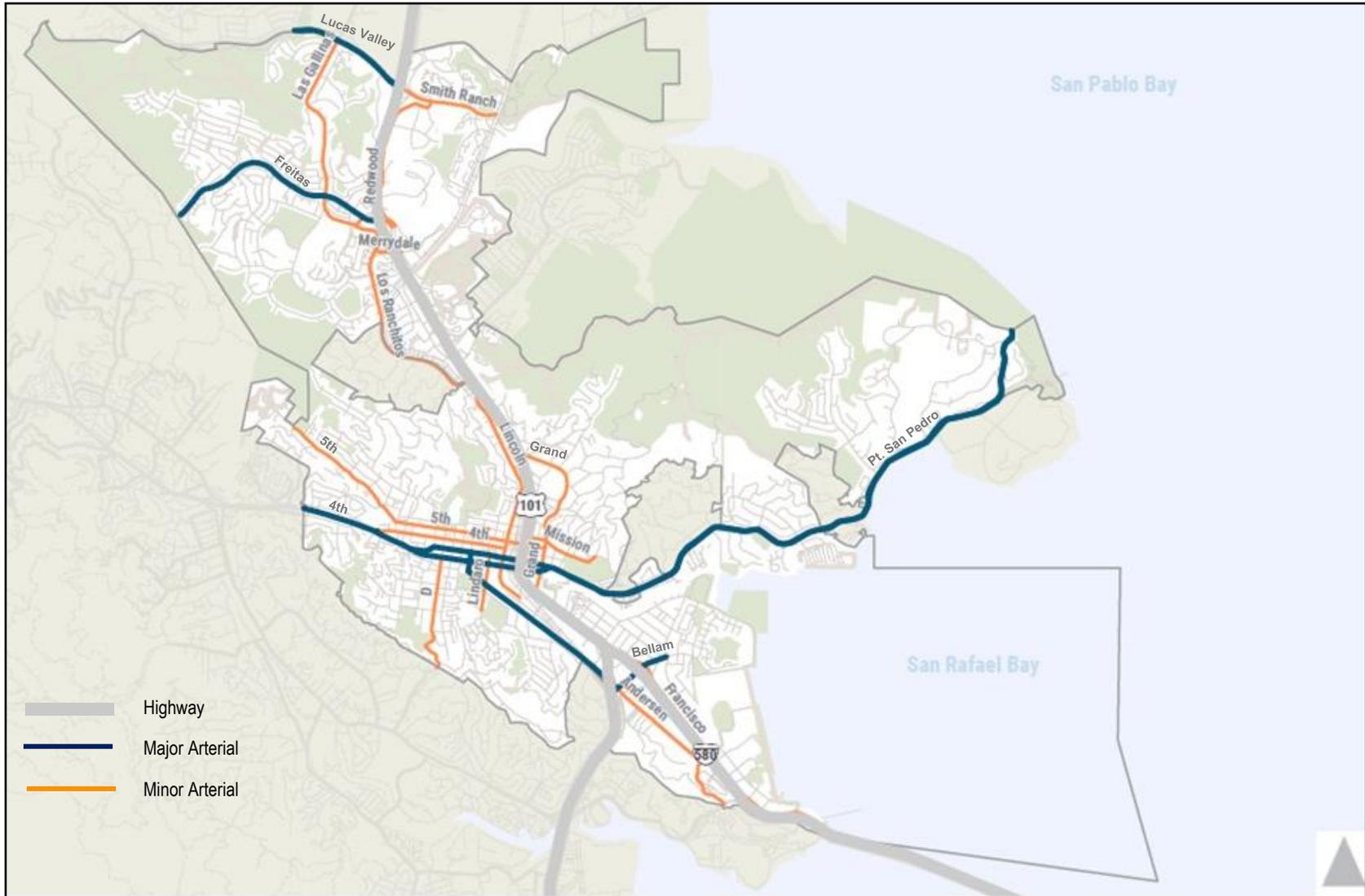
US 101 and I-580 are both Caltrans operated facilities that provide regional access to San Rafael. US 101 extends from Washington State to Los Angeles and is a major north-south Bay Area freeway. The freeway has four lanes in each direction in San Rafael and carries approximately 202,000 vehicles per day. I-580 extends from San Rafael to the East Bay and Central Valley via the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge. The freeway has two lanes in each direction in San Rafael, with an auxiliary lane between Sir Francis Drake Boulevard and the base of the bridge. The freeway carries about 77,000 vehicles per day just east of US 101.

Congestion levels on US 101 as well as the I-580/ US 101 junction can cause freeway traffic to detour onto City streets during peak travel periods or when incidents occur on the freeway. This can cause congestion on parallel surface streets such as Las Gallinas Avenue, Los Ranchitos Road, Lincoln Avenue, Grand Avenue, Andersen Drive, and Francisco Boulevard West and East. Land use patterns in San Rafael, coupled with local topography, have resulted in a primarily east-west road network. Major east-west roads include Lucas Valley/ Smith Ranch Road, Manuel T. Freitas Parkway, Second and Third Streets, North San Pedro Road, Point San Pedro Road, Bellam Boulevard and Andersen Drive.

Downtown San Rafael is served by both local and regional streets. There is a grid-based network of numbered east-west streets and lettered north-south streets in much of the area. There are also 53 signalized intersections and a number of specialized traffic control devices that facilitate safe pedestrian movement.



Photo Credit: Florian Kainz



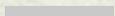
-  Highway
-  Major Arterial
-  Minor Arterial

Figure 10-1:
Existing Street System

San Rafael's mobility funding comes from a Federal, State, and local sources. Federal and state funds are constrained, placing a greater burden on County and local governments to meet transportation needs. Marin County Measure AA, a half cent sales tax, was initially passed (as Measure A) in 2004 and affirmed for a 30-year time period in November 2018. The City also collects traffic impact fees from new development to fund improvements identified in the General Plan. Additional funding sources will be required, not only for capital projects but also to improve mobility services for San Rafael residents.

Other Components of the Transportation Network

San Rafael is served by the Marin County Transit District (Marin Transit), the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway, and Transportation District (GGBHTD), and Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART). Marin Transit provides local bus service within Marin County and is financially supported by Measure A (AA), as well as State Transportation Development Act funds, fares, property taxes, and federal funds. GGBHTD is a special district created by the State of California to manage the Golden Gate Bridge, provide ferry service, and operate a regional transit system that links the North Bay to San Francisco and the East Bay. GGBHTD is currently leading the effort to relocate San Rafael's Bettini Transit Center, which is a major intermodal terminal in Downtown San Rafael.

SMART operates rail service between Larkspur Landing and Airport Boulevard in Santa Rosa, with stations in Downtown San Rafael and the Civic Center. The trains provide an important commute option for persons working in San Rafael and living in Sonoma County, and are a resource for San Rafael residents traveling north or to the Larkspur Ferry. SMART also serves non-commute travelers, with weekend and evening service. Long-range plans call for SMART's extension to Cloverdale.

Additional information on the transit system is provided under Goal 4.

San Rafael is served by San Francisco and Oakland International Airports, each located 31 miles away. There is also a small private airport in North San Rafael, which is locally operated for non-commercial flights. Marin County operates a small public airport for business and pleasure in Novato, known as Gness Field. San Rafael is also served by Airporter buses and shuttles that provide transport to Oakland and San Francisco International Airports, and by Greyhound Bus.

The city has a growing network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, addressed in Goal 6 of this Element. The San Rafael Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan was adopted in 2002 and updated in 2011 and 2018. As a result of the Master Plan, dedicated bike lanes and bike paths have been developed and measures to improve pedestrian safety have been taken.

Goal M-1: Regional Leadership in Mobility

Take a leadership role in developing regional transportation solutions.

San Rafael is proud of the leadership role it has taken in planning and securing funding for regional transportation projects. By working closely with regional transportation agencies and service providers, the City plays an important role in managing congestion, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and expanding travel choices in the Bay Area. The City will continue to advocate for local benefits when regional projects are proposed, including improvements that enhance local access, resilience, economic and fiscal health, social equity, and environmental quality. Project selection and design should be informed by rigorous cost-benefit analysis, objective data, consideration of emerging trends and technologies, and a transparent public process.

Mobility is a regional issue that must be addressed on a regional level. San Rafael is connected to the region by freeways, bridges, rail, buses, ferries, and trails. These facilities are governed by multiple agencies at all levels of government. At the federal level, the US Department of Transportation oversees the safety and efficiency of the nation's highways, airports, rail lines and ports. At the State level, Caltrans manages the State's highways and freeways. At the regional level, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) is the transportation planning agency for the Bay Area. San Rafael works with elected local, State, and federal representatives to ensure that the City has a voice in how transportation services are delivered and how major facilities are developed.

Closer to home, the Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM) manages Countywide transportation planning and funding. TAM administers the Measure AA half-cent transportation sales tax, as well as a \$10 vehicle registration fee. TAM serves as Marin County's Congestion Management Agency and includes a Board of Commissioners that includes San Rafael representatives. As the largest city in the County, San Rafael has historically been a leader in shaping the future of transportation in Marin. San Rafael is also represented on the boards of local transit agencies and on the MTC and ABAG Executive Boards and various committees.

Policy M-1.1: Regional Transportation Planning

Actively coordinate with other jurisdictions, agencies, and service providers to improve the local and regional transportation system and advocate for the City's interests. Work cooperatively to improve transit and paratransit services, achieve needed highway improvements, and improve the regional bicycle and pedestrian networks.

Program M-1.1A: Participation in Countywide and Regional Transportation Planning. *Actively participate in the planning activities of the Transportation Authority of Marin, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, SMART, and other transportation agencies and support implementation of cost-effective regional plans and programs.*

Program M-1.1B: Public Information About Transportation. *Provide timely information and opportunities for public input on transportation issues and projects through workshops, neighborhood meetings, social media, staff reports, and other means.*

Policy M-1.2: Regional Funding

Support a regional approach to the funding of transit, highway, bicycle, and pedestrian improvements by seeking a broad range of federal, State, and County funds. Use local funds to leverage and match outside funding sources.

Program M-1.2A: Transportation Project Grants. Work with governmental agencies, non-profits and community groups to secure grants for appropriate transportation projects.

Policy M-1.3: Regional Transportation Improvements

Actively participate in regional transportation improvements that facilitate mobility in San Rafael.

Program M-1.3A: US 101/ I-580 Connector. Continue to collaborate with TAM, Caltrans, the City of Larkspur, and impacted stakeholders on improvements to the US 101/ I-580 interchange and Richmond-San Rafael Bridge, including advocacy for local access improvements to East San Rafael.

Policy M-1.4: Transportation Innovation

Take a leadership role in delivering innovative transportation services and improvements.

Program M-1.4A: Transportation Technology. Use the most cost-effective proven technologies available when managing congestion and parking, including transportation information systems and “smart city” improvements.

Program M-1.4B: Delivery Services. Prepare for the potential impacts of emerging delivery service technology, including drones, on local roads, infrastructure, parking systems, and noise.

Program M-1.4C: Autonomous Vehicles. Monitor and manage the effects of autonomous vehicles, personal air vehicles, and connected vehicle technology on transportation needs, road design, and travel behavior. Adjust local transportation programs, infrastructure, and design standards as needed.

Policy M-1.5: Travel Data and Modeling

Support the collection and analysis of data on travel behavior in San Rafael, particularly related to commute patterns and the effectiveness of City programs. Use this data when considering public expenditures and programs.



Untangling US 101/ I-580

Planning for a direct connection from northbound US 101 to eastbound I-580 is now underway. The effort is being coordinated by the Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM) in collaboration with Caltrans and the cities of San Rafael and Larkspur.

Currently, northbound drivers on US 101 heading to the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge must exit the freeway on San Francis Drake Boulevard or exit on Bellam Boulevard and continue through a signalized intersection before merging onto I-580. This causes congestion on northbound US 101, as well as Bellam Boulevard and nearby streets. The project will provide a direct ramp connection that avoids local streets. A number of alternative alignments are being considered for the new ramp, each with varying environmental impacts and costs. The project includes bicycle and pedestrian improvements along Bellam Boulevard, and new transit connections.

The US 101/ I-580 connector project is being coordinated with efforts to reduce bottlenecks on the eastbound I-580 approach to the Bridge. A third eastbound lane was opened on the bridge in 2018 for afternoon commuters. The connector project includes a new lane on eastbound I-580 from the new US 101 ramp to the existing on-ramp at Sir Francis Drake Boulevard.

Goal M-2: Improved Transportation Efficiency and Access

Sustain an efficient, cost-effective transportation network that continuously improves mobility and accessibility for all users.

The transportation system will remain safe and responsive to the needs of San Rafael residents, businesses, workers, and visitors. Emerging technologies will help improve the operational efficiency of streets and highways. Persons of all ages and physical capabilities will be able to get around the city. San Rafael will continue to manage local congestion while making it easier to get around without a car.

Given its central location, land use pattern, topography, and role as a regional economic center, San Rafael experiences significant traffic congestion. Congestion frustrates drivers, contributes to pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, and reduces productivity and recreational time. It is regarded as a key indicator of the quality of life.

Over the years, the City of San Rafael has improved the efficiency of its road system and maximized the capacity of its older streets. Examples include the “pairing” of Second/ Third and Hetherton/Irwin as one-way arterials through Downtown and the Kerner/ Irene/ Francisco/ “Loop” in East San Rafael. Technology has enabled the City to synchronize its traffic signals and monitor operating conditions, making adjustments as needed to improve traffic flow. While the City has little control over traffic on Highways 101 and 580, it continues to monitor congestion and support regional mobility initiatives.

Congestion management will continue to be a priority in San Rafael in the future. Much of the General Plan’s focus is on creating more transportation options and making land use decisions that reduce dependency on cars. Managing, maintaining, and improving our roads also has to be part of the solution. The City will continue to require that the impacts of new development on traffic are evaluated, and that improvements are made where necessary to offset these impacts and keep traffic moving.



Transportation Planning

Policy M-2.1: Road Hierarchy

Maintain a network of arterial, collector, and local streets that efficiently moves traffic through the city. Engineering and design standards should reflect road type and function, the characteristics of adjacent uses, and the need to accommodate motorized and non-motorized travel.

Program M-2.1A: Complete Streets. *Consistent with State “Complete Streets” requirements, maintain street design and engineering standards that plan for the needs of all travelers and minimize conflicts between competing modes.*

Policy M-2.2: Safety

Design a transportation system that is safe and serves people using all modes of travel. Higher levels of congestion may be accepted at particular intersections if necessary to ensure the safety of all travelers, including pedestrians, bicycles, motorists, and transit users.

Program M-2.2A: Collision Data. *Collect and analyze data on traffic collisions and use such data to inform decisions about capital improvements, enforcement, and traffic safety programs.*

Program M-2.2B: Street Pattern and Traffic Flow. *Support efforts by the City Traffic Engineer to configure or re-configure street patterns to improve traffic flow and turning movements while prioritizing safety.*

Complete Streets

The concept behind “complete streets” is that streets belong to everyone. They should be designed and operated to allow safe access for all users—not just cars, but pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and persons of all ages and abilities. Complete streets are an essential part of transportation equity. Buses can run more smoothly because the lanes aren’t jammed with cars. Those who don’t own cars have the freedom to move safely through the city.

California adopted complete streets legislation in 2008. All cities and counties in the state are required to design their roads to meet the needs of all users. While there is no single prescription for a complete street, some of the important elements include wider sidewalks, dedicated bike lanes, narrower travel lanes, bus pullout areas, and curb extensions (“bulbouts”) that reduce the distance pedestrians must travel when crossing the street.



Policy M-2.3: Cost-Benefit Considerations

Consider the relative costs and benefits of transportation improvement projects, including the amount and source of funding, the potential number of people who will benefit, the expected impact on vehicle miles traveled and climate goals, the cost and time impacts on all travelers, the social and equity impacts, the effects on the environment and public safety, and similar factors.

Program M-2.3A: Cost-Benefit Analysis. *Conduct cost-benefit analyses as part of the design process for proposed transportation projects, including the criteria listed above and other factors that may be relevant (see also Policy CSI-5.1 on cost-benefit analysis).*

Policy M-2.4: Transportation Efficiency

Undertake improvements that manage lane capacity, traffic flow, and intersections more efficiently.

Program M-2.4A: Intelligent Transportation Systems. *Support the use of intelligent transportation systems to improve traffic flow and provide real-time data on traffic conditions so that motorists may travel through the city as efficiently as possible.*

Program M-2.4B: Reducing Vehicle Idling. *Support transportation network improvements to reduce vehicle idling, including synchronized signal timing.*

Program M-2.4C: Roundabouts. *Consider the use of roundabouts as an alternative to traffic signals and stops signs. Roundabouts can improve the flow of traffic when they are properly designed and located on streets with low to moderate volumes.*

Level of Service

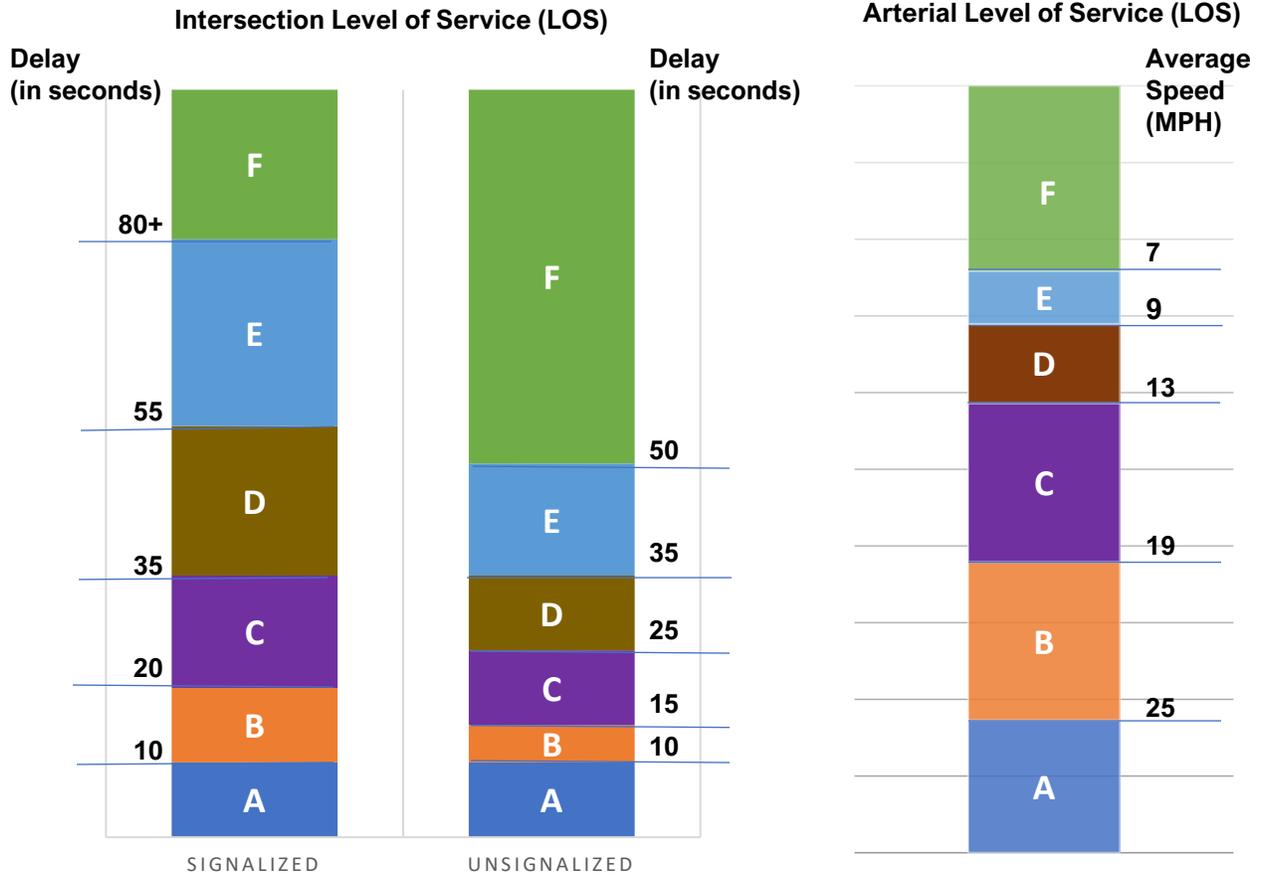
Level of Service (LOS) is a tool used to measure operating conditions and congestion levels at intersections and along road segments.

- For *intersections*, LOS is based on the time it takes to pass through the intersection—specifically, the level of delay that occurs when the intersection is congested.
- For *road segments*, LOS is based on the average travel speed between two points along a road.

LOS is expressed using a letter grade, similar to a report card. LOS “A” corresponds to an intersection with no delay, or a road segment where traffic moves at or above the speed limit. LOS “F” is a failing grade, given to an intersection with long delays or a road segment with jammed traffic. When a road is at LOS “F,” it may take multiple cycles of a traffic light to pass through an intersection. As shown in Chart 10-5, there are specific metrics (seconds of delay and average speed levels) associated with each of the lettered grades.

In the 1980s, San Rafael began using LOS as the metric for evaluating the performance of its road system. The City established LOS “D” as the minimum acceptable standard. For intersections or road segments operating below LOS “D” (or projected to operate below LOS “D” in the future), the City faced a choice: undertake improvements to restore the facility to LOS “D” or better, or accept a lower level of service. This choice has been made on a case by case and area by area basis. In some instances, improvements were funded by a traffic mitigation fee levied on new development. A fee was justified because there was a clear connection (called a “nexus”) between new development and the increase in traffic and need for improvements. In other cases, accepting a lower level of service (E or F) was necessary because improvements were infeasible or the project provided a significant public benefit. For example, this might occur where widening a road would require removing homes or businesses, or where denying the project would cause a loss of potential affordable housing or local jobs.

Chart 10-5: Level of Service Metrics for San Rafael



San Rafael's experience with LOS has evolved over the years. The system was initially only applied to evaluate the weekday evening peak hour (4:00-6:00 PM). It was later expanded to include the weekday morning peak hour (7:00-9:00 AM) for environmental review purposes. LOS became the threshold used to determine whether a project had a "potentially significant" impact under the California Environmental Quality Act. Decisions to approve, deny, or scale back new projects very often hinged on their LOS impacts.

In 1988, the City adopted a program called the Priorities Projects Procedure (PPP). PPP allocated development potential in portions of North and East San Rafael based on their remaining traffic capacity. In 2004, the PPP was replaced with the Project Selection Process (PSP), which implemented the same allocation process citywide. In 2011, the PSP program was discontinued because most of the remaining traffic capacity had been used up and few vacant developable sites remained.

In 2013, the California legislature passed SB 743, disallowing the use of LOS as a CEQA threshold. The requirement was phased in over seven years as new guidelines for evaluating impacts were developed. The new requirement came about because reliance on LOS had a number of unintended consequences, including continuous widening of roadways and expansion of road capacity to reduce vehicle delay. At best, these improvements were making it harder to shift trips to public transit, cycling, and walking. At worst, they were contributing to urban sprawl and leading to longer trip lengths. Exclusive reliance on LOS also created a potential disincentive to development in places like Downtown San Rafael, where roads were congested but could not be expanded without further relaxing LOS standards or sacrificing community character and walkability.

As noted in Goal 3, the City of San Rafael has now adopted Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) as its CEQA threshold, consistent with State law (see text box on page 10-27). VMT is a completely different type of threshold, based on regional conditions rather than local conditions. It measures the additional amount of driving a project will generate, rather than the amount of congestion it will create. VMT impacts are usually addressed by providing alternatives to driving, rather than increasing road capacity.



San Rafael will maintain LOS “D” as its planning standard, establishing exceptions in the General Plan as the City has done in the past. Traffic studies will continue to be required to determine if this standard is being met, and what improvements may be required to maintain it in the future. As noted in Goal M-3, a Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) standard also will be used to evaluate future projects.

Policy M-2.5 identifies exceptions to the LOS “D” standard for Downtown San Rafael and at several intersections and road segments. These are locations where the existing or projected LOS is below LOS “D,” and where LOS “D” cannot be maintained (or restored) due to financial constraints, engineering or topographic constraints, existing land uses, regional traffic beyond the City’s control, and similar factors. Policy M-2.5 also establishes a City Council exception process for projects that will exceed LOS standards but provide benefits that may outweigh their negative effects on traffic conditions.

Where an LOS below “D” is deemed acceptable, the intent is not to simply let traffic get worse without any intervention. Steps will continue to be taken to address congestion and improve the functionality of these roads and intersections. The City will develop guidelines for traffic studies and improvements that are tailored to roads and intersections that are already operating beyond their accepted capacity.

Traffic Volumes and Projected LOS

To provide a baseline for the transportation analysis in General Plan 2040, 24-hour traffic counts were collected at 41 road segments in the San Rafael Planning Area on a weekday in May 2019. The highest volumes were reported on 4th Street (west of Downtown), the 2nd/ 3rd Street one-way pair through Downtown, Point San Pedro Road, Francisco Boulevard East, Bellam Boulevard, and Freitas Parkway between Las Gallinas and US 101. All of these roads carry more than 1,300 vehicles an hour during the peak commute hours.

Figure 10-2 indicates the AM and PM peak hour LOS on these road segments as of 2019. Figure 10-3 indicates the AM and PM peak hour LOS that is projected by 2040. The projected conditions were developed using a traffic model, which is a mathematical simulation of future traffic flow based on current conditions, the location of future development, and anticipated changes to the road network and modes of travel over the next 20 years. The model was developed by the Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM) for local and countywide transportation planning in Marin County through 2040.

The TAM model takes into consideration not only trips that begin or end in San Rafael, but also regional trips that pass through the city. In fact, much of the increase in traffic in the city is associated with regional growth (or “background” traffic), including traffic caused by cars using surface streets because the freeway is congested. Some of the greatest increases in projected volumes in the next 20 years are on streets like Lincoln Avenue, Los Ranchitos Road, and Francisco Boulevard East. This is at least in part due to the alignment of these streets parallel to the freeways. The traffic model includes assumptions about travel behavior, including drivers exiting US 101 and using parallel surface streets when the freeway is congested.

Road segments and intersections projected to operate at LOS “E” and “F” during the peak hour in 2040 are listed in Policy M-2.5. Programs implementing this policy (M-2.5A, B, and C) describe the requirements for future traffic studies, the findings necessary to allow exceptions to LOS standards, and provisions for ongoing monitoring of traffic conditions. Additional analysis of future traffic conditions in the Priority Development Areas (PDAs) in North San Rafael and Southeast San Rafael should take place as part of future planning studies for each area.

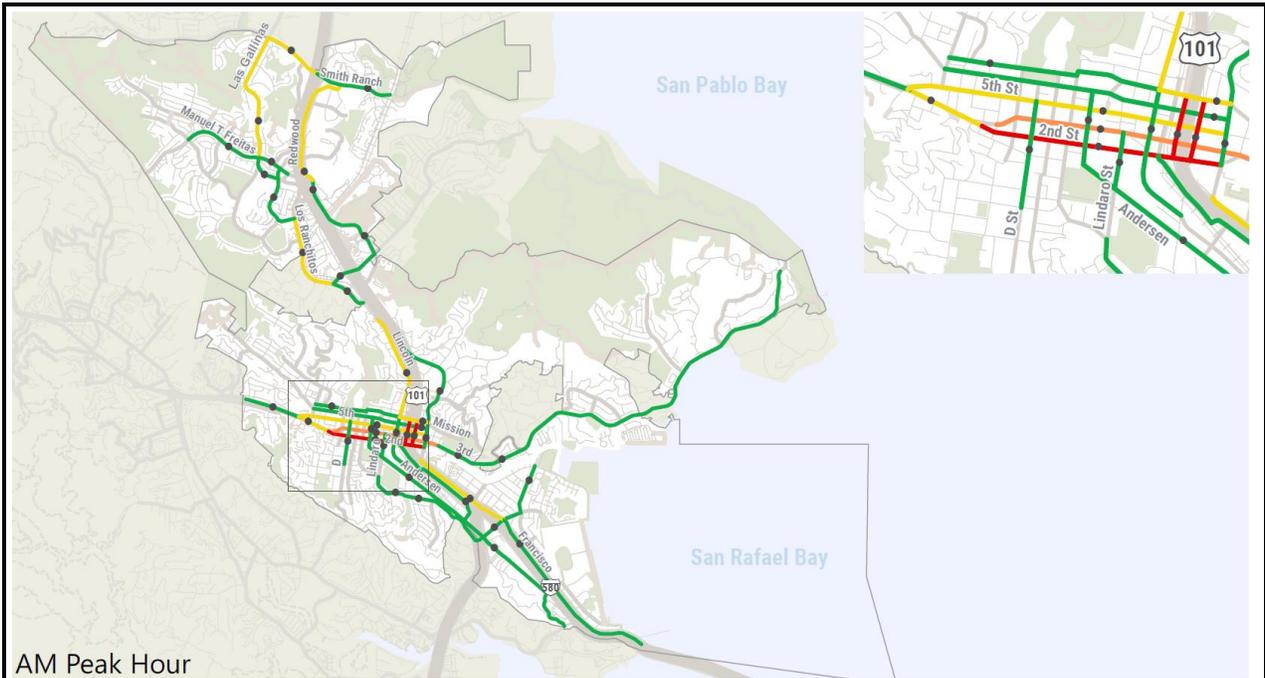
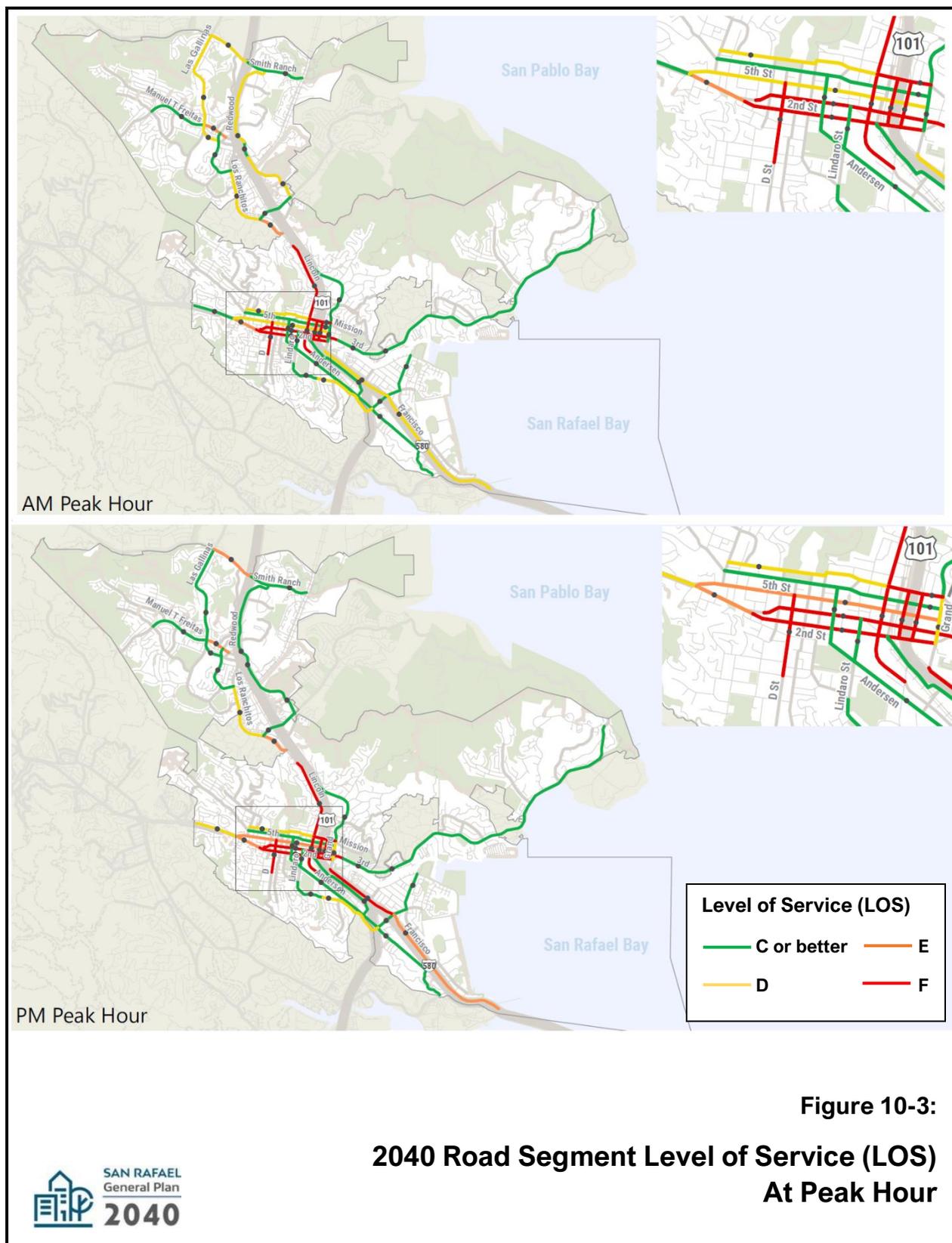


Figure 10-2:
2019 Road Segment Level of Service (LOS)
At Peak Hour



Policy M-2.5: Traffic Level of Service

Maintain traffic Level of Service (LOS) standards that ensure an efficient roadway network and provide a consistent basis for evaluating the transportation effects of proposed development projects on local roadways. These standards shall generally be based on the performance of signalized intersections during the AM and PM peak hours. Arterial LOS standards may be used in lieu of (or in addition to) intersection LOS standards in cases where intersection spacing and road design characteristics make arterial LOS a more reliable and effective tool for predicting future impacts.

- a) Intersection Standards. LOS “D” shall be the citywide standard for intersections, except as noted below:
 - 1) Intersections within the Downtown Precise Plan boundary are subject to the provisions of Section (c) below.
 - 2) Signalized intersections at Highway 101 and I-580 on-ramps and off-ramps are exempt because these locations are affected by regional traffic and are not significantly impacted by local measures.
 - 3) LOS “E” shall be acceptable at the following intersections:
 - Andersen and Bellam
 - Bellam and Francisco Blvd East (AM peak only)
 - Freitas at Civic Center/ Redwood Highway
 - Merrydale at Las Gallinas Avenue (PM peak only)
 - Freitas Parkway and Northgate Drive (PM peak only)
 - 4) LOS “F” shall be acceptable at the following intersections:
 - Andersen and Francisco Blvd West (AM peak only)
 - Bellam and Francisco Blvd East (PM peak only)
 - Merrydale at Civic Center Drive (AM peak only)

- b) Arterial Standards. LOS “D” shall be the citywide standard for arterials, except as noted below:
 - 1) Arterials within the Downtown Precise Plan boundary are subject to the provisions of Section (c) below.
 - 2) LOS “E” shall be acceptable on the following arterial segments:
 - Freitas Parkway from Las Gallinas to Del Presidio
 - Lucas Valley from Las Gallinas to 101 S/B ramps (PM peak only)
 - Los Ranchitos from North San Pedro to Lincoln
 - Francisco Blvd East from Bellam to Main (Richmond Bridge) (PM peak only)
 - 3) LOS “F” shall be acceptable on the following segments:
 - Francisco Blvd East from Grand Avenue to Bellam
 - Lincoln from 101 SB/ Hammondale to Mission
 - Del Presidio from Las Gallinas to Freitas

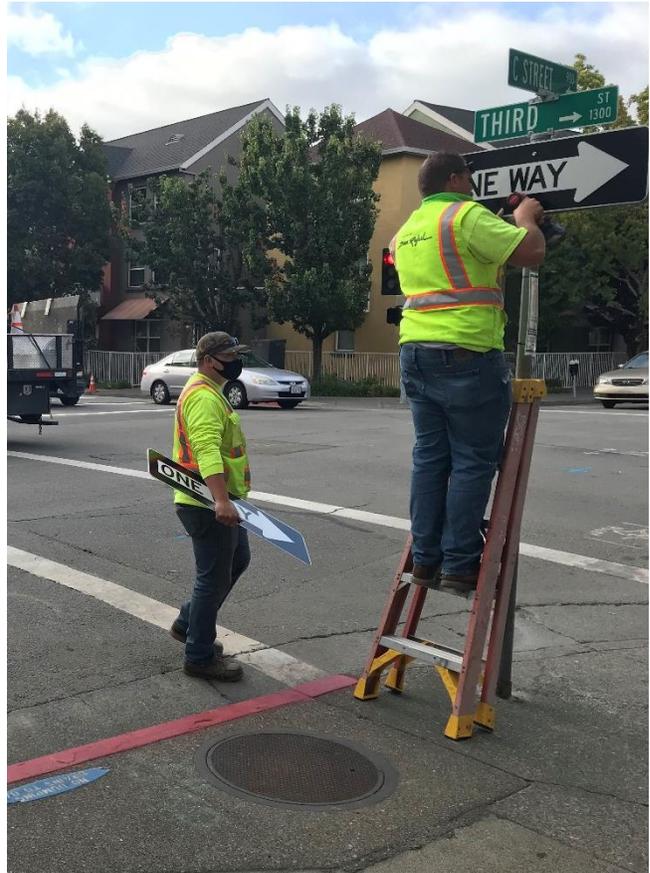
- c) Downtown Standards. Intersections and arterials within the boundaries of the Downtown San Rafael Precise Plan are not subject to LOS standards, recognizing their unique context, operation, and physical constraints, as well as their multi-modal character. Proactive measures shall be taken to address and manage Downtown congestion, evaluate and reduce the impacts of new development on the transportation network, and ensure the long-term functionality of streets and intersections. Traffic shall be monitored and evaluated to identify the need for improvements to ensure that Downtown streets adequately serve both local and regional traffic.

- d) Additional Provisions for Roads Operating at LOS “E” or “F.” Where the adopted standard is LOS “E” or “F,” measures should be taken to avoid further degradation of traffic conditions. Projects impacting roads operating at LOS “F” may still be subject to requirements to offset those impacts as a condition of approval.

Program M-2.5A: Traffic Circulation

Studies. Traffic impact studies will be required for projects with the potential to increase congestion, create safety hazards, or otherwise impact local circulation conditions. Unless covered by the exemptions in Policy M-2.5, such studies should include projections of future LOS, an assessment of the contribution of the proposed project to increases in congestion, an assessment of projected increases in congestion on greenhouse gas emissions, and an assessment of traffic impact fees related to the project. Measures to maintain adopted service levels may be required as a condition of approval.

Projects that are exempt from LOS and/or VMT standards may still be required to perform limited scope traffic and circulation studies to evaluate impacts on traffic conditions or traffic control devices in the immediate area of the proposed project. For projects in Downtown San Rafael, local traffic assessments (LTAs) should evaluate the potential for additional delay or safety hazards at nearby intersections. LTAs should identify necessary road or operational improvements, ingress and egress requirements, and potential site plan changes that reduce delays, conflicts between travel modes, and potential safety hazards.



Guidelines for traffic impact studies and Local Traffic Assessments should be developed within one year after General Plan adoption. The guidelines should include metrics for evaluating impacts to the road network where LOS does not apply or where the acceptable LOS is below the “D” standard.

Program M-2.5B: Level of Service (LOS) Exceptions

Exceptions to LOS planning thresholds may be granted where both of the following circumstances apply:

- a) The improvements necessary to attain the standards would conflict with other land use, environmental, community character, emission reduction, safety, housing, or economic development priorities.
- b) Based on substantial evidence, the City Council finds that:
 - (i) The specific economic, social, technological, and/or other benefits of the project to the community substantially outweigh the project’s impacts on circulation.
 - (ii) All feasible mitigation measures have been required of the project including measures to reduce vehicle delay and measures to reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT); and
 - (iii) The project is consistent with and advances the Guiding Principles of General Plan 2040, including foundational principles such as maintaining great neighborhoods and a sense of community, and aspirational principles such as improving housing affordability, preparing for climate change, and sustaining a healthy tax base.

Program M-2.5C: Traffic Monitoring. Monitor and evaluate traffic conditions throughout San Rafael on an ongoing basis. Based on such evaluations, the City Traffic Engineer may develop recommendations to improve operations, address safety concerns, or modify thresholds. New traffic monitoring technology should be implemented as it becomes available.

Policy M-2.6: Traffic Mitigation Fees

Collect impact fees for new development based on the expected number of trips a project will generate. Fees should be used to implement transportation improvements as directed by City Council resolution.

Program M-2.6A: Traffic Mitigation Fee Updates. Continue to implement and periodically update local traffic mitigation fees and other requirements to cover development-related traffic and transportation improvements.

Future Improvements

Table 10-1 indicates proposed mobility improvements for the 2020-2040 period. Cost estimates for these improvements are contained in a separate report that provides the foundation for the City's traffic impact fee program. These estimates should be periodically reviewed and updated as conditions change. Table 10-1 should be updated as projects are completed and new projects are identified. As required by AB 1600, the City prepares an annual report on traffic impact fee revenues, disclosing how much was collected, how much was spent, and what work was done with the funds.

Policy M-2.7: Proposed Mobility Improvements

Use Table 10-1 (Proposed Mobility Improvements) as the basis for transportation network improvements over the next 20 years. The improvements shown are intended to balance the City's goals of managing congestion, reducing vehicle miles traveled, and enhancing mobility and safety. Specific improvements will be implemented as conditions require and will be refined during the design phase. Table 10-1 may be amended as needed to reflect other design solutions and priorities, subject to City Council approval. Improvements will be implemented through the Capital Improvements Program using a variety of funding sources and may be subject to further environmental review.

Program M-2.7A: Update Proposed Circulation Improvements. Regularly update the list of proposed circulation improvements based on traffic data, available funding, and evolving issues and priorities. Incorporate projects into the Capital Improvements Program as appropriate.

Program M-2.7B: Circulation Improvement Funding. Advocate for Federal, State, and County funding for the transportation projects shown on Table 10-1, as well as other projects that improve mobility in San Rafael.

Table 10-1: Major Planned Mobility Improvements, 2020-2040

ID	Description
<p>1. Interchange Projects (*) Includes modifications to interchanges for capacity, safety, access, and improved circulation.</p>	
1A	<p>US 101/Freitas Parkway Interchange West. Reconfigure the US 101 off-ramp / Freitas Parkway (Del Presidio) and Northgate Rd/ Freitas Parkway intersection to address safety, circulation, and capacity issues. Improvements would be coordinated with ongoing development plans and anticipated Northgate PDA Specific Plan/ Precise Plan process where appropriate.</p>
1B	<p>US 101/ Freitas Parkway Interchange East. Reconfigure the US-101 NB off-ramp/Civic Center Drive intersection to address safety, circulation, and capacity issues. Improvements would be coordinated with ongoing development plans and Northgate PDA, and future planning process where appropriate.</p>
1C	<p>Smith Ranch Road/Lucas Valley Road Multimodal Improvements at US 101. Road widening and additional lane capacity from Los Gamos to Redwood Highway. Improve pedestrian and bicycle access across the US-101 underpass by reconstructing the bridge to provide dedicated bicycle facilities and wider pedestrian sidewalks.</p>
<p>2. Downtown Area Improvements Includes multi-modal improvements identified by the Downtown Precise Plan. Projects and improvements may include projects from other adopted City plans but are intended to achieve the vision, goals and objectives of the Downtown Plan. Also includes first/last mile improvements for SMART Station/Transit Center area (pedestrian, bicycle, lighting, wayfinding).</p>	
2A	<p>Downtown roadway and intersection improvements (traffic signals, roundabouts, pedestrian/bicycle, ADA, and/or turn lane modifications) and improvements to gateway streets to Downtown, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Downtown San Rafael Remaining One-Way Street Conversions, per Downtown Precise Plan • New Signal at Fifth/H St • New Signal at First/C St • New Signal at First/D St • New Signal at Fourth/Union St • New Signal or Roundabout at Mission/Court St
2B	<p>US 101/ Downtown San Rafael Interchange. Improvements to Irwin St, Hetherton Ave, 2nd St, and 3rd St in the vicinity of the NB off-ramp and SB on-ramp.</p>
2C	<p>Fourth Street (West End) Intersection Realignment. Re-align Fourth Street/Second Street/Marquard Avenue intersection.</p>
2D	<p>Second Street Multimodal Improvements. Improve Second Street corridor operations while addressing pedestrian and bicycle safety at crossing locations, and widen sidewalks and remove parking where feasible</p>
2E	<p>Fourth Street Multimodal Improvements. Improve pedestrian and bicycle connections while maintaining high quality transit route along 4th Street. Improvements include converting parking to loading, widening sidewalks, and improving the bus and bike experience. Also Includes 4th Street signal and ADA upgrades.</p>
<p>3. Active Transportation Projects Includes multimodal improvements and programs, with a focus on pedestrian and bicycle improvements identified in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.</p>	
3A	<p>Includes various projects identified in the 2018 BPMP, consistent with the priorities expressed in that Plan.</p>

Table 10-1, continued

ID	Description
<p>4. Complete Streets and Corridors (**) Corridor level improvements including reconstruction of sidewalks, streets, pavement, signing, striping, and crossing improvements, with the objective of improving peak hour traffic flows and accommodating modes other than just motorized vehicles.</p>	
4A	<p>Lincoln Avenue Peak Period Lanes/Parking Restrictions. Extend the existing PM peak period parking restrictions, to allow for two lanes in each direction during both AM and PM peak periods, from Hammondale Court/SB US 101 ramps to Mission Ave. Provide additional parking in corridor. Include ADA upgrades, crossing improvements, and other multimodal improvements/accommodations</p>
4B	<p>Northgate Area Intersection and Complete Streets Improvements. Includes Las Gallinas/Northgate and Las Gallinas/Del Presidio intersections. Also includes improvements to Las Gallinas Avenue and Los Ranchitos Road, Northgate Drive, and Del Presidio Blvd, and continued development of North San Rafael Promenade. <i>Additional improvements to be identified through anticipated future PDA planning process.</i></p>
4C	<p>Francisco Boulevard East Corridor Improvements. Increase capacity from Bellam to Grand Avenue bridge and install signal, ADA, and pedestrian improvements at Harbor St. <i>Additional improvements to be identified through anticipated future PDA planning process.</i></p>
<p>5. Intersection Improvements (**) Intersection improvements including traffic signals, intersection realignments/reconfigurations, and other major changes to spot locations that are outside the Downtown Precise Plan area.</p>	
5A	<p>Fourth Street (Miracle Mile) Intersection Improvement. Improve performance of Fourth Street signal at Ross Valley Dr and Santa Margarita Dr, including ADA upgrades.</p>
5B	<p>Lincoln/DuBois/Irwin. Consider new signal, roundabout, or other intersection improvement to improve safety and traffic flow; right-of-way required.</p>
<p>6. Smart Infrastructure (Technology) Traffic signal and communication infrastructure upgrades, including monitoring equipment, fiber optic/communication systems, and other technology enhancements to facilitate smart management of transportation system.</p>	
6A	<p>Intersection Technology. Traffic signal equipment, cameras, modems, wireless, bluetooth, automated data collection, etc.</p>
6B	<p>Corridor Communication System. Fiber optic cable and conduit along major arterials and central City system upgrades.</p>

Notes:

(*) Excludes northbound US 101 to eastbound I-580 connector, as this is a regional transportation improvement sponsored by TAM

(**) Additional improvements may be identified through anticipated future plans to be prepared for North San Rafael Town Center PDA and Southeast San Rafael PDA.

Policy M-2.8: Emergency Access

Identify alternate ingress and egress routes (and modes of travel) for areas with the potential to be cut off during a flood, earthquake, wildfire, or similar disaster.

Program M-2.8A: Highway Closures. *Develop and update contingency plans for highway closures as part of the City's disaster preparedness and emergency response plans.*

See the Safety Element for additional policies on evacuation and emergency response.

Policy M-2.9: Narrow Streets

In new subdivisions, allow narrower streets to reduce travel speeds and accommodate multiple modes of travel, while still providing for emergency and service access.

See also Goal EDI-6 for policies and actions on the transportation needs of older adults.

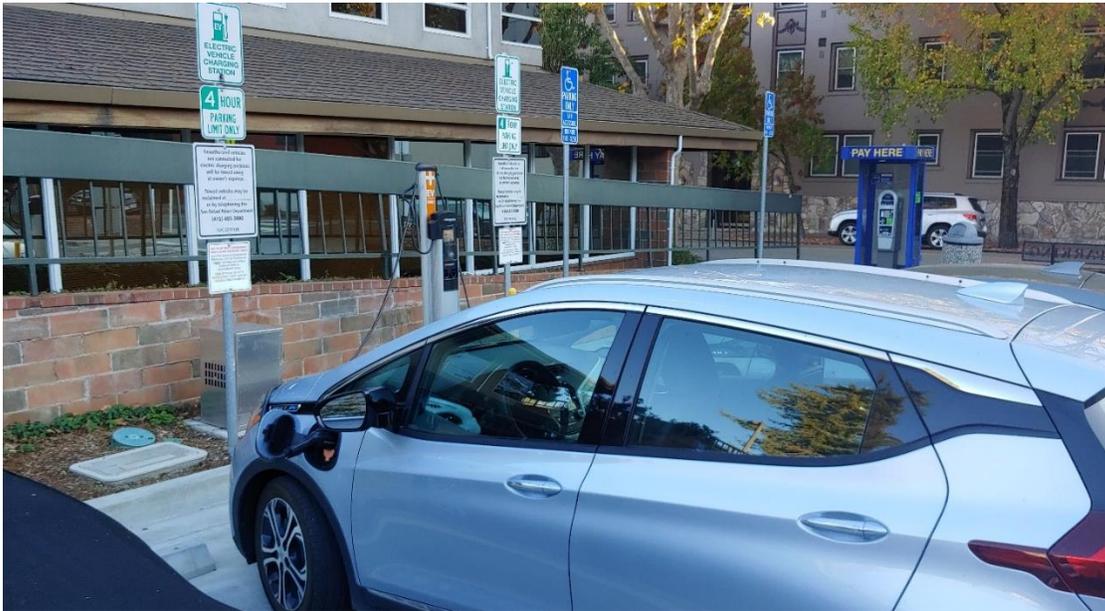
Policy M-2.10: Sea Level Rise

Actively plan for the impacts of sea level rise on the transportation system, including the need to elevate roadways, and potentially redesign or relocate roads to reduce flood hazards and meet evacuation needs.

See Goal S-3 for additional policy and program guidance on sea level rise, including transportation impacts

Policy M-2.11: Environmental Benefits

Look for opportunities to create environmental benefits such as stormwater capture and treatment when reconstructing or improving roads and other transportation facilities,



Goal M-3: Cleaner Transportation

Coordinate transportation, land use, community design, and economic development decisions in a way that reduces greenhouse gas emissions, air and water pollution, noise, and other environmental impacts related to transportation.

Transportation has many direct and indirect environmental impacts. It is the source of 62% of San Rafael's greenhouse gas emissions and the primary source of local air pollution. The City will reduce transportation impacts by supporting cleaner fuel vehicles and higher vehicle efficiency standards,, improving transit and non-vehicular travel modes, and reducing the vehicle miles traveled (VMT) by San Rafael residents and workers. Cost-effective VMT reduction is an essential part of the City's climate action strategy, and a fundamental part of its mobility programs.

Vehicle Miles Traveled

There are three primary ways that San Rafael has aligned its transportation plans with its climate action goals:

- First, through strategies to reduce vehicle miles traveled---in other words, the distance and number of vehicle trips taken each day by those who live or work in San Rafael. Since those trips are typically made by gasoline-powered vehicles, reducing VMT results in reduced transportation emissions.
- Second, by supporting a shift to cleaner fuel vehicles such as electric cars.
- Third, by improving alternative modes of travel, including public transit and “active” transportation modes like walking, bicycling and carpooling.

Ultimately, all three of these paths aim to reduce fossil fuel consumption. Goal 3 is strongly supported by State legislation aimed at reducing transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions, including AB 32, SB 375, and SB 743. The text box on the next page provides more information on VMT and explains how it works with respect to greenhouse gas reduction.

VMT Explained

Vehicle miles traveled (VMT) measures the number of miles traveled by all vehicles in a defined geographic area over a given period of time. Trips are measured from their origins to their destinations—for example, from home to work, or from work to home. VMT is calculated by adding up the trips taken by all drivers in a city or region over the course of a day, a year, or other period of time.

The shorter the distance is between work and home, the lower the VMT. As housing and employment patterns become more dispersed, VMT tends to go up. Reducing VMT is beneficial because it reduces the greenhouse gas emissions that cause global climate change.

VMT may be calculated using anonymous data pulled from smart phones and other devices with GPS. This data is used to generate maps evaluating the distance, frequency, origin, and destination of trips. Algorithms are used to predict the VMT that will be generated by an individual land use, such as a new home or office. The data is available through multiple on-line services.

Unlike Level of Service, VMT is not a measure of congestion. It does not assess the impact of a project on nearby intersections or roads. Rather, it addresses the impacts of a project on a regional scale, based on the amount of driving it will induce. Because it's focused on distance, the metric tends to increase as density decreases. In urban areas, VMT is usually low. People use transit, walk, and complete multiple tasks on the same trip. In a low-density suburban area, VMT is higher. Residents are more dependent on their cars, and drive longer distances to work, shopping, school, and errands.

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission indicates that the “average” Bay Area resident drove 23 miles per day in 2015. On average, San Rafael residents have a daily VMT that is about 10 percent lower than the regional average. However, persons commuting to San Rafael have a VMT per capita that is roughly 7 percent higher than the regional average.

The State Office of Planning and Research (OPR) has provided guidance as cities shift to VMT to evaluate the environmental impacts of new projects. OPR has suggested that new projects achieve a per capita VMT that is 15 percent below the regional average. In San Rafael, it is easier to reach this target for residential development than it is for office development.

So, how does a City go about reducing VMT for its local workforce? In theory, this can be done by building housing closer to local workplaces. But simply building housing near offices does not guarantee that workers will live nearby. Ultimately, a combination of strategies is required, including Transportation Demand Management measures (addressed in the text box on page 10-29).

Policy M-3.1: VMT Reduction

Achieve State-mandated reductions in Vehicle Miles Traveled by requiring development and transportation projects to meet specific VMT metrics. In the event a proposed project does not meet these metrics, require measures to reduce the additional VMT associated with the project, consistent with thresholds approved by the City Council.

Program M-3.1A: VMT Analysis Guidelines. *Develop local guidelines for calculating the projected VMT associated with future development projects and transportation improvements. The guidelines also should cover administration, screening criteria, and appropriate Transportation Demand Management measures and monitoring procedures. All VMT metrics should be reassessed at least once every four years and revised as needed to reflect changing conditions.*

Policy M-3.2: Using VMT in Environmental Review

Require an analysis of projected Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) as part of the environmental review process for projects with the potential to significantly increase VMT. As appropriate, this shall include transportation projects and land use/ policy plans as well as proposed development projects.

Program M-3.2A: Screening Criteria for VMT Analysis. *Adopt and maintain screening criteria for different land uses and project types to determine when a VMT analysis is required as part of the environmental review process. Screening criteria should be revisited over time to ensure that they are appropriate. The criteria should include exemptions for projects with substantial VMT benefits, such as mixed use and infill development in Downtown San Rafael.*

Program M-3.2B: Thresholds for Determining a Significant VMT Impact. *Adopt and maintain thresholds to determine if a VMT impact may be considered “significant” under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).*

Program M-3.2C: Mitigation Measures for VMT Impacts. *Develop and implement mitigation measures that can be applied to projects with potentially significant VMT impacts in order to reduce those impacts to less than significant levels (see Policy M-3.3 and Program M-3.3A).*

Program M-3.2D: Overriding Considerations for Projects with Unavoidable VMT Impacts. *Require the adoption of specific overriding consideration findings before approving a project that would result in significant unavoidable impacts on VMT.*

Policy M-3.3: Transportation Demand Management

Encourage, and where appropriate require, transportation demand measures that reduce VMT and peak period travel demand. These measures include, but are not limited to, transit passes and flextime, work schedules, pedestrian and bicycle improvements, ridesharing, and changes to project design to reduce trip lengths and encourage cleaner modes of travel.

Program M-3.3A: Develop TDM Program Guidelines. *Develop TDM Program Guidelines – or work in partnership with other local governments to develop Guidelines -- that can be used to mitigate potential VMT increases in new development and encourage reductions in existing development.*

Program M-3.3B: Support for TDM. *Work cooperatively with governmental agencies, non-profits, businesses, institutions, schools, and neighborhoods to provide and support TDM programs.*



Transportation Demand Management

Because there are limited opportunities to expand the road network in San Rafael, transportation demand management (TDM) is a critical part of mobility planning. TDM measures encourage shifts from single occupant vehicles to transit, rideshare, bicycle, or pedestrian travel. They can also shift travel times to off-peak periods, or reduce journey-to-work trips through telecommuting. TDM measures are usually administered by an employer, so they focus on work trips rather than trips for other purposes such as shopping and recreation. However, they may also apply to schools (staggering schedules, etc.), special events, and other activities.

The intent of TDM is not to penalize drivers. Rather, it is to create incentives to use other modes of travel. This concept is not new to San Rafael. The City adopted a Trip Reduction Ordinance in 1993 that requires employers with more than 100 employees to implement measures to reduce peak hour trips. A menu of 35 potential trip reduction strategies is included in the Ordinance.

Typical TDM measures include:

- Bicycle incentive programs, such as free bikes, secured bike parking, restrooms and showers
- Telecommuting, compressed work weeks, and flexible work hours
- Carpool/ vanpool incentives such as ride-matching and priority parking
- Bus/ rail subsidies and pre-tax bus pass benefits
- Express shuttles to connect workers with commute modes and activity centers
- Guaranteed ride home programs
- On-site child care facilities and concierge services for employees
- On-site or local employee housing, and home-finding assistance programs
- Public education on ridesharing and alternative ways to get to work
- Low emission vehicle fleets with fueling or charging stations
- Financial subsidies for walking or cycling
- Elimination of parking subsidies for employees

Program M-3.3C: City TDM Program. Implement a TDM program for City employees, potentially in partnership with other local governments, public agencies, and transit providers. Promote the program as a model for other local employers.

Program M-3.3D: Shifting Peak Hour Trips. Support efforts to limit traffic congestion by shifting peak hour trips to non-peak hour, modifying school hours to stagger start and end times, and encouraging flexible work schedules.

Policy M-3.4: Reducing Commute Lengths

Support reduced commute lengths and frequency by encouraging:

- (a) hiring of local residents by San Rafael employers.
- (b) opportunities for persons who work in San Rafael to live in San Rafael.
- (c) telecommuting and flexible work arrangements.
- (d) local-serving shopping, restaurants, and services that reduce the need to drive elsewhere.

Program M-3.4A: Telecommuting. Encourage San Rafael employers to implement telecommuting and work-from-home programs that reduce daily peak hour commutes. Also encourage co-working spaces, home offices, improved internet access, and opportunities for residents employed elsewhere to work productively within San Rafael. Consider “lessons learned” during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic when evaluating policy approaches to telecommuting.

Program M-3.4B: Housing Services. Support and facilitate roommate matching programs, connections between local property managers and major employers, employer housing programs, and other initiatives aimed at helping local workers find housing in San Rafael.

See the Economic Vitality Element and EDI Element for policies on workforce development so that residents may gain the skills needed to find employment in San Rafael

Policy M-3.5: Alternative Transportation Modes

Support efforts to create convenient, cost-effective alternatives to single passenger auto travel. Ensure that public health, sanitation, and user safety is addressed in the design and operation of alternative travel modes.

Program M-3.5A: Carpooling and Vanpooling. Support car and vanpooling in San Rafael through local and regional programs and on-line apps that match interested drivers and passengers.

Program M-3.5B: Shared Mobility. Support efforts to establish and operate car-sharing, bike-sharing, and other services that provide alternatives to driving, particularly in Downtown San Rafael and other transit-served areas.

Program M-3.5C: Micro-Mobility. Coordinate with “micro-mobility” companies such as shared electric scooter and electric bicycle vendors who seek to provide services in San Rafael.

Program M-3.5D: Transportation Network Companies (TNCs). Work with TNCs (Uber, Lyft, etc.) to address issues such as curbside management and maximize the potential benefits of such services.

Policy M-3.6: Low-Carbon Transportation

Encourage electric and other low-carbon emission vehicles, as well as the infrastructure needed to support these vehicles.

Program M-3.6A: ZEV Plan. *Consistent with the San Rafael CCAP, develop a Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Plan with a goal of 25% of the passenger vehicles in San Rafael being ZEVs by 2030. The Plan should provide for additional charging stations, preferential parking for ZEVs, other programs that incentivize ZEV use by San Rafael residents.*

Program M-3.6B: Zero Emission Municipal Vehicles. *As finances allow, shift the municipal vehicle fleet to ZEVs. Use low-carbon fuels as an interim measure until gasoline-powered City vehicles are replaced.*

See also Program M-7.9B on electric charging station requirements

Policy M-3.7: Design Features that Support Transit

For projects located in or near transit hubs such as Downtown San Rafael, incorporate design features that facilitate walking, cycling, and easy access to transit.

Policy M-3.8: Land Use and VMT

Encourage higher-density employment and residential uses near major transit hubs such as Downtown San Rafael, recognizing the potential for VMT reduction in areas where there are attractive alternatives to driving, concentrations of complementary activities, and opportunities for shorter trips between different uses.

See the Downtown Precise Plan for programs implementing Policies M-3.7 and 3.8. See also Land Use Element Policy LU-1.3



Goal M-4: High Quality, Affordable Public Transit

Support accessible, reliable, cost-effective transit services that provide a convenient, affordable, efficient alternative to driving.

The City of San Rafael is served by several transit agencies, operating buses, trains, ferries, and shuttles. Service improvements by these agencies will be supported so that transit becomes a more competitive alternative to driving, both for trips within San Rafael and for trips to and from other destinations. A safe, convenient, affordable transit system is important to San Rafael's quality of life. Transit has the potential to reduce greenhouse gases, alleviate traffic congestion, and provide mobility to those who are unable to drive or do not own a car.

Roughly 10 percent of San Rafael's employed residents use transit to get to work each day. There is also a significant transit-dependent population in the city, including seniors, youth, low-income households, persons with disabilities, and those who don't own cars. Despite this rider base, transit service in San Rafael is challenging given the dispersed travel pattern and low density land use patterns in the city. Average daily bus ridership has slightly declined over the last 20 years, making it more challenging to deliver affordable, equitable, convenient service.

Land use policies that support transit use are essential to the future of our local transit systems. This is especially true for SMART Rail, which was developed in part to relieve congestion on the 101 corridor by providing an alternative for commuters. Locating offices and housing near the stations can reduce reliance on automobiles and help support transit use. Bus and rail also provides an essential resource for San Rafael residents commuting to San Francisco, the East Bay, and Silicon Valley. These services remove cars from the highway and help support greenhouse gas reduction goals.



Having a viable transit system is an important equity issue. Transit is a lifeline for many lower income residents. Nearly 60 percent of Marin Transit's passengers have annual household incomes of less than \$50,000, compared to 25 percent of the County's households at large. Persons of color represent 71 percent of Marin Transit's passengers but are only 28 percent of Marin County's residents. While the City itself does not deliver transit services to residents, it can work with service providers to influence routing, transfers, fare policies, and public engagement.

Existing transit facilities are shown in Figure 10-4. The three largest transit service providers in San Rafael—Marin Transit, GGBHTD, and SMART—each have master plans or strategic plans that guide operations, capital improvements, and funding. Updates to these plans will need to respond to the impacts of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic on ridership and finances, as well as plans to address long-term passenger concerns about rider wellness and safety.

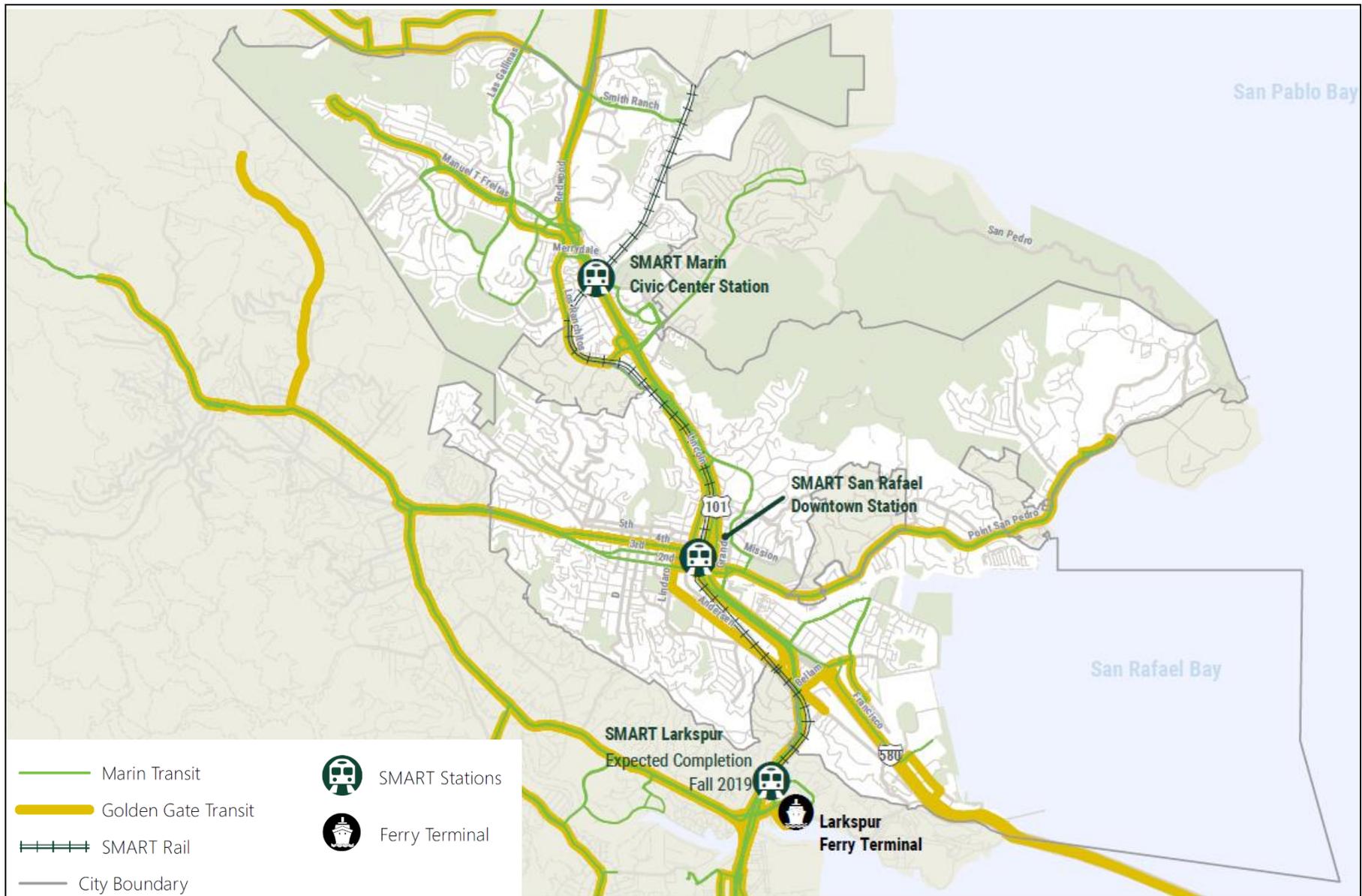


Figure 10-4:
Existing Transit Facilities and Network

Policy M-4.1: Sustaining Public Transportation

Support a level of transit service frequency and routing that promotes transit usage, avoids overcrowding, and makes transit an attractive alternative to driving.

Program M-4.1A: Transit Advocacy. Support State, County, and regional efforts to sustain and expand Marin County's transit network. Work with neighborhoods, employers, transit providers, transportation planning agencies and funding agencies to improve and expand transit and paratransit services.

Program M-4.1B: Evaluating Transit Needs. Support efforts to track, forecast, survey, and respond to changing transit and paratransit needs in order to meet the requirements of specific population groups. Advocate for meaningful public participation in meetings and discussions with transit providers and ensure that the needs of those in the community who are transit-dependent are well represented. Encourage the use of performance measures and regular reporting by transit agencies to ensure services are being delivered as efficiently as possible.

Program M-4.1C: Partnerships. Encourage partnerships between local transit service providers to avoid redundancy, maximize coverage and efficiency, and improve transfers between transit systems.

Program M-4.1D: Transit for Tourism. Support efforts to provide effective transit options for visitors to West Marin and other County tourist destinations, in order to reduce regional traffic flow through San Rafael.

Program M-4.1E: Transit Information. Encourage the development and dissemination of information to facilitate transit use. This includes real-time, multi-lingual information on bus arrivals, departures, transfers, and routes. In addition, the City should include information on transit access on notices of City meetings and provide links to transit websites from its own website

Program M-4.1F: Public Health. Work with transit service providers to effectively respond to service and design challenges associated with rider safety during and after public health emergencies.

Policy M-4.2: Regional Transit Options

Encourage expansion of regional transit connecting Marin with adjacent counties, including basic and express bus service, rail, and ferry service.

Program M-4.2A: Regional Bus Service. Support expansion of regional bus service to and from other Bay Area counties, including expanded express bus service along the 101 and 580 corridors, and continued bus and shuttle service to the region's airports.

Program M-4.2B: Rail Service. Advocate for reliable long-term funding sources to sustain and enhance North Bay rail service.

Program M-4.2C: Ferry and Water Taxi Service. Work with the Golden Gate Bridge Highway and Transportation District and other regional agencies to support improved ferry service, additional ferry terminals, efficient connections between ferries and other transportation modes, new ferry routes (to Vallejo, the East Bay, San Francisco, and points south), autonomous buses,



Photo Credit: Frank Johnson

Policy M-4.3: SMART Improvements

Maximize the potential benefits of Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) while minimizing potential conflicts between SMART trains, adjacent land uses, bicycle and pedestrian movement, and vehicle traffic circulation. City plans and programs related to SMART should be periodically evaluated based on changes in funding, operating costs, ridership, and other factors impacting service levels.

Program M-4.3A: Rail Safety. Work with SMART to improve safety measures along the SMART tracks, reduce train noise, and avoid the blockage of intersections by trains.

Program M-4.3B: Passenger Pickup and Drop-Off. Work with SMART on plans to improve passenger pick-up and drop-off, connectivity between trains and buses, and provisions for passenger parking (see also Policy M-7.9 on parking for transit users).

Program M-4.3C: Arrival Experience. Create a welcoming experience for passengers arriving at the Downtown San Rafael and Civic Center stations, including wayfinding signage, easy transfers, and clearly marked, well lit pathways to nearby destinations.

Program M-4.3D: Service Reliability. Work with SMART to avoid disruptions of service during power outages and provide backup power to sustain operations during and after emergencies.

Program M-4.3E: Downtown Crossings. Continue to work with SMART to reduce congestion related to grade-level train crossings in Downtown San Rafael. Encourage SMART to assess the potential cost, as well potential funding sources, to elevate the tracks through Downtown.

See the Land Use Element for policies on encouraging transit-oriented development in the station areas.



Policy M-4.4: Local Transit Options

Encourage local transit systems that connect San Rafael neighborhoods, employment centers, and other destinations.

Program M-4.4A: Local Bus Service.

Support Marin Transit and Golden Gate Transit efforts to improve bus routing, frequency, and equipment, and to keep bus fares affordable.

Program M-4.4B: Improved Bus Stops.

Support efforts to improve bus stops and shelters to provide a safe and pleasant experience for riders. Allow commercial advertising to fund bus shelter upgrades and maintenance.

Program M-4.4C: Local Shuttle Programs.

Support efforts to create financially feasible shuttle, jitney, and circulator bus services to connect passengers arriving at the San Rafael Transit Center and SMART stations to their destinations.

Policy M-4.5: Transit and the Environment

Encourage a less carbon-intensive transit system with reduced environmental impacts. This could include electrification of buses and trains, and the use of smaller vehicles in areas of lower demand. Environmental costs and benefits should be a critical factor when evaluating transit service improvements over the long- and short-term.

Policy M-4.6: Paratransit Options

Encourage expansion of paratransit and flexible route services as needed to serve specialized populations including seniors, students, and persons with disabilities.

Program M-4.6A: Other Local Transit. *Support Dial-A-Ride, taxi, and transportation network company (TNC) services serving San Rafael.*

Program M-4.6B: Paratransit Service. *Support continued Whistlestop Wheels service and expanded regional paratransit services where needed.*

Policy M-4.7: Intermodal Transit Hubs

Support efforts to develop intermodal transit hubs in Downtown and North San Rafael to provide safe, convenient connections for all travelers. Such hubs should include secure bicycle parking, EV charging stations, and efficient drop-off and pick-up areas and create a positive experience for those arriving in San Rafael.

Program M-4.7A: Transit Center Relocation. Complete the relocation process for the San Rafael Transit Center. Design of the facility should consider the effects on local street congestion and the safety of those walking or bicycling to and from the facility. Continue to work with transit service providers to coordinate schedules, transfers, and routing in a manner that is convenient for San Rafael travelers.

Program M-4.7B: First Mile/ Last Mile Trips. Work with TAM, transit agencies, neighborhood groups, and the local business community to improve options for “first mile/ last mile” trips connecting regional transit hubs to nearby destinations.

Program M-4.7C: Implementation of Other Plans. Implement the recommendations of the Downtown Precise Plan, the Downtown Station Area Plan, and the Civic Center Station Area Plan for coordination of transit services and improvement of connections between travel modes.

Goal M-5: Safe, Attractive Streets that Connect the Community

Provide a transportation system that minimizes negative impacts on neighborhoods while maximizing access and connectivity in the community.

Local streets should be safe, attractive, and provide easy access to homes and businesses. Neighborhoods should be protected from the impacts of cut-through traffic, regional congestion, and overflow parking. Business districts should be conveniently connected to the neighborhoods around them. Residents should be able to comfortably travel to schools, parks, shopping, and workplaces without driving.

Safe, attractive streets are an important part of the quality of life in San Rafael neighborhoods. As congestion increases, drivers may seek alternate routes through adjacent neighborhoods. The problem is made worse by phone apps and GPS systems that sometimes direct commuters through residential areas when arterials and freeways are jammed.

In the past, the City of San Rafael has helped neighborhoods reduce the impacts of increased traffic volumes and speeding cars through neighborhood traffic calming measures. These measures range from speed humps and stop signs to road closures on streets such as Los Gamos Drive. In some settings, road “bulbouts” or curb extensions may be used to slow traffic and reduce pedestrian crossing distances. The City Council has adopted a Speed Hump Installation Policy establishing specific criteria for speed hump installation. Criteria have also been adopted for multi-way stops. Traffic calming measures also include increased enforcement and expanded public education about rules of the road.

Other mobility factors contributing to the quality of life include street appearance and connectivity. Street trees, landscaping, signage, and public art can make the city more attractive while providing orientation and a sense of place. Connectivity includes improvements that make it easier to travel from one neighborhood to another, or from one’s home to school, work, or shopping. San Rafael’s topography has resulted in some neighborhoods being isolated from others, resulting in longer trips and more driving. Highway 101 contributes to the problem by bisecting the city, making it harder to get from one side to the other.

Examples of neighborhoods that are not well connected include the Canal and Downtown, Terra Linda and the Civic Center area, and Terra Linda and Downtown. Over the years, projects like the Merrydale Overcrossing, the Andersen Drive extension, and the Puerto Suelo Bike Path have helped connect the city and make it easier to get around. Opportunities for additional connections should be pursued.

Policy M-5.1: Traffic Calming

Protect residential areas from the effects of speeding traffic or traffic from outside the neighborhood through appropriate traffic “calming” solutions such as speed humps, bulb-outs, speed limits, stop signs, and chicanes. Traffic calming measures shall not conflict with emergency response capabilities.

Program M-5.1A: Traffic Calming Program. *Maintain a neighborhood traffic calming program under the direction of the City Traffic Engineer and seek funding for its implementation. Ensure neighborhood participation in the development and evaluation of potential traffic calming solutions.*

Program M-5.1B: Emergency Access Considerations. *Ensure that road redesign projects, including bicycle and pedestrian improvements, maintain evacuation capacity and emergency vehicle response time, particularly along designated evacuation routes.*

Policy M-5.2: Attractive Roadway Design

Design roadway projects to be attractive and, where possible, to include trees, landscape buffer areas, public art, public space, and other visual enhancements. Emphasize tree planting and landscaping along all streets.

Program M-5.2A: Landscape Maintenance. *Continue to regularly maintain landscaping along roadways, and to encourage attractive drought-tolerant and native plantings.*

See also Policy CDP-3.3 and 3.4 on landscaping and maintenance of City streets and Policy CSI-4.7 on street maintenance.

Policy M-5.3: Connected Neighborhoods

Identify opportunities to better connect San Rafael neighborhoods to one another and to improve access to local destinations such as schools, shopping, and workplaces. Consider such connections as part of emergency response and evacuation planning.

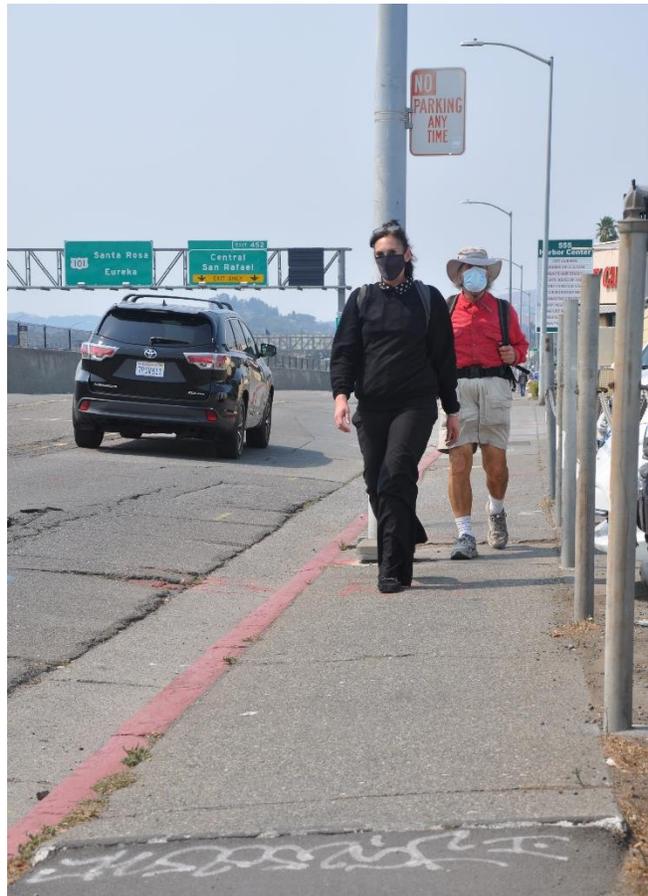
Program M-5.3A: East San Rafael Improvements. *Consider the potential for new or relocated roads in East San Rafael that would relieve local street congestion, increase efficiency, and improve access between the north and south sides of Interstate 580.*

See Program M-6.3A for a description of pathway improvements. Improvements are also addressed in the Neighborhoods Element.

Policy M-5.4: Meeting Local Circulation Needs Around Highway Interchanges

Ensure that regional transportation projects located in San Rafael provide local benefits, address the safety of all travelers, and improve circulation between neighborhoods.

Program M-5.4A: Interchange Improvements. Work with Caltrans and TAM to ensure that the design of freeway interchange improvements includes measures to relieve local congestion, provide commuter parking, improve pick-up/ drop-off parking at bus stops, and enhance pedestrian and bicycle access and safety. This could include safe and separated underpass or overpass pedestrian and bike path crossings where needed.



Policy M-5.5: School-Related Traffic

Actively encourage public and private schools to reduce congestion caused by commuting students and staff through improved provisions for pick-up and drop-off, parking management, staggered start and end times, and trip reduction.

Program M-5.5A: School Transportation. Implement measures to improve the safety and enjoyment of students walking, bicycling, or taking the bus to school. Examples include pedestrian crossing enhancements, transit passes or reduced rates for students, locating transit stops near school campuses, supporting increased funding for school buses and crossing guards, and staggering school hours.

See also Policy CS-1.5 on coordination with schools

Policy M-5.6: Truck Impacts

Manage truck traffic and deliveries in residential areas to avoid conflicts with local auto traffic, pedestrian and bicycle safety, parking, and adjacent uses.

Program M-5.6A: Trucking Routes and Transportation Permits. Continue to designate specific streets as trucking routes and maintain permit requirements for vehicles that exceed weight limits on non-designated routes.

Program M-5.6B: Quarry Traffic. Continue, and periodically update, measures to mitigate the impacts of quarry-related truck traffic on Point San Pedro Road.

Goal M-6: Safe Walking and Cycling

Encourage walking and bicycling as safe, pleasurable, healthful ways to travel.

Walking is an integral part of daily life and provides benefits to our health, the environment, and the character of our neighborhoods. Cycling is both a recreational activity and a practical way to complete short trips for many residents. Looking to 2040, walking and cycling will be supported by an expanded network of sidewalks, paths, crosswalks, bike lanes, and bike parking.

San Rafael established a Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) in 1998 with the specific purpose of creating and maintaining a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (BPMP). The City's most recent BPMP was adopted in 2018, advancing the city's current priorities and ensuring San Rafael's eligibility for State Active Transportation Program (ATP) funding and other grants. The 2018 BPMP includes 109 proposed projects, including 2.9 miles of sidewalk improvements, 33 intersection or undercrossing improvements, and 13.1 miles of new or improved bikeways.

Pedestrian Conditions

San Rafael has a well-developed network of sidewalks and walkways. Most areas of the city have sidewalks on at least one side of the street and most commercial areas have sidewalks on both sides. Downtown has high pedestrian volumes, as well as amenities such as curb extensions, benches, shade trees, and crosswalks. However, there are safety issues associated with crossing Downtown's high-volume arterials (Second, Third, Hetherton, and Irwin). Elsewhere in the City, sidewalk conditions vary. Some areas have narrow sidewalks, discontinuous sidewalks, sidewalks occupied by parked cars, or no sidewalks at all. According to the State Office of Traffic Safety, the City of San Rafael had the second highest frequency of pedestrian collisions among 104 comparably sized cities in California in 2016. One in ten collisions in San Rafael involves a pedestrian, with most of these collisions occurring Downtown.

One of the goals of the BPMP is to encourage and support walking as a daily form of transportation. The Plan prioritizes projects to make sidewalks safer and expand the existing pedestrian network. It proposes closing gaps in the sidewalk network, creating more direct walking routes, incorporating pedestrian improvements in new development and transportation projects, and improving conditions for students, seniors, and persons with disabilities. The Plan seeks ongoing funding for maintenance of sidewalks and pathways, as well as curb cuts and other improvements required by the Americans With Disabilities Act.

Bicycle Conditions

Figure 10-5 displays the location of existing and proposed bicycle facilities in San Rafael (see text box on page 10-42 for an explanation of the bicycle classification system). About 12 percent of the city's roads have space dedicated for bicycle use. Class I bicycle facilities have been developed parallel to the SMART rail line, along the San Rafael Bay shore in Starkweather Park, along Mahon Creek, along Lucas Valley Road, and along and the North Fork of Gallinas Creek. There are Class II bike lanes along Las Gallinas Avenue, Freitas Parkway, and Andersen Drive. Multiple streets in the city have been designed as Class III bike routes. There are currently no Class IV facilities in San Rafael.

Based on 2016 data from the State Office of Traffic Safety, San Rafael has the eighth highest frequency of bicycle collisions among 104 comparably sized cities in California. The highest collision densities are located in the San Rafael Transit Center area and the Downtown Core. Downtown bicycle facilities consist primarily of bike routes, with bicycle traffic mixing with vehicle traffic on many surface streets.

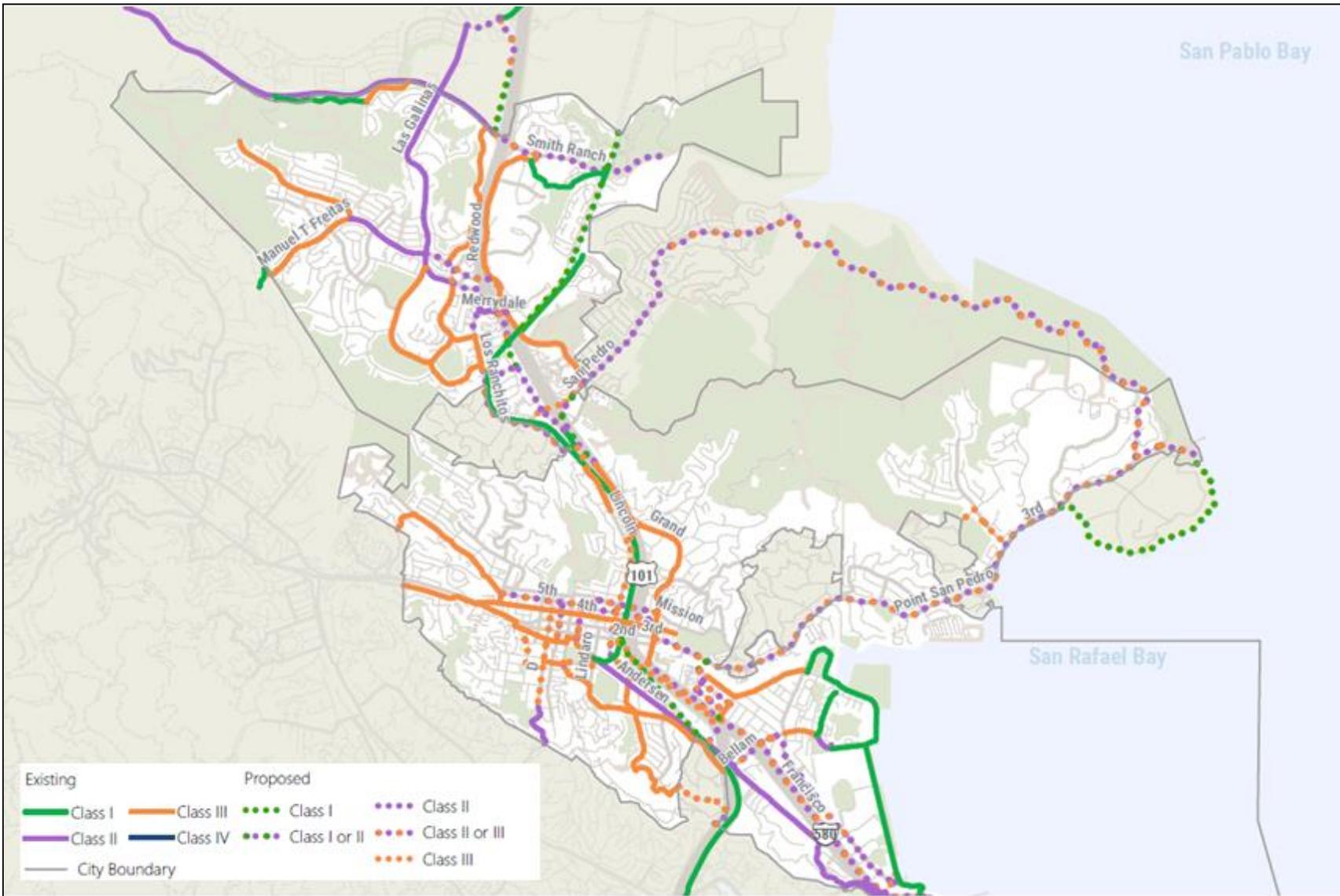


Figure 10-5:

Existing and Proposed Bicycle Facilities

Bicycle Facility Types



Class I bicycle facilities consist of completely separate rights of way and are designed for the exclusive use of bicyclists and pedestrians. These facilities provide a safe environment for younger or less experienced cyclists who do not want to ride alongside traffic. An example is the Puerto Suelo Hill path along the SMART line.



Class II bicycle facilities provide a restricted right-of-way and are designated for use by bicyclists with a striped lane on the street. Bicycle lanes are generally five feet wide. Examples include Andersen Drive and Las Gallinas Avenue.



Class III bicycle facilities require bicyclists to share the right-of-way with motor vehicles. These routes may be designated by signs or by “sharrow” markings on the pavement that indicate that bicycles may use the travel lanes.



Class IV bicycle facilities or “cycle tracks” are dedicated bike lanes separated from vehicle traffic by bollards, raised medians, or dividers. They are located on the curb side of parking lanes, offering a higher level of protection to cyclists.

Significant expansion of the bicycle network has taken place in recent years, and additional improvements are planned. In addition to bike lanes and paths, the City has developed bike racks, lockers, and signage. Public education, outreach, and rider safety has been an important component of these efforts.

Because the list of potential projects exceeds available resources, prioritization is an important part of long-range planning. Among the priority projects are completion of the Cross-Marin Bikeway, extending (from the West End to Peacock Gap), a Downtown east-west connector, the North San Rafael Promenade, completion of the North-South Greenway (generally following the SMART right-of-way), and connections between the Canal neighborhood, Downtown, and the Richmond Bridge. Funding for these and other projects will come from local, state, and federal programs.

The County of Marin has also adopted a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan for the unincorporated area. That Plan identifies improvements that complement those in the city, including connections between Terra Linda and Marinwood and improvements in the Santa Venetia area.

Policy M-6.1: Encouraging Walking and Cycling

Wherever feasible, encourage walking and cycling as the travel mode of choice for short trips, such as trips to school, parks, transit stops, and neighborhood services. Safe, walkable neighborhoods with pleasant, attractive streets, bike lanes, and sidewalks should be part of San Rafael’s identity.

Program M-6.1A: Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Implementation. *Maintain San Rafael’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (BPMP) and update the Plan as required to ensure eligibility for grant funding. The BPMP should be a guide for investment in pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, and for programs to make walking and cycling a safer, more convenient way to travel.*

Program M-6.1B: Station Area Plans. *Implement the pedestrian and bicycle improvements in the 2012 Downtown Station Area Plan and the 2012 Civic Center Station Area Plan.*

Program M-6.1C: Canal Community Based Transportation Plan (CBTP). *Update the CBTP for the Canal neighborhood, including provisions to improve walking and cycling within the Canal and East San Rafael communities, and better connect the Canal area to Downtown, the waterfront, and the rest of the community.*

Program M-6.1D: Funding. *Seek grant funding for implementation of the BPMP and other plans proposing bicycle and pedestrian improvements.*

Policy M-6.2: Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety

Identify, prioritize, and implement pedestrian and bicycle safety improvements in order to reduce collisions and injuries, and eliminate fatalities.

Program M-6.2A: Implementation of Safety Measures: *Implement pedestrian and bicycle safety measures as described in the 2018 BPMP, including ADA compliant curb ramps, curb extensions in business districts, median refuge islands, active warning beacons, painted bike “boxes” at intersections, and signal phasing adjustments in areas with high bicycle volumes.*

Program M-6.2B: Vision Zero. *Consistent with the BPMP, support a “Vision Zero” approach to safety among pedestrians and cyclists, with the goal of eliminating severe injuries and fatalities.*

Program M-6.2C: Enforcement. *Conduct enforcement activities to improve compliance with traffic safety laws, especially around intersections with frequent collisions.*

Program M-6.2D: Safe Routes Programs. *Work collaboratively with local schools to implement Safe Routes to School programs. Explore similar programs to promote safe routes to parks, work, services, and transit, as well as safe routes for seniors.*



Safe Routes to School

Safe Routes to School (SR2S) is a national program designed to improve the safety of children walking or biking to school. The Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM) administers an SR2S program that includes San Rafael. The program includes education, special events, infrastructure improvements, crossing guards, and other strategies. To address the unique needs of each school district, a Task Force is formed for each program, bringing together families, school personnel, law enforcement, and City representatives.

Policy M-6.3: Connectivity

Develop pedestrian and bicycle networks that connect residents and visitors to major activity and shopping centers, existing and planned transit, and schools. Work to close gaps between existing facilities. Funding and prioritization for projects should consider relative costs and benefits, including such factors as safety, number of potential users, and impacts on parking.

Program M-6.3A: Implementation of Pathway Improvements. *Implement the major pedestrian and bicycle pathway, intersection, and lane improvements included in adopted City plans, including:*

- *Restoration of pedestrian paths, stairways, and rights-of-way, particularly in the “inner ring” neighborhoods around Downtown*
- *An east-west bikeway across Downtown San Rafael*
- *A north-south greenway and separated bicycle and pedestrian facilities along West Tamalpais Avenue*
- *Improved crossings of the San Rafael Canal, including a potential new crossing east of Grand Avenue*
- *Additional Class I, II, and IV lanes, as identified in the BPMP*
- *Improved signage, pavement markings and sidewalk widening*
- *Closing gaps in the Bay Trail*
- *Bike lane improvements to Point San Pedro Road (Cross-Marin Bikeway)*
- *Pedestrian/ bicycle “promenades” along the San Rafael Canal and in North San Rafael (Civic Center Station to Terra Linda Community Center, including Freitas Parkway and North San Pedro Road)*
- *Potential pedestrian crossing over 101 (in association with the I-580/101 reconstruction) and east-west pedestrian improvements under the 101 viaduct through Downtown.*

See the Neighborhoods Element for further descriptions of some of these improvements

Program M-6.3B: Improvements in the Unincorporated Area. *Integrate the recommendations of the Unincorporated Marin County Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan to create a seamlessly connected system that allows for easy bicycle travel between City and County neighborhoods. This includes improvements along Miller Creek Road and Las Gallinas Avenue in Marinwood.*

Program M-6.3C: Bicycle Parking. *Create additional bicycle parking and storage capacity at the SMART stations and in Downtown San Rafael.*

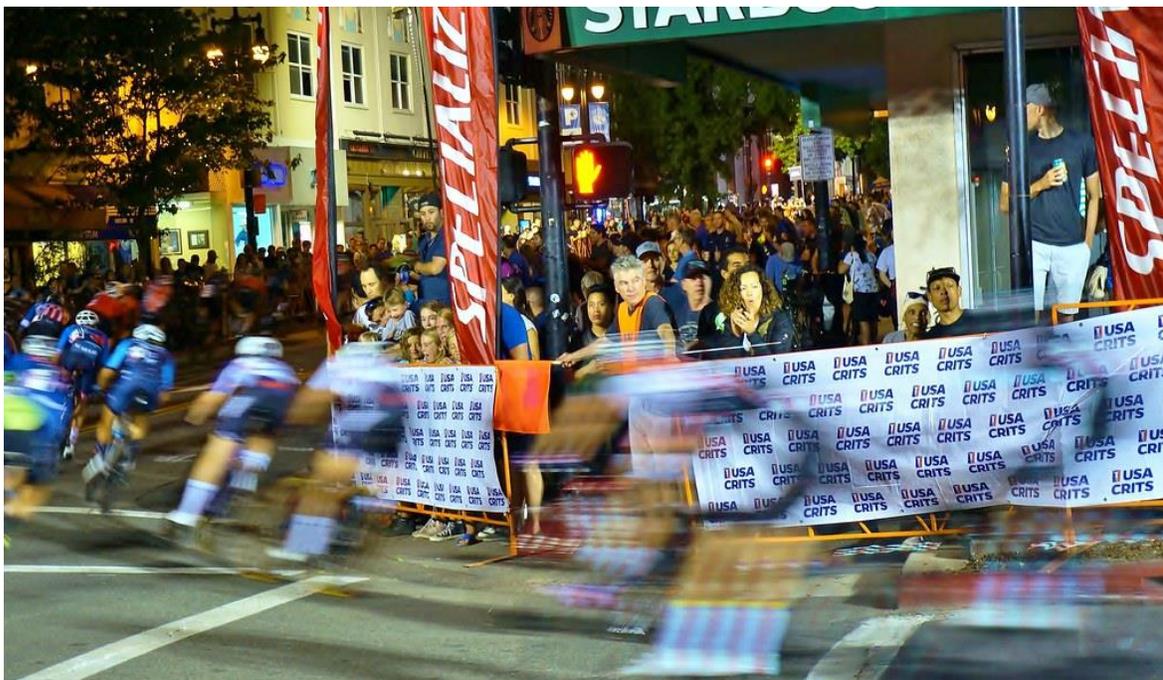
Program M-6.3D: Electric Bicycles: *Monitor and support the use of electric bicycles and periodically evaluate the need for standards, programs, and facilities that support their use.*

Policy M-6.4: Urban Trails Network

Identify, renovate, improve, and maintain an urban trails network to encourage walking and appreciation of historical and new pathways.

Program M-6.4A: Urban Trails Master Plan. *As part of a citywide Trails Master Plan, include an “urban trails” component with maps and descriptions of existing and potential urban trails in San Rafael. Urban trails to be identified include, but are not limited to, historic neighborhood stairways and walkways, Downtown alleyways, park pathways, and creekside paths. Identify potential funding sources for projects identified in the Plan projects and include the projects in the Capital Improvements Program.*

Photo Credit: Frank Johnson



Policy M-6.5: Pilot Projects

Support pilot projects that install removable pedestrian and bicycle improvements on a short-term basis to test their effectiveness and public reception before investing in permanent improvements.

Policy M-6.6: Coordination

Work with other jurisdictions, transit agencies, and stakeholders to implement projects that reflect bicycle and pedestrian needs at the local and regional levels.

Program M-6.6A: Bikeshare Program. Partner with the Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM) in implementation of a bikeshare program in Downtown San Rafael and at the Civic Center station. Consider possible locations for bike sharing “pods” at destinations throughout San Rafael, especially Downtown.

Program M-6.6B: Monitoring. Maintain data on the effectiveness of pedestrian and bicycle improvements and use this data to adjust programs as needed.

Policy M-6.7: Universal Design

Design and construct bicycle and pedestrian facilities to serve people of all ages and abilities, including children, seniors, families, and people with limited mobility.

Program M-6.7A: ADA Compliance. Continue efforts to improve access for those with disabilities, including compliance with Federal and State accessibility requirements.

Program M-6.7B: Best Practices. Continue to construct bicycle and pedestrian facilities according to the most up-to-date local, state, and national best practices and design guidelines.

Policy M-6.8: Pedestrian and Bicycle Programming

Continue programs and activities to encourage walking and cycling.

Program M-6.8A: Public Information. *Maintain public information on pedestrian and bicycle projects, routes, data, and information on the City's website.*

Program M-6.8B: Bike to Work Day. *Encourage City employees, other San Rafael workers and residents to participate in Bike to Work Days and similar programs that encourage cycling as a viable commute alternative.*

Program M-6.8C: Maintenance of Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities. *Develop a program for prioritizing and funding the maintenance of existing pedestrian and bicycle facilities based on use, connectivity, and facility conditions.*

Goal M-7: Well Managed Parking

Manage parking in a way that meets resident, business, and visitor needs while supporting the City's goal of a more sustainable transportation system.

Parking will be managed to support local businesses and enhance the quality of life in residential areas. In areas of high demand, a range of strategies will be used to balance supply and demand, including pricing, shared parking, on-site parking requirements, public-private partnerships, and similar measures that support mobility and economic vitality. Demand will be monitored over time to respond to trends and ensure appropriate design standards. Parking policies should support the goal of a walkable, transit-friendly environment while still recognizing the needs of motorists.

Parking is both a transportation issue and a land use issue. Most San Rafael households own two or three cars, use these vehicles several times a day, and require parking at their destinations. Much of the City was designed for vehicle access and has plentiful parking. Other areas have limited supply. In addition, areas like the Canal neighborhood were designed in anticipation of single-car households, but are now occupied by larger households with multiple cars.

While parking is necessary to support businesses and meet resident needs, it is not always the most efficient or desirable use of land. This is particularly true of large surface parking lots, which may trap heat, contribute to water pollution, and detract from aesthetics and neighborhood character. In many settings, parking lots sit vacant for many hours of the day. Parking structures have been developed in Downtown San Rafael and a few other places in the city, providing an essential resource for local business. But providing *too much* parking makes it harder to achieve competing City goals, such as encouraging public transit use, walking and bicycling.

The City strives for balance as it manages parking, recognizing these competing factors. A combination of on-street and off-street policies is used to balance supply and demand. These policies must be regularly revisited as vehicle technology changes, and as parking technology itself evolves.

San Rafael’s parking needs vary by area. The highest demand occurs Downtown, given the density of development and concentration of businesses. A Downtown Parking District was formed in 1958 to better provide parking for the area. The District roughly encompasses the area bounded by Lincoln Avenue, D Street, Second Street and Fifth Avenue. The City has adopted reduced off-street parking standards for development in this area, recognizing the availability of municipal parking and nearby public transit.

Other commercial areas, such as the Montecito Shopping Center, experience high parking demand during peak shopping hours. Parking for transit users is also an ongoing issue in the city. Neither of San Rafael’s SMART stations, nor the San Rafael Transit Center, has dedicated off-street parking facilities. The need for parking must be balanced with the desire to discourage driving to the station. This has led to a focus on “last mile” trips between the transit stations and passenger destinations, potentially including shuttles, e-scooters, shared bicycles, and similar modes.

The Neighborhoods Element of the General Plan provides additional direction on parking in specific neighborhoods, supplementing the citywide policies cited below.

Policy M-7.1: Optimizing Existing Supply

Optimize the use of the existing parking supply. Expand the supply where needed through innovative programs, public/private partnerships, and land use policies.

***Program M-7.1A: Shared Parking.** Encourage shared parking arrangements that serve private and public users (for example, private office parking lots that are available for nighttime public use).*

Policy M-7.2: Parking Districts

Encourage parking districts in areas of high demand. Such districts reduce the burden of providing off-street parking facilities on individual business owners and encourage shared facilities that meet the parking needs of multiple users.

Policy M-7.3: Parking Technology

Use technology to improve parking efficiency and reduce the land area required to meet parking needs.

***Program M-7.3A: Downtown Parking and Wayfinding Study Recommendations.** Implement the technology recommendations of the 2017 Downtown Parking and Wayfinding Study and consider the application of these recommendations to other parts of San Rafael.*



Improving Parking Through Technology

San Rafael completed a Downtown Parking and Wayfinding Study in 2017. Among the Study’s recommendations was to improve parking efficiency through new technologies, including:

- End-user technologies, such as a mobile responsive website or text message maps to enhance wayfinding
- Mobile parking apps to allow on-street meters to be located and used more easily
- Mobile lifts, stackers, and other methods to accommodate parking with less space
- Automated space counters, digital displays, and real-time information on space availability at garages.

Policy M-7.4: Downtown Parking

Maintain a sufficient number of Downtown parking spaces to meet demand and support local businesses.

Program M-7.4A: Monitoring Demand. Monitor demand for parking around the Downtown SMART station and San Rafael Transit Center to determine the need to adjust parking time limits and costs, and the need to increase supply.

Program M-7.4B: Assessment District Expansion. Modify the Downtown Parking Assessment District boundaries to include the areas east to Hetherton and west to E Street. Pursue parking and other transportation-related services and improvements in the expanded area.

Program M-7.4C: Private Garages. When new private parking structures are constructed Downtown, encourage the inclusion of spaces that are available for public use (at rates to be set by the owner). Consider development agreements and public private partnerships that support such set-asides.

Program M-7.4D: Wayfinding Signage. Improve wayfinding signage for Downtown parking. Undertake marketing programs to make drivers and pedestrians more aware of the location of parking and convenience of Downtown parking lots and garages.

Program M-7.4E: Design Standards for Parking Garages. Develop design standards for parking garages to ensure that they maintain architectural integrity, are easy to use, align pedestrians toward their destinations, and can support ancillary activities where they front pedestrian-oriented streets.



Policy M-7.5: Dynamic Pricing

Consider dynamic pricing options (e.g., varying prices at different times of the day) to manage parking in high-demand locations such as Downtown. Parking rates should distribute demand more evenly and achieve the most efficient use of space. Rates should be periodically adjusted to reflect demand, operating costs, and changes in technology.

Program M-7.5A: Adjustments to Parking Rates. Establish a formal system for setting and periodically re-evaluating parking rates based on performance, costs, best practices, and similar factors. Rates should be based on occupancy data and designed to support fiscal health, as well as the needs of residents, businesses, workers, and visitors. As needed, the City Code should be modified to establish principles for parking management as well as a process for rates to be reviewed based on specified metrics.

Policy M-7.6: Off-Street Parking Standards

Maintain off-street parking standards that adequately respond to demand, minimize adverse effects on neighborhoods, and sustain local businesses.

Program M-7.6A: Adjustments to Parking Standards. Periodically adjust off-street parking requirements to respond to data on parking needs, and trends in vehicle design, car ownership, and travel behavior.

Program M-7.6B: Parking Reductions. Allow reduced parking subject to findings that a project will have lower vehicle ownership rates (for example, for senior housing or housing adjacent to a SMART station).

Policy M-7.7: Parking Management

Proactively manage street parking in areas of heavy demand and areas where parking affects neighborhood character, convenience, and safety.

Program M-7.7A: Residential Permit Parking. Re-evaluate provisions for residential permit parking to make it easier and less costly to implement such programs.

Program M-7.7B: Parking Studies. Periodically conduct neighborhood and business district parking studies. Use these studies as the basis for parking management strategies.

See also Policy LU-3.7 on on-street parking in neighborhoods

Policy M-7.8: Parking for Alternative Modes of Transportation

Designate parking spaces to incentivize and encourage carpooling, electric vehicles, and other more sustainable modes of travel.

Program M-7.8A: Charging Stations. Install additional electric vehicle chargers in public parking lots and garages. Consider expanding electric charging requirements for private parking lots and structures.

Program M-7.8B: Parking Standards. Periodically revisit off-street parking standards to include incentives or additional standards for clean air vehicles, bicycles, shared vehicles, and other low-emission travel modes.

Policy M-7.9: Parking for Transit Users

Support regional efforts to fund and construct commuter parking along transit routes, near commuter bus pads, and near inter-modal commuter hubs in order to support use of transit. Parking areas should include secure parking for carpools, bicycles and other alternative modes and should minimize neighborhood impacts.

Program M-7.9A: Commuter Parking. Regularly evaluate the need for parking around the SMART stations and San Rafael Transit Center, as well as ways to meet that need.

See also Program M-7.5D on wayfinding signage

Policy M-7.10: Curbside Management

Plan for on-street parking in a way that considers broader curbside needs associated with loading, deliveries, passenger pick-up and drop-off, cycling, and other activities. Curb space should be managed to recognize changing needs throughout the day and night.

11 Community Services and Infrastructure

Introduction

The Community Services and Infrastructure Element addresses schools, libraries, law enforcement, fire and emergency medical services, water, sewer, storm drainage, solid waste, energy, and telecommunication facilities in San Rafael. While this element is not required by State law, it addresses systems that are vital to San Rafael's future. The city's prosperity is dependent on high-quality community services and efficiently operated, well maintained infrastructure.

This Element anticipates the impacts of potential growth on each service it covers, and includes goals, policies and programs to respond to current and future needs. The Element provides a brief summary of each topic area, including data and trends. Many of the services described are covered by independent system plans (sewer master plans, master facilities plans, etc.) that may be consulted for further detail. In addition, some of the services described here are provided by other agencies. The policies and programs express an intent to collaborate with the service providers, since the City's direct authority over these services is limited.

The City owns and maintains buildings that house public safety, public works, and administrative activities. It also owns and operates facilities to meet recreational and cultural needs. In addition, San Rafael is responsible for maintaining and managing public rights-of-way, including street surfaces, signals, curbs, gutters, sidewalks, street trees, landscape medians, signs, and streetlights. Some of these facilities are addressed in other elements of this Plan, including the Mobility Element, the Community Design and Preservation Element, and the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Element.

Funding for facility construction, modernization, and repair is addressed through the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Government Code Section 65103(c) requires the CIP to be reviewed for consistency with the General Plan. The CIP is a major element of the City's budget. It includes fully funded projects as well as projects where funding is not yet available. Funding priorities are identified in the program; these priorities may change as new funding sources become available.

San Rafael uses a three-year period for capital improvements programming. The FY 2018-2021 CIP identified about \$35 million for new projects over this period. Major funding sources include the gas tax and Measure A/AA (for transportation projects), Measure A (for parks), the Stormwater Fund, and the Building Maintenance Fund. Other sources include grants, donations, assessment districts, local bond funds, and funds from development impact fees such as the Traffic Mitigation Fee. Because potential expenses typically exceed available revenues, some CIP projects may be deferred.

Schools

Goal CSI-1: Educational Excellence

Promote excellent schools and high-quality, equitable education.

The City will support school district and County Office of Education efforts to ensure access to quality education for everyone. San Rafael's schools will provide a safe, supportive, and collaborative learning environment that engages all students. Lifelong learning will be supported through adult education, literacy tutoring, career development, and technology courses.

The City of San Rafael recognizes the value of schools and education to the community. The City is committed to collaborating with local school districts to ensure that exceptional education is provided to all students. San Rafael is also committed to offering and supporting classes and programs that provide lifelong educational opportunities.

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.¹ 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.

The location of San Rafael's schools is shown in Figure 11-1. SRCS has a total of eleven K-8 properties, including seven elementary schools, one middle school, one K-8 school and two closed campuses. One of the two closed campuses (Old Gallinas) has been repurposed as a children's center. SRCS also operates three high schools (Grades 9-12). Two of these high schools (San Rafael High and Madrone Continuation School) share a campus in the Montecito area and the third (Terra Linda) is located in North San Rafael. MCSD has a total of three active K-5 elementary schools and one middle school. MCSD also owns three elementary schools that are leased to third parties and a fourth former school that includes the District's administrative offices.

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.

San Rafael is also home to several K-12 private schools, enrolling about 1,800 students in 2019. The city is also home to Dominican University, also with about 1,800 students. The City of San Rafael itself also offers classes, including pre-kindergarten and adult education classes, as well as literacy and arts classes.

¹ 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 Lucas Valley, Marinwood, and other parts of unincorporated Northern San Rafael.



Map shows public schools (and public schools leased to other operators) only.

Figure 11-1:
Schools in San Rafael



Source: California Department of Education, 2020

Chart 11-1: Public School Enrollment in San Rafael, 2004-2018

Chart 11-1 (above) shows enrollment trends at San Rafael’s public schools from 2004 to 2018. SRCS elementary schools experienced a 32 percent increase in enrollment between 2007 and 2015 but enrollment has levelled off since 2015. San Rafael High School’s enrollment increased by 12 percent between 2014 and 2018. Miller Creek schools have seen relatively stable enrollment throughout the period. In general, changes in enrollment have been driven by demographic changes rather than by new housing construction in the city. Latino students represented 54 percent of the student body citywide in 2018, compared to 40 percent in 2004.

Both SRCS and MCSD have developed Master Facilities Plans to guide future capital improvements. These plans provided the foundation for voter-approved bond measures that are facilitating capital improvements in all three districts. The plans address the need to replace and modernize existing facilities and add new facilities to respond to growth. An important objective of the facility plans is to establish parity among schools, recognizing that some may be in greater need of amenities and new facilities than others.

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 issues include congestion related to student drop-off and pick-up, faculty and student parking on residential streets, and the safety of students walking and bicycling to school. 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.



Policy CSI-1.1: Educational Programs

Collaborate with schools to foster educational programs and opportunities that benefit the community.

Program CSI-1.1A: Communication. *Maintain regular communications with the School Districts, including periodic joint City Council/ School Board meetings, to foster collaboration and address issues of mutual interest.*

Program CSI-1.1B: Partnerships with Schools. *Participate in school initiatives to educate students about local issues and City government.*

Program CSI-1.1C: Higher Education. *Expand partnerships with Dominican University, the College of Marin, and other nearby colleges and universities to support local education and lifelong learning.*

See Goal EDI-5 for additional guidance on educational programming. See Policy LU-2.7 and Policy EDI-5.1 for guidance on child care.

Policy CSI-1.2: Schools as Community Hubs

Collaborate with schools to provide greater public access to school facilities for neighborhood and community activities.

Program CSI-1.2A: Joint Use Agreements. *Develop joint use agreements with the School Districts and other local academic institutions to improve community access to facilities for recreation, child care, and/or community events.*

See Policy PROS-1.12 for additional guidance on joint use agreements



Student Generation Rates

Student generation rates are used by school districts to estimate the probable number of students in a “typical” new 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 based on data from existing homes in each district, or on State of California standards.

Statewide, the student generation factors in 2019 were 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. A 2018 fee justification study prepared by San Rafael City Schools determined the local yields were 0.23 students per single family home and 0.44 students per unit for multi-family housing.

Policy CSI-1.3: Relationship to Business Community

Strengthen the relationships between businesses, non-profits, and schools to enhance the quality of education and support workforce development. This should include a better understanding of local business needs, as well as opportunities to meet those needs through academic partnerships.

Program CSI-1.3A: Internships. Provide City-sponsored internships for working-age students and assist with publicity about other internship opportunities through partnerships with the Marin County Office of Education and others. Encourage and facilitate local businesses and non-profits to provide internships, apprenticeships, mentoring, and vocational programs.

See Policies EV-1.8 and EDI-5.4 for policies on job training, mentoring, and workforce development

Policy CSI-1.4: Lifelong Learning

Offer programs and classes that provide the whole community with opportunities for lifelong learning (i.e., opportunities to continue learning beyond formal education and job training).

Program CSI-1.4A: City Programs and Classes. Continue to offer a variety of City-sponsored leisure, recreation, education, and personal enhancement courses and programs for all age groups. Regularly assess participation and public opinion to determine interest and support.

Policy CSI-1.5: Campus Land Use and Transportation Issues

Work with San Rafael City Schools, the Miller Creek School District, local private schools, and neighborhood organizations to address traffic, parking, and land use issues on and around school campuses.

Program CSI-1.5A: School Construction Projects. Coordinate with school personnel on campus construction, modernization, and improvement projects.



Photo Credit: Frank Johnson

Program CS I-1.5B: Long-Range Planning and Development Review. Collaborate with schools on long range planning and development review, including collection of appropriate fees, enrollment projections, and planning for future improvements.

See Mobility Element Program M-3.3D and Policy M-5.5 on staggering school start and end times to reduce peak hour congestion. See Program M-6.2D for Safe Routes to School Programs

Policy CSI-1.6: Private Schools

Recognize the role of private (e.g., independent) schools in San Rafael’s education system and their potential as community partners and resources.

Libraries

Goal CSI-2: Modern, Welcoming Libraries that Meet Community Needs

Enhance library services and facilities to meet the informational and recreational needs of the community.

San Rafael's public library system will provide an expanded collection of materials, increased access to services and programs, and attractive, comfortable facilities for patrons. New and improved facilities will enable the City's libraries to fulfill their role as places to learn, explore, discover, and grow.

San Rafael's Public Library, founded in 1887, is one of the most heavily used services in the City of San Rafael. The original Downtown Library opened in 1909, one of 40 libraries in the Bay Area developed with funds donated by philanthropist Andrew Carnegie. The building was expanded in 1960 and again in 1976 to its current size of 14,800 square feet. The City also operates two small branch libraries—one at the Albert J Boro Community Center and another in an interior storefront in Northgate Mall.

In 2017, the City completed an evaluation of its library facilities and developed a vision for improvement. San Rafael currently has roughly 20,000 square feet of library space (including the main library plus two branches). This is less than half of what is recommended by national standards. The evaluation also concluded that the City's libraries require more diversity in collection formats and better integration of new technologies. There is no capacity for expanding the collection in the existing space, and there is also limited seating, an inadequate number of computers, and obsolete meeting space and staff space.

The City is reimagining future library services based on three key elements:

- Expanding core resources, including 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 building.
- Increasing access to services and programs, including expanded hours of operation, meeting space, activities for children, library events, and cultural events
- A place for people, based on the principle that the library should provide a clean, beautiful, modern, welcoming environment with comfortable seating and places to read, learn, and socialize.

An assessment of library needs and different options for meeting those needs was completed in 2019. The currently preferred alternative is to develop a new library integrated with the San Rafael Community Center in Albert Park. Recommendations also include a permanent 11,000 square foot library in Northgate Mall, and expanding the footprint of the library at the Al Boro Center. These recommendations continue to be refined based on funding availability and other factors.

Policy CSI-2.1: Library Facilities

Improve library facilities to meet current and future needs and recognize the changing role of libraries in community life.

Program CSI-2.1A: New Main Library. Fund, develop, and construct a new Main Library designed to provide adequate space for collection materials, City programs, public meeting rooms and technology, seating for visitors, and services for special user groups such as children and teens. Develop adaptive reuse plans for the historic Carnegie Library as part of library planning.

Policy CSI-2.2: Branch Libraries

Expand community-based library services in East and North San Rafael to ensure that library services are accessible to everyone in the community.

Program CSI-2.2A: Pickleweed and Northgate Libraries. *Modernize and expand the Pickleweed and Northgate Libraries so they are adequately equipped to deliver the services needed in the surrounding communities.*

Program CSI-2.2B: School Libraries. *Consider partnerships with the school district to make high school libraries available to the public.*

Policy CSI-2.3: Library Collections

Expand and adapt library collections to meet the changing needs of the community and respond to technological change, while preserving a core collection of materials of continuing value. This should include Spanish language materials.

Policy CSI-2.4: Libraries as Community Centers

Promote programs and events that affirm the role of the City’s libraries as community gathering places and a setting for the open exchange of ideas and information.

Program CSI-2.4A: Focused Services. *Provide dedicated library programs for children, youth, older adults, and Spanish-speaking residents. Provide other services, such as free internet access and electrical power during an emergency.*

Program CSI-2.4B: Literacy Programs. *Continue to offer literacy and tutoring programs for English learners, as well as support and training for volunteer tutors.*



Public Safety

Goal CSI-3: Exceptional Public Safety Services

Provide and maintain exceptional fire, public safety, and paramedic services.

San Rafael's Police Department engages with the community to provide professional, fair, compassionate and dedicated law enforcement services with integrity and respect. San Rafael's Fire Department strives to provide quality public fire services, and to deliver fire and emergency medical services with skill, strength, and dedication. In its delivery of public safety services, the City will be a countywide and regional leader in addressing issues related to equity and social justice.

Law Enforcement

Law enforcement services in the San Rafael Planning Area are provided by several agencies. The City of San Rafael Police Department has primary responsibility for areas within the City limits and operates from the Public Safety Center at 1375 Fifth Avenue. The Marin County Sheriff's Department is located at 1600 Los Gamos Drive in San Rafael and 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 mission of the San Rafael Police Department is to engage with the community to provide fair, compassionate, and dedicated law enforcement with integrity and respect. In 2019, the Department had 60 full-time sworn personnel and 22 full-time non-sworn personnel, which was comparable to similarly sized North Bay cities on a per capita basis. The Department includes an Operations Division, which provides uniformed police services 24 hours a day, and an Administration Division, which provides services such as training, criminal investigation, and dispatch.

Relative to comparably sized communities, San Rafael is a safe city. Based on FBI Uniform Crime Reporting data, 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.

The relocation of the Police Department to the new Public Safety Center addresses the space shortages that previously affected the Department. Resources continue to be needed for training, new equipment and technology, and crime prevention. 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. The Police Department participates in planning and development processes to ensure these issues are addressed.

San Rafael Police also provides services to residents experiencing mental health challenges and homelessness, and administers other initiatives focused on compassionate law enforcement and public safety. It also provides traffic enforcement services. Many of the Department's programs build on the philosophy of community policing, including more direct public contact with officers and stronger ties with the community.

Fire and Emergency Medical Services

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 State 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. The San Rafael Fire Department also provides paramedic services under a joint powers agreement to the entire Planning Area.

Station	Address
51	1375 Fifth Ave
52	52 Union St
54	46 Castro Av
55	955 Pt San Pedro Rd
56	650 Del Ganado Rd
57	3530 Civic Ctr Dr

In 2013, San Rafael voters approved Measure E, extending an existing 0.5% sales tax and adding 0.25% to the tax, which was subsequently dedicated to upgrade critical public safety facilities. Measure E provided funding for the new Public Safety Center and replacement of Fire stations 52 and 57. Subsequent phases of the City's essential public safety facility improvement plan include seismic and operational upgrades to other fire stations.

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.

In 2020, the San Rafael Fire Department had 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 and a Fire Marshal who works closely with the City's Code Enforcement personnel to ensure that all structures meet Fire Code standards. The Bureau also manages the City's Vegetation Management Program, which focuses on reducing fire hazards throughout the City. Other Fire Department functions include monitoring the storage and use of hazardous materials, managing household hazardous waste, and delivering fire response and rescue services for urban and wildland fires.

The Fire Department's Insurance Service Office (ISO) rating is Class 1, the highest rating possible. The City has worked proactively to reduce fire risks through amendments to the Fire Code, including special requirements for properties in Wildland Urban Interface areas, vegetation clearance, and requirements for hydrant upgrades. The Fire Department calculates required fire flow for new development based on building construction, size, type, location, and the availability of sprinklers.

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. 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.

See the Safety and Resilience Element for a discussion of wildland fires, fire prevention programs, and emergency preparedness



Fire and EMS: By the Numbers

During calendar year 2019, the San Rafael Fire Department responded to:

- 27 residential structure fires
- 27 non-residential structure fires
- 22 vehicle fires
- 16 outdoor property fires
- 16 wildland fires
- 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
- 2,885 other incidents (animal rescue, smoke, etc.).

Policy CSI-3.1: Investment in Public Safety Services

Maintain cost-effective police, fire protection, and paramedic facilities, equipment, and services. Manage increases in costs through effective preventative measures, such as fire prevention and community policing.

Program CSI-3.1A: Police Department Strategic Plan. *Develop a Strategic Plan for police services to evaluate trends, establish goals, prioritize future actions, determine budget needs, and align services with other City departments. The Plan should include a proactive response to issues relating to social justice and compassionate law enforcement. Engage the community, including local businesses, in this process.*

Program CSI-3.1B: Capital Facilities. *Complete improvements to essential public safety facilities made possible by voter-approved measures. Conduct periodic evaluations of facility and technology needs in the future to ensure that the Police and Fire Departments are equipped to respond to emergencies and deliver quality services.*

Program CSI-3.1C: Public Safety Training. *Provide and encourage ongoing employee training to ensure public safety staff skills remain current and innovative. Continue to provide training in de-escalation and least harm techniques, as well as mental health and racial bias training.*

Program CSI-3.1D: Vehicle and Equipment Maintenance. *Maintain and upgrade vehicles and equipment as necessary.*

Policy CSI-3.2: Mitigating Development Impacts

Engage the Police and Fire Departments in the review of proposed development and building applications to ensure that public safety, fire prevention, and emergency access and response needs are considered and effectively addressed.

Program CSI-3.2A: Crime Prevention through Environmental Design. *Design new public and private development to achieve “eyes on the street,” including site planning, lighting, landscaping, and architectural design features that reduce the potential for crime.*

Program CSI-3.2B: Emergency Response Time. Use the development review process to identify appropriate measures to reduce fire hazards and ensure adequate emergency response capacity.

See Safety Element Programs S-4.2A, S-4.3A and S-4.3B for guidance on landscaping and building design measures to reduce fire hazards and maintain defensible space, and to ensure adequate emergency access and water supply for fire-fighting.

Policy CSI-3.3: Community-Based Public Safety

Actively promote a community-based approach to public safety services. This approach should emphasize a high degree of communication and interaction between officers, residents, neighborhood groups, schools, and businesses.

Program CSI-3.3A: Community Safety Programs. Implement community public safety programs such as National Night Out and the Citizens Police Academy to support a safer community and promote positive relationships between law enforcement officials and residents. Implement similar programs promoting fire prevention and preparedness.

Program CSI-3.3B: Business Outreach. Engage the business community in public safety program development and implementation. This should include increasing awareness of existing programs and developing new initiatives and partnerships to address property crime and other public safety issues affecting local businesses.

See the Safety Element for a discussion of emergency preparedness and wildfire prevention programs

Policy CSI-3.4: Quality of Life Programming

Maintain programs to proactively address quality of life issues, such as peace disturbances, loitering, littering, and vandalism. Focus on personal contact with residents and businesses and build positive relationships with all segments of the community.

Program CSI-3.4A: Foot Patrol Services. Maintain and potentially expand foot patrol services. Continue to work with homeless service organizations, mental health professionals, and the business community to create a safe, welcoming environment in Downtown San Rafael and other parts of the city.

Policy CSI-3.5: Traffic Safety

Maintain traffic enforcement programs to ensure the safety of pedestrians, bicycles, and motorists on San Rafael streets, sidewalks, paths, and bikeways. Evaluate and mitigate potential traffic hazards as changes to the circulation system are proposed, and as new modes of travel are introduced.

See Mobility Policy M-6.2 for additional guidance on traffic safety.

Policy CSI-3.6: Mutual Aid

Maintain mutual aid agreements for police and fire service with other jurisdictions and community service districts to ensure that the capacity exists to adequately respond to local emergencies.

See the Safety Element for policies on communication systems improvements

Infrastructure

Goal CSI-4: Reliable, Efficiently Managed Infrastructure

Support reliable, cost-effective, well-maintained, safe and resilient infrastructure and utility services.

Streets, water, sewer, storm drainage, energy and telecommunication systems will be managed by the City and allied agencies to sustain high-quality service delivery, while protecting the environment and responding to the challenges of a changing climate. Advances in technology will improve service quality, efficiency, security, and sustainability. A high level of communication and coordination will take place between service providers, ensuring that assets are prudently managed and funding is provided for capital, operating, and maintenance costs.

Water

Marin Municipal Water District (MMWD), a public utility governed by an elected board, provides water service to eastern Marin County south of Novato. Approximately 27 percent of MMWD's customers are within San Rafael. MMWD's water supplies presently come from a combination of local surface water supplies, imported water from the Sonoma County Water Agency (SCWA), and recycled water. Local surface water is stored in seven local, rain-fed reservoirs, all located outside the San Rafael Planning Area. The total reservoir storage capacity is nearly 25.9 billion gallons.

Like all water districts in California, MMWD prepares an Urban Water Management Plan and updates this Plan every five years. The most recent Plan for MMWD estimated the reasonable amount of water available from surface sources to be roughly 142,000 acre feet per year (AFY).² As noted above, MMWD also has an agreement with SCWA for up to 14,300 AFY, primarily from the Russian River. This water enters the MMWD system at the Ignacio Pump Station. This agreement is effective through June 2025 and includes a renewal provision extending it through 2040.

MMWD operates three water treatment plants, treating about 20.4 million gallons per day (MGD) for its customers. Treated water is distributed through a network of 886 miles of water mains, 94 pump stations, and 127 treated water storage tanks. MMWD also operates 27 miles of reclaimed water pipeline, capable of delivering 1.9 million gallons of treated wastewater for irrigation and other non-potable purposes.

MMWD considers San Rafael's long-range growth plans in its own water system planning. In 2015, demand in the service area was 38,866 AFY. By 2040, it is projected to increase to 42,109 AFY. This is within the system's capacity, even during periods of multiple dry years. Given the potential for drought and impacts of climate change, water conservation and efficiency remain imperative. MMWD—and the City of San Rafael—continue to actively promote conservation measures. MMWD also implements an ongoing capital improvement program to replace water pipelines and storage tanks and seismically strengthen its infrastructure.

² An "Acre Foot" is used to measure water volume. It is the amount of water needed to cover one acre of land with one foot of water.



Wastewater

Wastewater collection and treatment in San Rafael is provided by three entities: Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District (LGVSD), San Rafael Sanitary District (SRSD), and Central Marin Sanitation Agency (CMSA). LGVSD operates both a collection system and a wastewater treatment plant. SRSD operates a collection system that delivers wastewater to a treatment plant operated by CMSA.

LGVSD's service area includes North San Rafael and neighboring parts of unincorporated Marin County. The District operates 105 miles of gravity sewer pipelines, 6.7 miles of force mains, and 28 pump stations. LGVSD also operates a wastewater treatment plant, located at the east end of Smith Ranch Road. The LGVSD treatment plant provides secondary treatment followed by ammonia removal and filtration, chlorination and dechlorination, and discharge. A portion of the treated effluent is directed to MMWD's water recycling facility.

SRSD collects wastewater in the area south of Puerto Suelo Hill, including San Rafael, San Quentin, and adjacent unincorporated areas. The District operates 134 miles of sewer pipelines, 13 miles of force mains, and 32 pump stations. Wastewater is transported to the CMSA treatment plant on Andersen Drive near Point San Quentin. The CMSA plant also serves Larkspur, Corte Madera, Fairfax, Ross, and San Anselmo, as well as portions of unincorporated Marin County. Wastewater receives preliminary treatment, primary treatment, secondary treatment, disinfection, and dechlorination. Treated wastewater is discharged to Central San Francisco Bay via a two-mile outfall pipe.

Operating revenue for LGSVD and SRSD is primarily derived from sewer rates paid by customers and by property taxes. Preventive maintenance is an important part of operations, and is necessary to limit the frequency of overflows, reduce infiltration and inflow, and prevent and minimize blockages. The Sanitary Districts both have capital improvement programs that address capacity, storage, structural, and other issues, as well as needs associated with growth and technology. In general, the systems function adequately, even during flooding and wet weather conditions. Capacity assessments are periodically performed to identify potential deficiencies.

Both wastewater treatment plants have adequate capacity to meet San Rafael's long-term needs. However, capital projects are necessary to responding to regulatory changes, operational needs, and climate change impacts, including sea level rise. LGVSD is in the process of a multi-year, multi-million dollar plant upgrade. The District has also reached an agreement with MMWD to expand the recycled water treatment plant to provide tertiary treated wastewater to MMWD customers. CMSA has prepared a Facilities Master Plan which identifies 26 projects that respond to future needs.

Storm Drainage

The City of San Rafael Department of Public Works (DPW) owns and maintains San Rafael's storm drain system. The system includes 3,800 drain inlets, 116 miles of pipe, 35 miles of open ditches and culverts and 12 pump stations. The City maintains drains on City property while property owners are responsible for drains within their properties. Outside the City limits, the Marin County Flood Control and Water Conservation District operates and maintains the storm drainage system. This includes a system of pumping stations, levees, and tide gates that provide flood protection to Santa Venetia.

Storm drainage improvements are generally implemented through San Rafael's Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The list of CIP projects and funding priorities changes based on available sources of funding. CIP funding is provided in part by the City's Stormwater Fund and covers repair, replacement and improvement of various system components. The City is currently studying ways to comply with State requirements for the installation of trash capture devices in all storm drains, as well as methods of improving the levee system and responding to sea level rise.

See the Safety and Resilience Element (Goal S-3) for additional information on flooding and sea level rise and the Conservation and Climate Change Element (Goal C-3) for policies on water quality.



Energy and Telecommunications

Marin Clean Energy (MCE) provides electricity to all communities in Marin County, including San Rafael. MCE is a Community Choice Aggregation Program run by representatives from participating communities. It provides electricity that is primarily generated from renewable sources such as solar and wind power. MCE offers several program options to customers that include varying amounts of renewable energy, including an “opt out” program that allows continued service from Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E). The electric energy provided by MCE is conveyed to customers using infrastructure owned and operated by PG&E. PG&E maintains the transmission grid, distribution lines, transformers, and substations. PG&E also continues to generate electricity through coal-fired and nuclear power plants, as well as from renewable sources.

Natural gas service is provided to San Rafael customers by PG&E. This gas originates in California, other southwestern states, the Rocky Mountains, and Canada. Pipelines transport natural gas from fields and storage facilities in large pipes under high pressure. Smaller distribution pipelines deliver gas to individual businesses and residences. Gas lines are regularly inspected and monitored.

Components of the regional gas and electric delivery systems run through San Rafael. These include two north-south corridors containing overhead 60 kV and 115 kV transmission lines, one roughly parallel to US 101 and another passing through Southeast San Rafael, the San Pedro Peninsula, and the McInnis Marsh area. Substations are located near Second and Lindero in Downtown San Rafael and near Smith Ranch/US 101 in North San Rafael. There are also several natural gas pipelines running underground through the city.

Telecommunication services include traditional landline telephone services, cable and satellite television services, and mobile telephone services, as well as fiber/broadband and other internet services. These services are offered by multiple providers and are regulated to varying degrees by the California Public Utilities Commission and Federal Communications Commission. The City seeks to provide information and communication access to all residents in order to facilitate education and economic opportunity. Telecommunication infrastructure should be designed to minimize its visual impacts and be compatible with adjacent uses.

Solid Waste

Marin Sanitary Service provides residential, multi-family, and commercial garbage, recycling, and compostable collection services within the City and nearby unincorporated areas. Residential and commercial curbside recyclable materials are processed at the Marin Resource Recovery Center / Marin Recycling Center (MRC) located at 565 Jacoby Street in San Rafael. The MRC also has a Buy Back center that accepts recyclables as well as facilities for construction and demolition debris, landscaping materials, and bulky items. Waste at the Resource Recovery Center goes through a customized system of screens, conveyors, blowers, and magnets and is also sorted by hand. About 3,000 tons of recyclables are processed each month. The Marin Household Hazardous Waste Facility is also located at the Jacoby Street site, providing a repository for paint, household cleaning products, automotive products and similar materials that would be hazardous if disposed in a landfill.

Waste that is not recycled is transported to one of several landfills. About 54 percent of the city’s landfilled waste goes to Redwood Landfill north of Novato and about 41 percent goes to the Potrero Hills Landfill near Suisun City. The remaining five percent goes to landfills around the state. The Redwood Landfill includes a gas to energy plant that converts landfill gas to renewable electricity for use by Marin Clean Energy (MCE) customers. The landfill is expected to close in 2024. The Potrero Hills landfill is expected to be operational through 2048.

Given the limited capacity of landfills and the environmental benefits of recycling and waste reduction, the City strongly supports solid waste diversion initiatives. These are administered by Zero Waste Marin, an organization created through a Joint Powers Agreement between 11 cities and towns within Marin County as well as the County itself. Zero Waste Marin has established the goal of reducing landfilled waste to zero by 2025. In 2011, Marin County and its cities had an overall landfill diversion rate of 75 percent. The diversion rate actually declined to 66 percent by 2018. Continued public education and outreach will be essential to reverse this trend and move toward full diversion.



Policy CSI-4.1: Capital Investment

Provide for ongoing, preventative maintenance of infrastructure and timely replacement, repair, and upgrading of City equipment.

Program CSI-4.1A: Capital Improvement Programming. Maintain and regularly update a multi-year Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) covering City owned and operated infrastructure and public facilities. Seek the input of other local service providers (MMWD, LGVSD, etc.) when preparing the City's CIP and encourage these agencies to seek City input as they prepare their own CIPs.

Program CSI-4.1B: Funding for Maintenance and Capital Costs. Consider ways to improve the reliability of maintenance funding, such as establishing a reserve fund or voter-approved parcel taxes and special assessments. Identify potential funding sources for unmet and anticipated future capital project needs, such as grants, bond measures, and impact fees.

Program CSI-4.1C: Community-Supported Services. Consider community-supported (e.g., cooperative) services as an alternative to bring fundamental service upgrades to neighborhoods and managing capital costs.

Policy CSI-4.2: Adequacy of City Infrastructure and Services

As part of the development review process, require applicants to demonstrate that their projects can be adequately served by the City's infrastructure. All new infrastructure shall be planned and designed to meet the engineering standards of the City and various local service and utility providers.

See also Policy LU-1.2 requiring adequate infrastructure as a condition of development approval

Program CSI-4.2A: Long-Term Planning. *Continue to use the CIP to analyze and respond to local capital facility needs.*

Program CSI-4.2B: Engineering Standards. *Require new development to comply with the subdivision standards in the San Rafael Municipal Code, as well as relevant Marin County and utility district engineering standards. Where feasible, encourage development to reach beyond current standards and collaborate with the community to innovate and define new best practices.*

Program CSI-4.2C: Impact Fees. *Continue to collect impact fees and use other funding mechanisms to ensure that new development pays its fair share of providing/ upgrading services associated with that development.*

Policy CSI-4.3: Public Involvement in Infrastructure Planning

Encourage public participation in the planning and design of City infrastructure projects. As resources allow, this could include advisory committees, task forces, and similar community consultation efforts.

Program CSI-4.3A: Design Review. *Require design review for City projects. Provide complementary design review for major projects proposed by other public agencies.*

Program CSI-4.3B: CIP Process. *Continue to make the City's CIP easily available and to solicit public input in the CIP process, including web-based and social media applications that facilitate community feedback.*

Policy CSI-4.4: Sustainable Design

Plan, design, and operate infrastructure to minimize non-renewable energy and resource consumption, improve environmental quality, promote social equity, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. An evaluation of costs and benefits must be a factor in all improvements. This includes the potential costs of inaction and potential for "avoided costs," particularly with respect to climate change.

Program CSI-4.4A: Public Space and Infrastructure. *Seek opportunities to improve environmental quality in the design of streets, infrastructure, and public spaces. For example, public space improvements provide an opportunity to retain and treat stormwater through groundwater infiltration and subsurface water storage.*

Program CSI-4.4B: Reducing Impervious Surfaces. *Pursue porous pavement, rain catchment areas, and similar elements that reduce runoff.*

See also Green Streets policies and programs in the Conservation/ Climate Change Element

Policy CSI-4.5: Infrastructure Technology

Encourage the use of technology to improve service efficiency and environmental quality.

Photo Credit: Florian Kainz



Policy CSI-4.6: Climate Change Impacts

Incorporate sea level rise and increased storm intensity forecasts in the planning and design of local infrastructure projects.

See also Policy S-2.3 on Infrastructure Resilience and Program S-1.3A on Critical Public Facilities

Program CSI-4.6A: Guidance Document. Prepare a guidance document for incorporating sea level rise into the City's capital planning process.

Program CSI-4.6B: Coordination with Service Providers. Coordinate with water, sewer, energy, solid waste, and telecommunication service providers to prepare a plan for retrofitting critical infrastructure for rising sea levels, more intense storms, and other climate-related impacts.

Policy CSI-4.7: Street Maintenance

Provide efficient, effective street maintenance, sweeping, and lighting programs. Safe, well-maintained neighborhood streets are an important part of the public realm and the local transportation network.

Program CSI-4.7A: Pavement Management. Continue participation in the Pavement Management Program to assist in prioritizing street resurfacing projects. Adjust prioritization criteria as needed to ensure that pavement condition, traffic safety, equity, and community input are addressed.

Program CSI-4.7B: Street Sweeping. Continue to maintain a street sweeping program. Work with neighborhoods on ways to improve street sweeping efficiency and to publicize street sweeping programs. Investigate alternative funding sources for street sweeping.

Program CSI-4.7C: Sidewalk Repair. Continue to implement a cost-sharing program for Sidewalk Repair with residential property owners that is consistent with the State Streets and Highway Code, property owner interest, and funding availability. The success of the program, as well as sidewalk conditions and repair priorities, should be monitored. Potential funding sources and other cost-sharing approaches should be considered to address equity.

Program CSI-4.7D: Street Lighting Program. Continue efforts to improve street lighting, staying mindful of the need to balance financial, public safety, and environmental objectives.

See also Policy C-1.19 and Program C-1.19A on night lighting and dark skies. See Policy C-1.16 on urban forestry and Policy CD-5 on street trees. See Policy EDI-4.2 on equitable maintenance.

Policy CSI-4.8: Potable Water Supply and Delivery

Work with Marin Municipal Water District (MMWD) to meet projected water demand, encourage water conservation, and ensure the reliability and safety of the water supply and distribution system.

Program CSI-4.8A: Urban Water Management Plan. Support MMWD's efforts to regularly update and implement an Urban Water Management Plan.

Program CSI-4.8B: Water Supplies. Monitor efforts by the MMWD to implement conservation standards and expand the local water supply to meet long-term needs and potential future drought conditions. If desalination facilities are proposed along the bayfront in the future, ensure adequate review of environmental, design, and economic issues.

Program CSI-4.8C: Water Pressure and Storage. Work with MMWD to ensure that water pressure and storage remains adequate for fire-fighting, and to implement standards for new development that ensure adequate water flow.

See also Policy C-3.8 on water conservation



Policy CSI-4.9: Wastewater Facilities

Ensure that wastewater collection, treatment and disposal infrastructure is regularly maintained and meets projected needs. Improvements should be programmed to meet state and federal standards, respond to sea level rise and seismic hazards, repair and replace aging or leaking pipes, and protect environmental quality.

Program CSI-4.9A: Coordination of Services. Support efforts by the Las Gallinas Sanitary District, Central Marin Sanitation Agency and San Rafael Sanitation District to maintain high-quality wastewater collection and treatment facilities.

Policy CSI-4.10: Storm Drainage Facilities

Continue to monitor and pursue improvements to the storm drainage system, including programs to reduce flooding, improve water quality, remove trash, and respond to climate-related changes. Evaluate the potential for restoration of the natural hydrologic function of creeks and drainageways where possible.

Program CSI-4.10A: Replacement of Aging Facilities. Pursue the replacement of older or failing drainage facilities such as metal pipes and stormwater pumping stations with more durable and resilient materials, or with new structures and pumps.

Program CSI-4.10B: Silt Removal. Continue to remove accumulated silt from City maintained drainageways, ponds, and creeks subject to tidal siltation such as Mahon and Irwin Creeks. Sediment from stream flow and deposition should be considered a potential resource.

Program CSI-4.10C: Sustainable Stormwater Management. Seek funding for projects that restore the natural characteristics and functions of stormwater systems, such as bioswales and conversion of concrete ditches to natural creeks. Such projects should mitigate the effects of urban runoff, reduce flood hazards, and improve water quality and habitat value

See Conservation / Climate Change Element Policies C-3.3 and C-3.4 for additional guidance on “green Infrastructure”



Policy CSI-4.11: Canal Dredging

Periodically dredge the San Rafael Canal to reduce flood risks, maintain environmental health, and keep the canal viable as a commercial and recreational waterway. Dredge spoils should be disposed in an environmentally sensitive manner.

Program CSI-4.11A: Funding. Utilize federal Army Corps of Engineers funds to survey and plan for Canal dredging. Pursue additional funding for dredging and maintenance, and for levee repair and sea level rise adaptation improvements.

Policy CSI-4.12: Recycled Water

Encourage additional wastewater recycling by the Las Gallinas Valley Sanitary District, initiation of wastewater recycling by the Central Marin Sanitation Agency, additional recycled water distribution by MMWD, and additional use of reclaimed water where supply (“purple pipe”) is available.

Program CSI-4.12A: CMSA Capacity Expansion. Support implementation of the CMSA/MMWD Recycled Water Study recommendations, enabling increased use of recycled water and reduced potable water demand.

Program CSI-4.12B: Las Gallinas Expansion Project. Support completion of the Recycled Water Expansion Project and continued expansion of recycled water capacity.

Program CSI-4.12C: Sewer Line Replacement. Replace low-lying sewer pipes as needed to reduce saltwater intrusion, thereby reducing the cost of producing reclaimed water.

Policy CSI-4.13: Energy Reliability

Support efforts by local energy service providers and other public agencies to improve the safety and resilience of the local power grid.

Program CSI-4.13A: Backup Energy Provision. Evaluate backup energy provisions for critical public facilities, mass transit (including rail crossings), and wireless infrastructure and upgrade as needed. Encourage the use of fuel cell, battery storage, and solar generator backups, rather than gasoline-powered generators.

Program CSI-4.13B: Microgrids. Encourage further exploration of microgrids (see text box on page 6-35), allowing locally-generated renewable energy networks to supplement the electrical distribution system and provide back-up power in the event of an emergency,

Program CSI-4.13C: Emergency Power and Communication. Use public facilities as emergency centers for electricity, communication, and cooling in the event of a disaster, extreme heat event, or extended power outage.

Policy CSI-4.14: Utility Undergrounding

Continue to pursue undergrounding of overhead utility lines, and support maintenance and replacement programs to reduce wildfire hazards.

Program CSI-4.14A: Funding for Undergrounding. Explore funding opportunities and financing mechanisms to accelerate the undergrounding of utilities, including Rule 20A and B funds, private funding, and assessment districts.

Program CSI-4.14B: Prioritizing of Undergrounding Projects. *Develop a process to prioritize utility undergrounding projects. Among the factors to be considered are aesthetics, visibility, fire hazards, and vulnerability to flooding and sea level rise.*

Program CSI-4.14C: Public Information. *Provide information to the public on the costs of undergrounding projects, and the options for funding.*

See the Safety Element for additional policies and programs on fire safety and power lines

Policy CSI-4.15: Technology Infrastructure

Upgrade the City's technology infrastructure to improve public access to City services.

Program CSI-4.15A: Technology Improvement Plan. *Develop and maintain a multi-year plan for funding and prioritizing major City technology projects.*

Policy CSI-4.16: Telecommunication Improvements

Ensure that residents, schools, businesses and organizations have access to reliable, modern and cost-effective telecommunications. A variety of network options, including fiber optics and wireless, should be encouraged and expanded throughout the city.

Program CSI-4.16A: Fiber Optic Infrastructure. *Continue to encourage and permit the expansion of fiber optics infrastructure from existing "backbone" conduits to potential "last mile" customers.*

Program CSI-4.16B: Service Providers. *Work with telecommunication service providers to improve access to state-of-the-art systems and services.*

Program CSI-4.16C: Reliability. *Support efforts to "harden" mobile communication infrastructure so it is operational or can be quickly restored during a power outage or emergency,*

See the Community Design Element for policies to mitigate the visual effects of antennae and collocate new telecommunication facilities

Policy CSI-4.17: Reducing Landfilled Waste Disposal

Reduce landfilled waste disposal and related greenhouse gas emissions by reducing material consumption; requiring curbside collection and composting of organic materials; increasing recycling, re-use, and resource recovery; and encouraging the use of recyclable goods and materials.

Program CSI-4.17A: Waste Reduction. *Implement waste reduction programs consistent with the San Rafael Climate Change Action Plan and Zero Waste Goal. These include partnerships with Zero Waste Marin, Marin Sanitary Service, and other organizations; requirements for construction and demolition debris recycling; increased monitoring of waste diversion targets; waste audits; and additional infrastructure for removal of recoverable materials from the waste stream.*

Program CSI-4.17B: Recycling. *Continue recycling programs and expand these programs to increase waste diversion rates for homes, apartments and workplaces. .*

Program CSI-4.17C: Construction and Demolition Waste. Continue to implement programs requiring recycling of construction and demolition debris. Encourage the reuse of recycled building materials in future projects.

Program CSI-4.17D: Waste Reduction Programs. Continue efforts to reduce electronic waste, refrigerants, and single use plastics; and ensure proper disposal of household hazardous waste. This should include enforcement of City bans on plastic bags and polystyrene foam and potential new programs to reduce microplastics from waterways,

Program CSI-4.17E: Community Composting. Consider a mandatory community-scale program for curbside collection and composting of food and green waste, as well as vegetation cleared through fire prevention efforts

Program CSI-4.17F: Food to Energy. Support the Central Marin Sanitation/ Marin Sanitary Food to Energy Program.

Program CSI-4.17G: Recyclable Waste Receptacles. Support efforts by Marin Sanitary to install waste receptacles for recyclables in areas of heavy pedestrian traffic.

Policy CSI-4.18: Waste Reduction Advocacy and Education

Work with other cities and the County of Marin to advocate for programs and legislation to reduce waste and share waste reduction responsibilities with the manufacturers of consumer products.

Program CSI-4.18A: Recycling Education. Encourage Marin Sanitary to continue its recycling education programs and to expand awareness of “reduce, reuse, and recycle” principles among all residents and employees. Programs to promote reuse and repair of consumer goods rather than landfill disposal should also be supported.



Compost and Climate Change

Compost is the final product of a managed process through which micro-organisms break down organic materials into a form that is beneficial for soil. It can be a beneficial greenhouse gas reduction strategy because it increases sequestration (the drawdown of carbon into the soil), mitigates methane and other emissions from landfilled waste, and enhances resilience against flooding and drought. It also provides agricultural and home gardening benefits, as it enhances water-holding capacity and provides a source of nutrients. The Marin Carbon Project advocates for composting as one of several strategies to manage farming and grazing so they support carbon sequestration.



Municipal Finance

Goal CSI-5: Sound Municipal Financial Practices

Maintain sound financial practices and sufficient revenue sources to provide high quality City services.

San Rafael provides a broad range of services to meet diverse community needs. Maintaining and enhancing the City's revenue base is essential to providing desired services. The City continues to implement sound financial practices to maintain and improve services while minimizing the cost burden to residents and businesses.

Maintaining and enhancing San Rafael's revenue base is necessary for the City to provide essential and desired services. The City must maintain sound financial practices that meet applicable standards and direct San Rafael's financial resources to achieve its short and long-term goals.

Policy CSI-5.1: Cost-Benefit Analysis

Incorporate cost-benefit analysis to better understand the costs and impacts of City projects and programs relative to the revenues they may generate and benefits they may provide.

Program CSI-5.1A: Cost-Benefit Methodology. *Develop guidelines and procedures to more formally incorporate cost-benefit and fiscal impact analysis in the evaluation of new projects and programs.*

See also Policy M-2.3 on cost-benefit analysis for transportation improvements

Policy CSI-5.2: Transparent Budgeting

Maintain an open dialogue with the public during the budget process to evaluate and prioritize City services.

Program CSI-5.2A: Public Involvement. Continue to involve residents and businesses in the budget process to the extent feasible, through community meetings, focus groups, social media, and other outreach methods. Issues associated with rising pension costs also should be reported in a transparent manner.

Policy CSI-5.3: Program Assessments

Evaluate the performance of City programs and services in achieving their stated goals as part of the City's budget process. Retain, adjust or eliminate programs or services as appropriate.

Program CSI-5.3A: Program Assessment. Continue to provide budget and finance progress reports to the City Council. Continue to use benchmarks and quantifiable metrics, as well as qualitative evaluations, to monitor performance and determine progress in achieving program goals and objectives.

Program CSI-5.3B: Surveys. Regularly survey residents on their satisfaction with specific City services and programs (see also Program EDI-1.3B).

Policy CSI-5.4: Diversifying Funding Sources

As an alternative to increased taxation, pursue methods to diversify funding sources for public services, including grants, public-private partnerships, user fees for specific services, and development fees. As appropriate, the City should also consider streamlined services that cost less to deliver.

Program CSI-5.4A: Revenue Monitoring. Continue to maintain a revenue monitoring system to assist in trend analysis and revenue forecasting.

Program CSI-5.4B: Grants. Actively seek grants and encourage interdepartmental cooperation in preparing grant applications.

Program CSI-5.4C: Cost of Services. Periodically evaluate the cost of providing services and adjust revenue sources accordingly.

Program CSI-5.4D: New Revenue Sources. Consider establishing new revenue sources to adequately fund services and respond to changing conditions, including sources that require voter approval.

Policy CSI-5.5: Local Government Partnerships

Partner with other local governments and organizations to provide community services and resolve shared problems cost-effectively.

Program CSI-5.5A: Funding Strategies for Infrastructure and Services. In cooperation with other jurisdictions, develop funding strategies and joint powers agreements for infrastructure and services that create economies of scale for the contributing parties.

Policy CSI-5.6: Public-Private Partnerships

Explore public-private partnerships as a way to develop community facilities or achieve other community benefits (for example, public parking, affordable housing, and child care in new development projects).

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12 Arts and Culture

Introduction

The Arts and Culture Element recognizes the power of the arts to connect people, promote cultural inclusion and diversity, create civic pride and a sense of community, stimulate the local economy, and inspire the creative spirit of San Rafael residents. The arts are an essential part of San Rafael's identity and make the city more interesting and livable. They help define and express who we are as a community. Art creates opportunities for dialogue and thought as well as a source of entertainment and beauty.

San Rafael's breadth of artistic achievement encompasses many disciplines. The city is rich in music, dance, theater, literature, visual arts, and history. Its cultural roots and the traditions of its residents are celebrated through festivals, food, and special events. The city is home to galleries, theaters, night clubs, museums, iconic architecture, and even the County Fair. San Rafael has a growing creative sector and draws creative people. It is a magnet for artists, attracting musicians, film makers, photographers, painters, and designers. It also attracts visitors who come to experience the arts in the city.

An important part of the Arts and Culture Element is celebrating San Rafael as a multi-cultural city and ensuring that City services are inclusive. Organizations such as the Multicultural Center of Marin and the Canal Alliance provide a vital bridge between residents and the City, empowering residents to express their cultural identities. San Rafael is an international city, with residents from countries around the world. Recognition of cultural legacies extends beyond artistic expression, and should also inform and guide economic development, housing, transportation, and social service initiatives.

One of the goals of this Element is to ensure that the arts remain a vital part of San Rafael's economy and community fabric. There are significant challenges to this goal, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts on our ability to gather, as well as its longer-term effects on the economy. Non-profit arts organizations face tough competition for funding, threatening their long-term vitality. Housing and studio space in San Rafael remains prohibitively expensive for many artists.

Looking beyond the pandemic, San Rafael aspires to more strongly establish its role as an arts destination and a city that values creative enterprise. While the focus has historically been on Downtown San Rafael, culturally-related venues and activities should also enhance and benefit other areas such as Northgate and the Canal. Ultimately, the goal of this element is to sustain the arts as an integral part of life in San Rafael. This is an important part of realizing the General Plan 2040 vision of a "thriving city."

Please see the Community Design and Preservation Element (Chapter 5) for policies on historic preservation and tribal cultural resources.

Photo Credit: Skip Moore



Local Arts and Cultural Assets

San Rafael enjoys many arts and cultural-related assets. These range from community events and festivals to historic resources, public art, educational programs, and visual and performing arts. There are opportunities for persons of all ages to perform or experience the arts in its many forms. The following provides an overview of some of San Rafael's arts and cultural assets—this is not intended to be a comprehensive inventory but rather a sampling of the diverse resources available.

Local Arts and Cultural Institutions

San Rafael has a range of community-based arts and cultural institutions, including Art Works Downtown, Youth in Arts, Marin Arts, the Marin Society of Artists, Artes LatinX Marin, the Multicultural Center of Marin, the California Film Institute, Belrose Performing Arts Center, Marin Dance Theatre, the Marin Symphony, Marin Shakespeare, DrawBridge, Marin Ballet, The Kanbar Center for Performing Arts (at the Osher Jewish Community Center), and the Mayflower Choral Society. These organizations generate substantial revenue for San Rafael's economy and provide opportunities for San Rafael residents to engage in the arts.

City of San Rafael

The City of San Rafael provides arts and cultural programming through its Library and Recreation Department. The City operates the Falkirk Cultural Center, which provides galleries and community arts programming in a historic estate setting. It also offers programs for children, older adults, and the community at large, including theater, ceramics, sculpting, painting, dance, and literature.

County of Marin

As the County seat, San Rafael benefits from the presence of a number of County-operated arts and cultural programs, facilities, and events. The County operates the Marin Center in partnership with the Marin Cultural Association. Facilities include the Marin Veterans Auditorium, with seating capacity of 2,000; the 315-seat Showcase Theater; meeting rooms; and a 22,500 square foot Exhibit Hall. The County also sponsors the yearly Marin County Fair, and sponsors art and music festivals and other events at Lagoon Park. Docent-led tours of the County of Marin Administration Building, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, attract visitors from around the world.

Educational Institutions

Arts education and instruction is offered through local public and private schools throughout San Rafael. Arts are a vital part of the educational experience for San Rafael students and provide positive benefits such as self-esteem, critical thinking development, and motivation. The arts can also reach children who are at risk of dropping out by providing a form of creative expression. San Rafael and Terra Linda High Schools both have theaters for live performances, as does Marin Academy and the JCC. San Rafael is also home to Dominican University, with renowned arts and music programs, including exhibitions, concerts, lectures, and performances. Dominican provides degree programs in creative writing, arts management, graphic design, visual studies, literary and intercultural studies, and performing arts and social change.



Special Events and Festivals

Thousands of visitors are drawn to special events and festivals that take place in San Rafael, including the May Madness Downtown Classic Car Parade, the Annual Holiday Lighted Boat Parade, the Sunset Criterium Bicycle Race, the Food and Wine festival, the Mill Valley Film Festival (which includes screenings at the Rafael Theater), the Marin County Fair, Cinco de Mayo, Dia de Los Muertos, and numerous special holiday events. There are also Farmers Markets in Downtown San Rafael and at the Civic Center, and a Second Friday Downtown ArtWalk featuring open studios and exhibits.



Museums

San Rafael is home to several niche museums, with specialty collections ranging from classic cars to political art. The Mission San Rafael/ St. Rafael's Church is a local landmark, with historic exhibits and a gift shop on-site. The Planning Area is also home to China Camp State Park, with interpretive displays and historic structures that tell an important story about Marin County's early history.

Literary Scene

San Rafael has a vibrant literary scene. There are several groups that teach and support local writers. The Falkirk Cultural Center, San Rafael Public Library, local bookstores, and Marin Civic Center provide resources for research and education.

Arts and Entertainment Venues

San Rafael is home to numerous night clubs, performance and concert venues, and private galleries. Establishments like Terrapin Crossroads and George's Night Club are well-known Marin County institutions. There are also numerous businesses offering private instruction in dance, music, and the visual arts. San Rafael is also home to several recording studios, and businesses serving the film industry and other media enterprises. The City has been a popular movie and television filming location and was the home of Lucasfilm's Industrial Light and Magic until 2005. There are also several cinemas in the City.

San Rafael's arts and entertainment businesses and venues provide entertainment, sustain local artists and entertainers, attract visitors, help support local restaurants and other small businesses, and enrich the cultural life of the city.

Public Art and Architecture

Collaborative efforts to develop public art are important to the City. New public facilities frequently include dedicated space for public art. Public processes and partnerships between the City and local artists have been developed to provide opportunities for art installations in public places. Public art can provide an opportunity for meaningful community involvement in urban design, cross-cultural conversations, and an enhanced built environment. Public art can also accentuate City and neighborhood gateways and create a stronger sense of place. Art and creative placemaking can increase the affection residents feel for their neighborhoods and city, creating long-term civic and economic benefits.

Architecture is also a cultural resource in San Rafael. General Plan 2040 includes a Community Design and Preservation Element, with a Goal (CDP-5) focused on historic preservation and protection of local tribal resources. The city's older buildings distinguish San Rafael from other communities and provide an inspirational setting in which the arts can thrive.



Photo Credit: Skip Moore

Arts and the Local Economy

Arts-related businesses and activities employ a substantial number of San Rafael residents and are an important part of the local economy. These activities play a role in revitalization and economic development efforts, particularly in Downtown San Rafael and the city's commercial districts. A thriving arts scene provides secondary benefits for other sectors of the economy, including hospitality, retail, food and beverage establishments, and creative industries. It also makes San Rafael a more attractive choice for larger employers, who regard a vibrant local arts scene as an important amenity.

Arts establishments are also potential tenants for vacant retail spaces, particularly in historic settings like Downtown San Rafael. Some of these vacant spaces also may have the potential for live-work or production space. Arts and cultural jobs are expected to grow in the future, creating employment opportunities and the potential for niche markets that build on San Rafael's diversity and multi-cultural population.

As home to Marin County's largest Spanish-speaking community, San Rafael has a thriving Latino arts presence that can become stronger and more visible in the future. Creation of new cultural districts and arts-related activity hubs can catalyze private investment and enliven the City. Culturally relevant arts programming, projects, and businesses can make San Rafael a more important cultural arts destination while also breaking down cultural barriers.

The National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) provides statistical data on the contribution of the arts and the creative workforce to national economy. Among their findings:

- Arts and cultural production represented 4.5 percent of the United States gross domestic product (GDP) in 2017---more than the construction, transportation, travel and tourism and agricultural industries. In California, the share is 8.2 percent of the gross State product.

- Performing arts companies and independent artists, writers, and entertainers added a combined total of **\$52.2 billion** to the U.S. economy in 2017.
- America’s nonprofit arts industry generates **\$166.3 billion in economic activity** every year, resulting in **\$27.5 billion** in federal, state and local tax revenues.
- Artists are highly entrepreneurial and are 3.6 times more likely than the total US workforce to be self-employed (*National Endowment for the Arts*).
- Artists are highly educated—63 percent hold bachelor’s degrees or higher levels of education, compared to 36 percent for the workforce as a whole (*National Endowment for the Arts*)

Creative places are innovative places. Arts districts provide an economic driver and can stimulate tourism, historic preservation, and private investment.

Downtown San Rafael Arts District

In 2017, Downtown San Rafael was selected as one of 14 places in California to receive a California Cultural District designation by the California Arts Council. The Cultural Districts program leverages the state’s artistic and cultural assets in order to increase the visibility of local artists and support community participation in arts and culture. The Downtown San Rafael Arts District partners with local arts leaders, businesses, City officials, and community members to create a vibrant and engaging environment that promotes well-being, equity, and inclusivity through the arts.

The Cultural District designation recognizes the high concentration of arts and cultural enterprises in Downtown San Rafael, as well as the potential for the arts to generate business traffic and tourism, create opportunities for youth, and foster a dialogue on social and economic issues in the community. The benefits of the designation include technical assistance, peer to peer learning and exchanges, access to resources, tax incentives, regulatory assistance, branding and promotional materials, and a five-year monetary stipend.



Photo Credit: Frank Johnson



Engaging Youth in Planning through Art

City planning can be an abstract concept for kids, but ultimately, it comes down to a single question – how can we make San Rafael a great place for everyone? That was the question asked by Youth in Arts and Y-PLAN during General Plan 2040 as they sought to engage San Rafael elementary school students in a discussion of the City’s future. Through a combination of art, short essays, and three-dimensional models, San Rafael students provided a unique lens into their priorities for San Rafael in 2040.

Y-PLAN is an initiative of the Center for Cities and Schools at UC Berkeley designed to empower young people to tackle real-world problems in their communities. Youth in Arts is a San Rafael based organization dedicated to building visual and performing arts skills among youth, and advocating for equitable, inclusive arts education. The General Plan provided an opportunity for the two organizations to collaborate, sparking the imagination and curiosity of students about the ways their community might grow and change in the next 20 years.

The City’s General Plan team participated in two rounds of youth engagement with Y-PLAN and Youth in Arts over a two-year period. During the first round, students in Grades 4 and 5 developed proposals for responding to sea level rise, and presented ideas for making the city safer, easier to get around, better connected with nature, and more colorful. They provided ideas for new gateways and solutions to homelessness and expressed hope that San Rafael would be a city for people of all ages. Students delivered their recommendations in a presentation to the General Plan Steering Committee, which was enthusiastically received.

During the second round, students in Grade 3 took on the challenge of redesigning Fourth Street. They reminded their audience that they would be 30 years old in 2040, and might be leaders, activists, and artists in their community. Their vision for Fourth Street was that it be “welcoming, colorful, safe, and fun for people of all ages.” Their final recommendations included better public transit, more trees, and nicer gathering places. The students constructed creative models of Fourth Street, inspiring the adults to think big and be bold.



Goal AC-1: Arts and Culture that Enrich Community Life

Recognize the potential for the arts to enrich and inspire residents, build a sense of community, bridge differences and forge unity, attract visitors, revitalize the city, and provide economic benefit.

Arts and culture are integral parts of San Rafael's quality of life and civic identity. Art connects us, expands our awareness of the world, and makes us stronger as a community. San Rafael has a thriving arts, cultural, and literary scene, with programs, performances, events and venues that serve a diverse and engaged population.

Policy AC-1.1: Cultural Center of Marin

Continue to promote San Rafael as the hub of arts and culture in Marin County.

Program AC-1.1B: Arts Facilities. Support and encourage efforts to improve and sustain local arts facilities, including those operated by government, non-profits, and other organizations, and recognize their role in making San Rafael a regional arts hub.

Program AC-1.2A: Falkirk Cultural Center. Promote the Falkirk Cultural Center as a venue to support and foster the arts and celebrate local culture. Seek funding to rehabilitate and improve the mansion and sustain programs through income-producing activities.

Program AC-1.1C: Arts and Culture Master Plan. Build on the work done by the County of Marin and San Rafael-based arts organizations to create a San Rafael Arts and Culture Master Plan. All segments of the community, including residents and workers, should be encouraged to participate in this process. The Plan should promote participation of the arts community in civic life, enhance arts programming, promote cultural inclusion, and maximize opportunities for arts events. Potential funding sources for a Master Plan and its implementation should be explored. As part of this process, options for ongoing leadership and arts advocacy should be considered, potentially including an Arts Council or similar organization.

Policy AC-1.2: Arts Programming

Encourage and support an array of cultural arts programs and activities addressing the needs and interests of the whole community.

Program AC-1.2A: City Activities. Continue to provide City-sponsored arts classes and cultural activities, including arts programs at San Rafael's community centers. Programs should be equitably distributed around the City so that they can be accessed by all residents.

Program AC-1.2B: Programs for Diverse Populations. Encourage additional inclusive arts programming for the general public, including persons of all socio-economic means, ages, ethnicities, genders, and abilities. Special emphasis should be placed on programs for youth, children, and older adults.

Program AC-1.2C: Advocacy for Arts Programming. Advocate for continued arts programming in public schools and other venues.

Program AC-1.2D: Public Information. Work with local arts organizations to improve public awareness of local venues, galleries, exhibits, events, performances, and opportunities to participate in arts and cultural events in the city. Provide links to such information on the City's website and strengthen the website as a resource for the arts community.

Policy AC-1.3: Partnerships

Promote and strengthen partnerships and collaborative arts programming with local artists, schools and institutions of higher learning, community-based organizations, the County of Marin, the private sector, and non-profit arts organizations.

Program AC-1.3A: Venues. Encourage arts groups, schools, and businesses to conduct programs in City venues. Seek opportunities for the City to use County, institutional, and private space for its arts activities.

Policy AC-1.4: Inclusive Activities

Encourage activities, entertainment and events that reflect San Rafael's diverse cultural heritage and population. Programming should be inclusive of all ages, ethnicities, genders, abilities, and socio-economic groups. Participation in the arts should be supported as a way to promote intercultural understanding, and to bridge differences and forge unity. All residents should have access to arts and cultural activities.

Program AC-1.4A: Equitable Programming. Improve cultural equity and access to arts programming among lower income and non-English speaking residents (for example, through new partnerships, training, outreach strategies, multi-lingual initiatives, and reduced fees for qualifying residents).



Policy AC-1.5: Public Art

Promote a stimulating and engaging environment through the greater display of public art, including both temporary and permanent works. Locations throughout the city should be considered.

Program AC-1.5A: Art in Public Places. Evaluate the feasibility of an Art in Public Places Ordinance (or “percent for art” program) that would establish a funding source and/or mechanism for increasing public art. Strive for solutions that maximize flexibility in the way funds are collected and used.

Program AC-1.5B: Community-Based Outdoor Art Installations. Support participatory public art projects that engage the community, such as murals, 3D art, and street painting. Such projects should foster a greater understanding of local cultures, arts, and history and provide an opportunity to express neighborhood identity.

Photo Credit: Matthew X Kiernan, Big Apple Media



Falkirk Cultural Center

Falkirk Cultural Center is a beautiful historic estate owned and operated by the City of San Rafael. The Center has served San Rafael and the surrounding area as an arts and cultural center since 1974. Falkirk includes art galleries with rotating exhibits showcasing the work of local artists, as well as gardens, spaces available for public rental, and seasonal displays and celebrations. The Cultural Affairs Service League (CASL) continues to offer support and volunteer assistance for events, fundraising, and cultural advocacy at the facility.

Policy AC-1.6: Space for the Arts

Encourage and promote the creation of public and private arts and cultural space in the city, such as galleries, theaters, indoor and outdoor performance spaces, music venues, and cultural centers.

Program AC-1.6A: Art as a Community Benefit. Recognize space for the arts as a community benefit in municipal code and density bonus programs. Expand incentives for incorporating arts space and arts features in new projects and in vacant and underutilized space.

Program AC-1.6B: Reducing Barriers. Amend municipal codes or adopt new policies as needed to facilitate the temporary or interim use of vacant commercial or lobby space for art exhibits, display space, and “pop up” arts and cultural activities.

Program AC-1.6C: Central Performance Spaces. Prioritize creation of central outdoor spaces suitable for community-wide events and performances in Downtown San Rafael and in the North San Rafael Town Center (for example, at Northgate Mall).

Policy AC-1.7: Event Participation

Encourage public and private participation in support of arts and cultural events, including neighborhood fairs and gatherings.

Program AC-1.7A: Sponsorship of Events. Support special events that provide quality arts, cultural, and enrichment activities in locations throughout the community.

Program AC-1.7B: Art and Technology. Support an expanded and more vibrant arts and cultural presence through technology, including the potential for “virtual” events and media that reach larger, more diverse audiences.

See also Policy LU-3.11 and Program EV-2.5C on special events

Policy AC-1.8: Arts and the Local Economy

Recognize the value of the arts to the economy of the city, and the role of the arts in community revitalization.

Program AC-1.8A: Arts District. Leverage the Downtown San Rafael Arts District designation to encourage, promote, and support arts activities, attract visitors and business patrons, promote equity and inclusivity, and create a more welcoming and exciting Downtown environment. Encourage multi-disciplinary art activities and events that showcase local talent and provide opportunities for all residents to experience the arts. Regularly renew the Arts District designation to sustain arts and cultural opportunities.

Program AC-1.8B: Cultural Tourism. Promote cultural tourism (for example, visits to the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed Civic Center or the Mission San Rafael Arcangel) as a way to support and sustain the local arts community and hospitality industry. Partnerships with the Marin Convention and Visitors Bureau should be encouraged.



Photo Credit: Frank Johnson

Photo Credit: Frank Johnson



Art Works Downtown

Art Works Downtown (AWD) was founded in 1996 to enrich the San Rafael community by encouraging artistic activities, educating the public, increasing appreciation of art, and strengthening the relationship between artists, arts organizations, and the larger community. AWD is located in a 40,000 square foot historic building on Fourth Street. Through the dedication and vision of its founders and a creative partnership with the City of San Rafael and Marin Community Foundation, the building was purchased in 1999 and converted into 17 affordable apartments on the upper floor and 32 artist's studios at the street and lower levels. The complex provides a unique opportunity for artists to live, work, create, and exhibit in the same building. Two decades later, Art Works is the anchor of a burgeoning Arts District and is a model for other communities.

Policy AC-1.9: Arts-Supportive Environment

Create an environment that is supportive to arts professionals.

Program AC-1.9A: Communication.

Support ongoing communication with and among local arts organizations to address and resolve issues of concern, including pandemic recovery.

Program AC-1.9B: Engagement in Community Actions. Recognize the arts community as important stakeholders in local community actions and economic development strategies. Support artist engagement in planning and governance.

Program AC-1.9C: Showcasing Local Artists. Consider artist in residence programs, poet laureates, City-sponsored lunch concerts and similar events showcasing the work of local artists and performers.

Program AC-1.9D: Reducing Costs. Explore opportunities to create more affordable space for artistic production, including live-work and studio spaces, public cultural facilities, and affordable performance space. Remove barriers to reusing vacant or underutilized commercial space for this purpose.

Program AC-1.9E: Volunteers. Provide opportunities for volunteers in art, cultural, and literary events.

Policy AC-1.10: Funding

Establish a broad range of public and private funding sources to support arts and cultural programs and activities.

Program AC-1.10A: Non-Profit, Private and Community Efforts. Support the efforts of non-profit, private, and community organizations to apply for grants, raise funds, develop arts endowments, and promote community and business investment in art, cultural, and literary activities. This support could include funding, volunteers, staffing, coordination, providing space and materials, and similar collaborative efforts.

Program AC-1.10B: New Funding Sources. Explore potential new funding sources or funding relief mechanisms such as set-asides from transient occupancy taxes, sales taxes, or parking revenues; tax credits and property tax abatements; and corporate and foundation support.

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Photo Credit: Skip Moore

Opportunity for All

13 Economic Vitality Element

14 Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Element

15 Housing Element

13 Economic Vitality

Introduction

San Rafael's quality of life and economic health are closely linked; each supports and benefits the other. Business is drawn to San Rafael by amenities such as parks, schools, and public safety services. In turn, these businesses generate taxes, fees, and revenues which help sustain government services. As this cycle has shaped San Rafael, the economy itself has become one of the city's amenities. San Rafael offers an array of goods and services, convenient shopping, restaurants, health care, and entertainment, creating an environment that attracts new residents and new jobs.

Adoption of General Plan 2040 coincides with the economic aftershocks of the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has significantly impacted San Rafael's businesses, residents, and workforce, with repercussions for City revenues and service delivery. Low-wage workers and people of color have been especially hard hit. In the short-term, strategies are needed to facilitate recovery and provide economic assistance. Longer-term, the impacts on commercial real estate, shopping, workplaces, commute patterns, and other aspects of San Rafael's economy will need to be monitored, with policies and programs adjusted in response to evolving trends.

Policies in this Element take the long view, recognizing that this is a 20-year Plan. The local economy will ebb and flow, but the long-term goals remain relevant. These goals include a healthy and resilient economy, a diverse and balanced business mix, and distinctive business districts. Economic vitality goals are complemented by policies throughout the General Plan that support San Rafael's economic health, including land use compatibility, transportation efficiency, good urban design, and improved access to education and jobs for all residents.

San Rafael's Economy

San Rafael accounts for about one-third of Marin County's jobs. There are approximately 44,000 jobs in the Planning Area, with the largest sectors being education, health, and social services; professional and management positions; retail trade; arts and hospitality; and public administration. Table 13-1 provides data on jobs that are located in San Rafael from the US Census Bureau. Table 13-2 shows the occupational categories of persons working in the city.

In December 2019, the unemployment rate in Marin County was just 2.0 percent. By April 2020 it was 11.2 percent. The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in substantial job losses as well as increased vacancy rates. Countywide unemployment had improved to 6.5 percent by September, but there still uncertainties about what lies ahead.

The Marin Economic Forum (MEF) notes that Marin County businesses have been especially hard hit by the pandemic, in part because many of them are small (70 percent of all payroll firms in Marin County employ nine people or fewer) and serve a localized market. Small companies are less able to withstand a cash crisis, making them more vulnerable in a sudden downturn. In addition, much of the local economy is driven by personal services, a sector which has been particularly hard hit by shelter in place orders. Part of making the economy more resilient is diversifying the mix of goods and services provided by San Rafael's businesses, including industries that provide goods and services beyond county borders.

Table 13-1: Workers by Industry, San Rafael and Marin County

Industry	San Rafael		Marin County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Educational, Health, and Social Services	8,530	19.6%	26,875	21.1%
Professional, Scientific, Management, Admin, and Waste Management Services	7,305	16.8%	22,680	17.8%
Retail Trade	4,910	11.3%	14,260	11.2%
Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodations, and Food Services	3,485	8.0%	13,110	10.3%
Other Services, except Public Administration	3,320	7.6%	9,670	7.6%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, Rental, and Leasing	3,310	7.6%	10,320	8.1%
Public Administration	3,200	7.3%	5,390	4.2%
Construction	2,905	6.7%	8,450	6.6%
Manufacturing	2,060	4.7%	5,555	4.4%
Transportation, Warehousing, and Utilities	1,770	4.1%	3,365	2.6%
Information	1,470	3.4%	3,680	2.9%
Wholesale Trade	1,160	2.7%	3,130	2.5%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, Hunting, and Mining	140	0.3%	860	0.7%
Armed Forces	4	0.0%	165	0.1%
TOTAL	43,569	100.0%	127,510	100.0%

Source: BAE, Census Transportation Planning Package, Table A202104 five-year sample data, 2019. Figures represent total number of jobs in each sector in San Rafael and Marin County.

Table 13-2: Occupational Categories of Workers, San Rafael and Marin County

Worker Occupation	San Rafael		Marin County	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Sales and Office Occupations	10,625	24%	29,295	23%
Service Occupations	8,715	20%	26,325	21%
Management, Business, and Financial Occupations	8,225	19%	24,895	20%
Education, Legal, and Arts Occupations	4,720	11%	16,445	13%
Natural Resources, Construction, and Maintenance Occupations	3,830	9%	10,165	8%
Production, Transportation, and Material Moving Occupations	2,805	6%	6,530	5%
Computer, Engineering, and Science Occupations	2,365	5%	7,375	6%
Health Practitioners and Technicians	2,265	5%	6,395	5%
Armed Forces	0	0%	95	0%
TOTAL	43,569	100.0%	127,510	100.0%

Source: BAE, Census Transportation Planning Package, Table A202107 five-year sample data, 2019. Figures represent total number of jobs in each occupational category in San Rafael and Marin County. Totals may differ slightly from other sources due to independent rounding.

Goal EV-1: A Healthy and Resilient Economy

Maintain a healthy and resilient local economy that attracts investment, creates jobs, and provides services for residents and visitors.

San Rafael will strive for an economy that adapts to changes in the business environment and remains productive over time. A diverse range of local businesses should provide the tax base and revenue needed to sustain City services and infrastructure. City policies will help local employers provide jobs and services to the community, meet new challenges as they arise, and ensure long-term business success.

San Rafael envisions a healthy, resilient economy, driven by the community's commitment to sustaining the vitality of individual businesses as well as key industries. The City further recognizes the importance of San Rafael's cultural diversity, and preservation of its unique environment, to its economic prosperity. Achieving the goal of a resilient economy will require productive partnerships among businesses, schools, neighborhoods, government, and advocacy groups. Business organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce work in partnership with the City to facilitate business attraction, retention, and expansion, and promote San Rafael as a great place to locate, visit, and do business.

San Rafael is a business-friendly city. The City will continue to improve the local business environment through the efforts of its Community Development and its Economic Development Departments. Both Departments assist existing and prospective businesses with navigating the permitting process and understanding City regulations. Staff assists businesses with real estate project planning, and works with business organizations in the planning of special events and business development initiatives. The City also helps secure and facilitate funding for the benefit of local businesses, and partners with the private sector on projects and programs. It also helps widen public understanding of the benefits of a healthy economy and business sector.



Policy EV-1.1: Quality of Life

Recognize the importance of a healthy economy to the quality of life, especially the ability to provide excellent schools, public safety services, public works, recreation, housing programs, and other government services.

Program EV-1.1A: Education About the Local Economy. Continue to promote a business-friendly climate by educating decision-makers and the public about the inter-relationship of community life and economic vitality. This should include data on the local economy, including indicators of San Rafael's economic health, disseminated through the City newsletter, City website, social media, staff reports, and other means.

Program EV-1.1B: Economic and Fiscal Impacts. Continue to evaluate economic and fiscal impacts in reports to the Planning Commission and City Council.

Program EV-1.1C: 2020 Pandemic Recovery. Develop and implement an Economic Recovery Strategic Plan to address business and fiscal impacts created by the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic and develop measures to recover losses in City revenue.

See also Policy EV-1.7 on the importance of workforce housing to the local economy

Policy EV-1.2: Relationship Building

Strengthen positive working relationships between the business community, neighborhoods, surrounding communities, and City government. Local businesses should be directly engaged in the design and evaluation of City economic development programs, recognizing their first-hand knowledge of economic conditions and trends.

Program EV-1.2A: Chamber of Commerce and Business Improvement District. Sustain partnerships with the Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Business Improvement District, and other business organizations to improve the business climate and support local businesses.

Program EV-1.2B: Relationships with the Real Estate Community. Engage the local commercial and residential real estate brokerage and development community in identifying and resolving barriers to doing business in San Rafael and keeping City staff informed of business trends and changes. This engagement should occur on a sustained basis, through regular communication and events.

Program EV-1.2C: Marin County Economic Forum. Work with the Marin County Economic Forum to analyze business trends, improve the economic health of the region, and encourage businesses success in San Rafael.

Program EV-1.2D: Communications with Residents. Regularly communicate with residents on economic issues. Maintain consistent and accessible contact through, for example, meetings with neighborhood associations, the City website, and the Citizens Advisory Committee.

Program EV-1.2E: Minority Business Outreach. Work with local minority-owned businesses, business organizations, and non-profits to encourage business success and support job training and career advancement opportunities.

Program EV-1.2F: Housing Production Partnerships

Continue to foster strong working relationships with Marin Builders Association, the Marin Association of Realtors, and local non-profit housing developers to reinforce the development of workforce housing and housing for lower-income residents (see also Policies EV-1.7 and EV-1.8)

See Goal EDI-5 for additional policies and programs on increasing economic opportunities for lower income residents

Policy EV-1.3: Business Retention and Support

Create a favorable environment for business in San Rafael. Maintain ongoing communication with the business community and respond to needs and concerns as they arise.

Program EV-1.3A: Economic Development Strategy. Develop and periodically update an Economic Development Strategy that provides guidance for maintaining economic health, fostering business success, responding to economic trends, and measuring the effectiveness of local programs.

Program EV-1.3B: Development Opportunities. Provide site location assistance to the real estate community and prospective businesses by maintaining an inventory of vacant and underutilized sites in the City, including vacant buildings. Inventory data should include allowable uses and intensity, site availability, and potential issues.

Program EV-1.3C: Permit and Technical Assistance. Provide advocacy services to assist local businesses in the permitting and development processes. Seek opportunities to innovate with technology to help improve service delivery. Simplify and streamline the permit process wherever feasible.

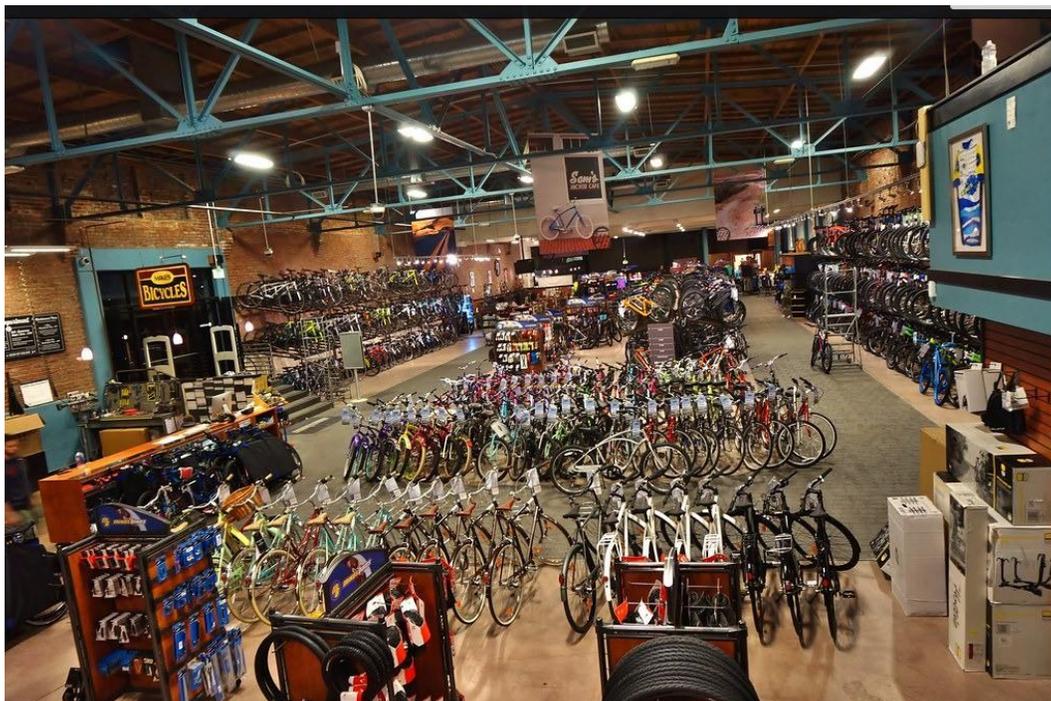


Photo Credit: Frank Johnson

Program EV-1.3D: Small Business Support. Partner with the Marin Small Business Development Center and other organizations to provide small business advisory and training opportunities including business plan development, marketing and social media, human resources strategies, and access to capital/investment.

Program EV-1.3E: Business Incubation. Encourage business mentoring, education, and incubation programs that could be undertaken in cooperation with public, institutional and/or private sector partners (for example, Marin Builder’s Exchange, College of Marin Career Education, etc.).

Program EV-1.3F: Business Recognition. Support recognition programs for exemplary businesses, such as annual awards programs.

Policy EV-1.4: Business Attraction

Build on San Rafael’s strengths, including its location, housing diversity, transportation system, weather, scenery, history, culture, and people, to attract business and private investment. The City will work with local partners to enhance and diversify the City’s economy.

Program EV-1.4A: Industry Clusters and Supply Chains. Identify desired industries and develop economic development programs to attract these types of businesses. Encourage supply chains for such industries and encourage business-to-business relationships.



Marin Small Business Development Center

The Marin Small Business Development Center (SBDC) is a nonprofit organization that advises small businesses on strategies and resources. The Center, which is hosted on the Dominican University campus, works with both new and expanding businesses. SBDC provides one-on-one advising, training and workshops, practical tools to access capital, and specialty programs such as a tech futures group and an international trade group.

Policy EV-1.5: Monitoring

Regularly monitor the success and effectiveness of local economic development programs. This should include evaluating the impacts of City regulations and standards on businesses and considering changes that help businesses succeed. Local programs should be adjusted as needed based on measurable outcomes and feedback from the business community.

Policy EV-1.6: Marketing and Branding

Encourage and support marketing and branding efforts to promote San Rafael.

Program EV-1.6A: Media Relations. Generate media coverage that communicates a positive image of San Rafael and increases recognition of the city as a great place to do business. Implement social media strategies that reinforce this message.

Program EV-1.6B: Competitive Edge. Market San Rafael’s competitive edge relative to other Marin cities and mid-sized Bay Area cities. San Rafael’s branding should highlight the City’s reputation as the business, civic, cultural, dining, and entertainment hub of Marin County.

See also Policy CDP-5.10 on historic preservation as an economic development strategy

Policy EV-1.7: Workforce Housing

Aggressively encourage creation and retention of housing that is affordable to low and moderate-income workers, especially those providing necessary local services, such as public safety, health care, elder care, and education.

Program EV-1.7A: Benefits of Workforce Housing. *Work with local partners to educate residents on the benefits of workforce housing to the community.*

Program EV-1.7B: Public Agency Partnerships. *Work with local school districts and other agencies to explore opportunities to build housing for teachers, public safety employees, and other essential service employees on public land.*

Policy EV-1.8: Workforce Development

Support workforce development programs that provide skilled labor for San Rafael businesses as well as jobs and career advancement opportunities for San Rafael residents.

Program EV-1.8A. Workforce Development Programs. *Support the efforts of businesses, labor organizations, non-profits, schools, and the public sector to provide job training and placement services. Consider opportunities for these initiatives to support other City goals, such as reducing homelessness (e.g., Downtown Streets Team.), building housing (e.g., Education to Career Construction Program) and improving wildlife habitat (e.g., California Conservation Corps, etc.).*

Program EV-1.8B. Mentoring Programs. *Continue to participate in mentoring, apprenticeship, and internship programs, including participation in programs run by other agencies and organizations.*

Program EV-1.8C: English as a Second Language. *Continue to support community wide efforts to provide English as a Second Language (ESL) training, citizenship, and other educational programs for the San Rafael workforce.*

See Goal EDI-5 for additional policies and actions on workforce development

Policy V-1.9: Sustainable Business Practices

Promote sustainable business practices that reduce the consumption of non-renewable resources and support the City’s climate action goals.

Program EV-1.9A: Green Economy. *Support the creation of environmentally beneficial jobs and businesses.*



E2C Program

The Education to Career (E2C) Construction program is a partnership of the College of Marin, Canal Alliance, CareerPoint Marin, and the Marin Builders Association. It offers entry-level career training for high-demand construction jobs, including financial and personal support and counseling and assistance in job placement. The program provides a pathway to a living wage and opportunities for long-term career growth through hands-on learning.

Program EV-1.9B: Green Business Practices. Coordinate with Marin County, environmental organizations and the Chamber of Commerce to promote greener business practices and participation in the County’s Green Business Program.

Program EV-1.9C: CCAP Implementation. Work with local business to help achieve the goals of the 2030 Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP), including a shift toward renewable energy, reduced waste, increased composting, and low-carbon transportation. The potential costs, as well as the potential savings or other benefits, of CCAP measures on businesses should be important considerations as programs are implemented.

Photo Credit: North Bay Business Journal



San Rafael Leadership Institute

The San Rafael Leadership Institute (SRLI) is a San Rafael-based leadership development program that helps participants build skills while learning about the issues that impact Marin County. The program was established by the San Rafael Chamber of Commerce in 1989 and empowers local professionals to make a difference in their community, expand their networks, and understand San Rafael and Marin from the ground up.

Each year’s class carries out a project. The program’s group setting facilitates debate and decision making, which helps future leaders develop problem-solving skills. A critical component of the learning process is team-building, which prepares participants to become community leaders who facilitate community change. Previous projects have included a homelessness awareness campaign and street clean-up, fundraising for San Rafael first responders, and developing a commuter toolkit for businesses.

Policy EV-1.10: Economic Resilience

Encourage economic resilience and improved ability to function during and after disasters and other emergencies. The City should also support resilience in the face of disruptive economic events and longer-term economic change.

Program EV-1.10A: Business Engagement.

Actively engage the business community in disaster preparedness planning and recovery.

Program EV-1.10B: Education on State Regulations.

Provide information and outreach to businesses on new (and potential) State mandates and regulations, particularly those related to climate change. Explore ways to mitigate cost impacts based on consultation with local businesses and organizations.

See the Community Services Element for policies and programs on microgrids and electrical reliability, and the Safety Element for policies on resilience to climate change and sea level rise.

Policy EV-1.11: Innovation

Ensure that City policies, regulations, and programs are responsive to business trends and best practices in economic development and support innovation.

Program EV-1.11A: Innovation Working Group. Convene an economic development and innovation working group to identify new business opportunities and prospects for innovation and diversification.

Goal EV-2: A Diverse and Balanced Business Mix

Sustain a diverse and balanced local economy that provides a wide range of goods, services, and opportunities.

San Rafael is widely recognized as Marin's "go to" city for shopping, dining, entertainment, and an array of day-to-day and specialized services. The city is home to major education, health care, cultural, and government facilities. It provides a full spectrum of commercial and industrial districts that meet the needs of many types of businesses. Economic diversity is part of San Rafael's heritage and should be part of its future. This will require foresight and action, particularly to recover from the devastating impacts of the 2020 pandemic and respond to declining demand for "brick and mortar" retail space.

San Rafael has a well-balanced mix of jobs in the office, retail, industrial, and hospitality sectors, providing a diverse mix of jobs, services, and tax revenues. Major sectors of the City's economy are described below.

Office Sector

San Rafael has the largest concentration of office space in Marin County, with an inventory of 5.4 million square feet (43 percent of the County total). Office rents are slightly below the County average, and vacancy rates are also slightly lower. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the office market was considered robust, as prospective tenants were attracted to the city's amenities, business mix, central location, and variety of office types. During the last decade, San Rafael has attracted a number of small and mid-sized professional service firms as well as larger corporate offices.

San Rafael is home to a growing number of health care and bio-medical firms. BioMarin occupies most of the San Rafael Corporate Center and has become a major presence in the city. Kaiser Permanente is one of San Rafael's largest employers and continues to invest in and expand their facilities in the community.

Figure 13-1 shows the distribution of office space in San Rafael. The figure identifies a significant cluster of smaller buildings in the Downtown area and along the Lincoln Avenue corridor, larger buildings in North San Rafael, and mid-sized offices throughout Southeast San Rafael along Andersen, Kerner, Francisco Boulevard East, and nearby streets.

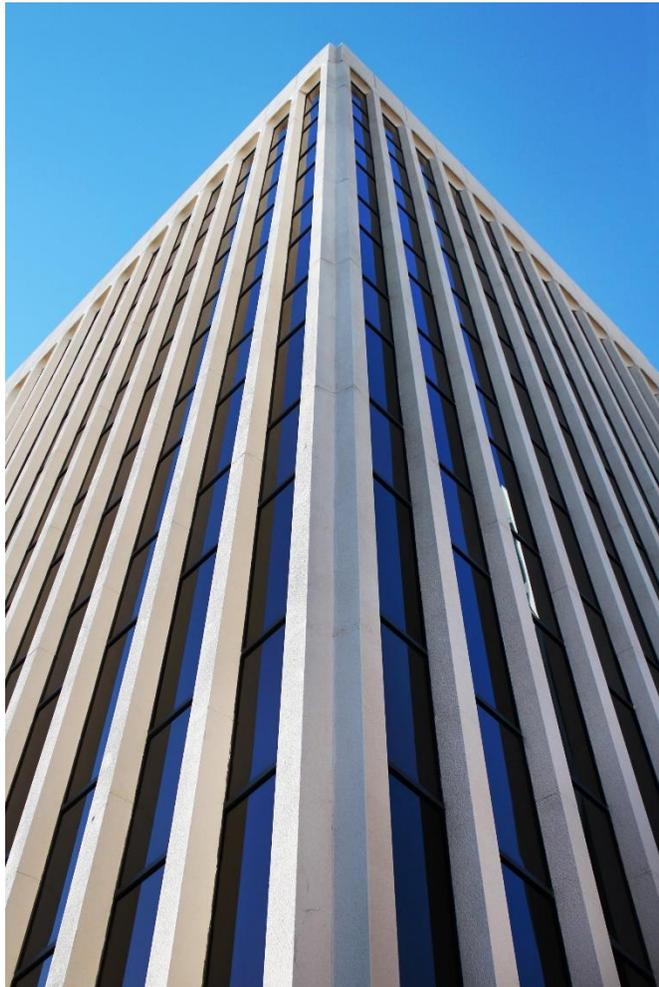
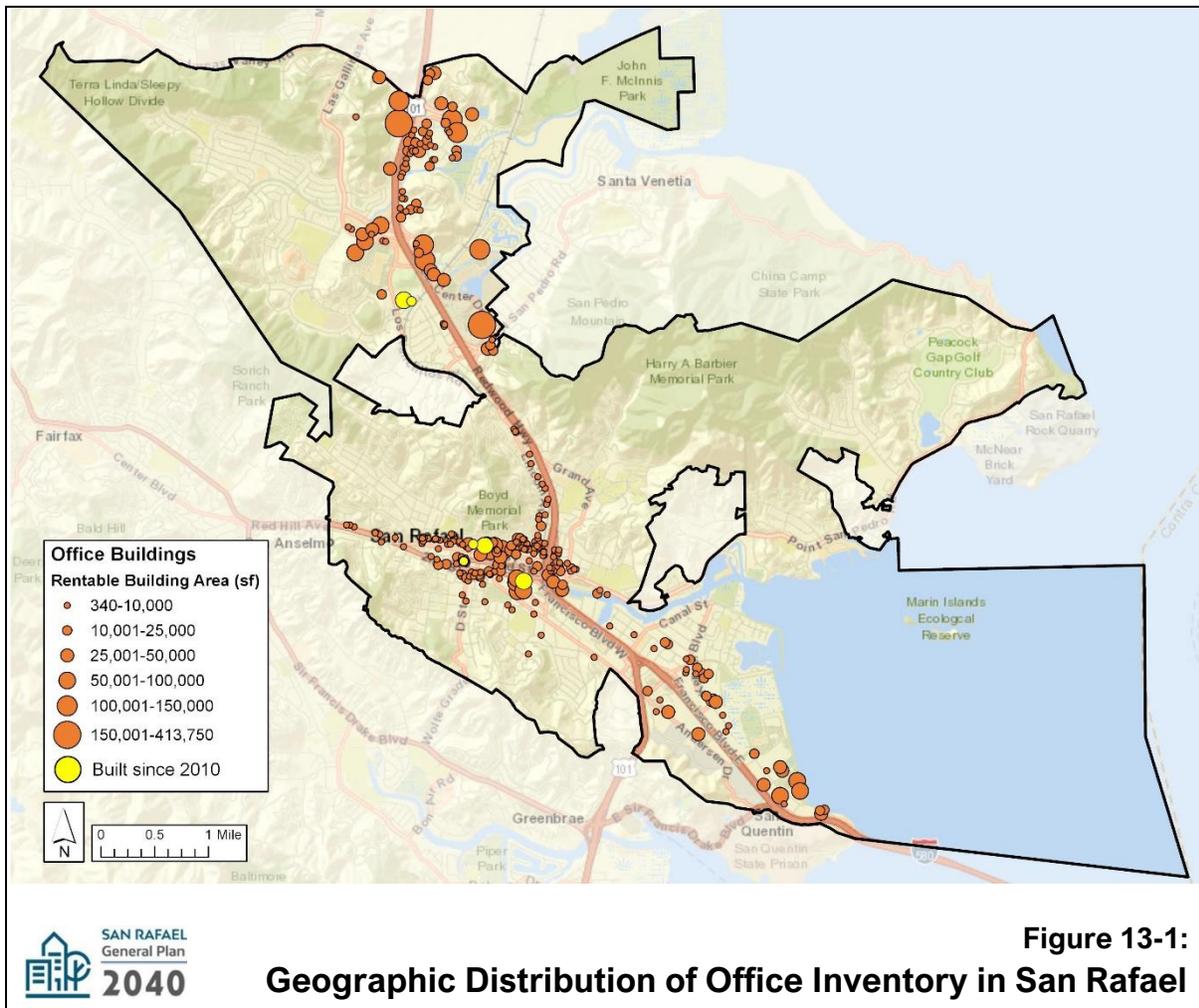


Photo Credit: Skip Moore



During the 2010s, demand for office space was shaped by several factors, including a shift in tenant preferences from suburban office parks to high-amenity, transit-rich locations. The past decade has also seen office growth in locations near retail, service, and entertainment activities in mid-sized downtowns like San Rafael, San Mateo, Mountain View, and Walnut Creek. Office demand has also been influenced by a trend toward open floor plans, less square feet per worker, and “green” building amenities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted many of these trends. During Summer 2020, more than 40 percent of the U.S. workforce was working from home, emptying much of the nation’s office space. In October 2020, commercial real estate firm Cushman & Wakefield (C&W) reported that the amount of available office space available for sublease in the Bay Area increased substantially in 2020 due to the coronavirus. C&W indicate that Marin County’s office market has not been as hard hit as some sub-markets in the region, such as Downtown San Francisco and the Peninsula.

There are anecdotal reports that Marin County is viewed as an attractive alternative for businesses and organizations considering leaving San Francisco, given the area’s proximity to the North Bay workforce, easy freeway access, ample parking, and comfortable climate. San Rafael has already seen this trend in its residential real estate market. Longer term, the City is likely to see impacts on the design of interior office spaces, potentially including an increase in square footage per employee. In some cases, older and less marketable office space may be converted to new uses such as housing.



Photo Credit: Frank Johnson

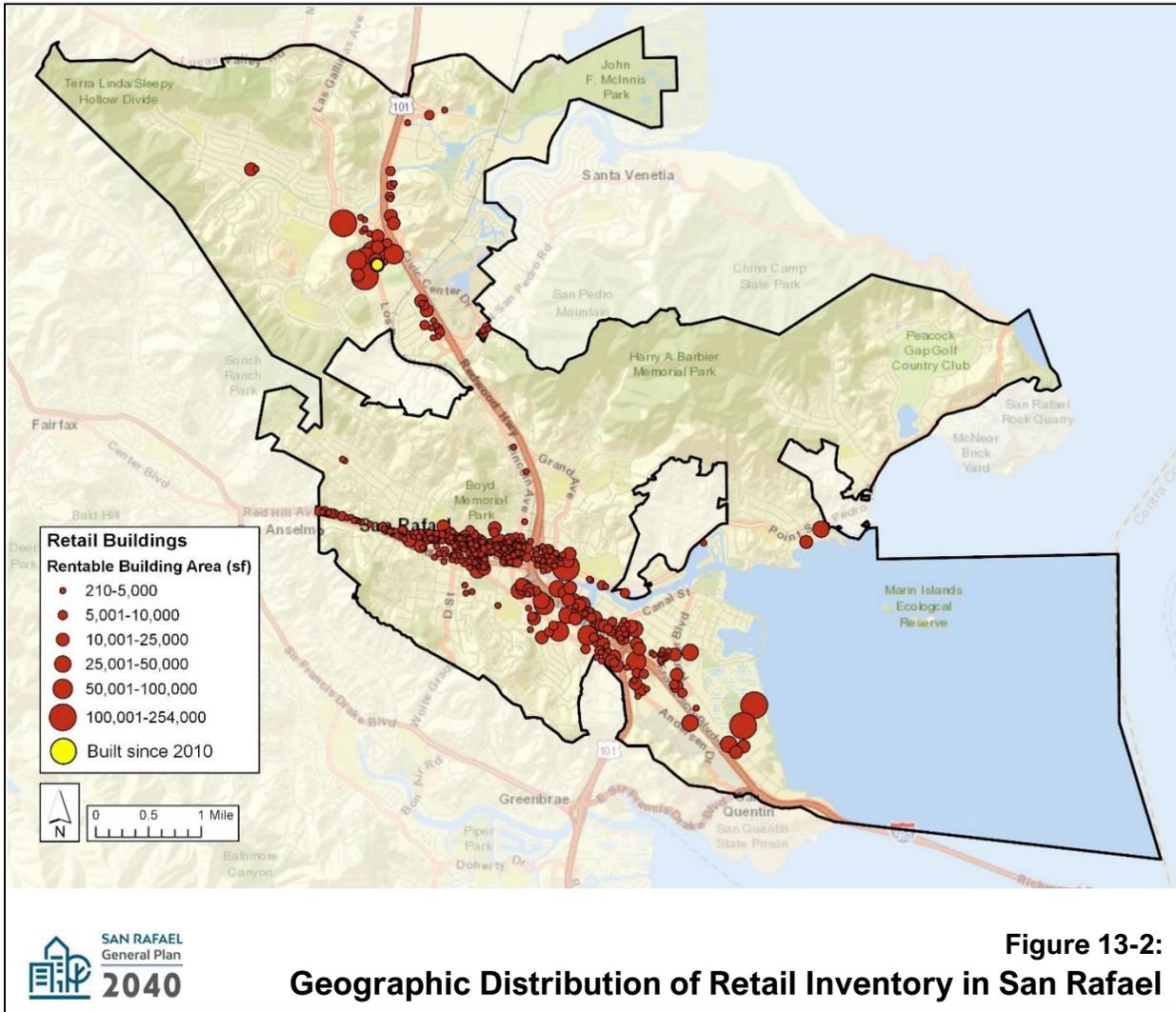
Retail Sector

San Rafael is home to several of the County's major shopping centers and districts, including its Downtown shopping and entertainment district, Northgate Mall, Montecito Plaza, and retail/service commercial businesses along the Francisco Boulevard East and West corridors. The City's retail inventory of 4.9 million square feet represents slightly more than one-third of the total inventory in Marin County. Downtown San Rafael alone accounts for 1.6 million square feet of retail space. Figure 13-2 shows the distribution of retailers in San Rafael by square footage.

In addition to Downtown and shopping center space, San Rafael also has several large auto dealerships and big box stores including Target, Home Depot, and Best Buy. There are also small neighborhood centers, such as the Terra Linda Shopping Center and the Bret Harte Center. Prior to the 2020 pandemic, the real estate market was characterized by relatively low rental rates and low vacancy rates.

The retail sector is particularly important to San Rafael's fiscal health. The City's 2019 Financial Report indicated that sales taxes were the single largest revenue stream in the municipal budget, generating more than \$35.6 million in revenue. By comparison, property taxes generated \$25.9 million in revenue. Sales taxes represented 42 percent of the City's general revenues and 30 percent of its total revenues. The share of municipal revenue attributable to sales tax has been consistently important over time—sales taxes also represented 42 percent of general revenues in 2000—though this share fluctuates with the economy.

The retail market faces challenges, including Downtown spaces that are not well configured for modern retail needs and relatively few evening activities in most of San Rafael's retail centers. These issues will likely persist as the City recovers from the pandemic, with the added uncertainty about long-term changes in the retail sector. In the third quarter of 2020, Cushman and Wakefield reported that the retail vacancy rate in Marin County was 4.1 percent. This compared to a 15.3 percent vacancy rate in San Francisco.



While the immediate focus upon adoption of General Plan 2020 is the recovery of local retail and service businesses, there are longer-term challenges such as repurposing underperforming centers. Retail is rapidly evolving. Certain types of businesses, including those providing essential services (supermarkets, pharmacies, etc.) will likely be sustained in the long run. Other retail sectors were already in decline prior to the pandemic, and some may not fully recover. Incentivizing housing in Downtown San Rafael and in its retail centers can add buying power to the consumer spending base while also allowing older commercial centers and storefronts to adapt to new uses.

San Rafael's Largest Shopping Centers

Name	Leasable Square Feet
Northgate Mall	755,677
Montecito Plaza	130,500
Northgate I	115,000
Marin Square	82,000
Northgate III	71,300
Shamrock Ctr (Staples)	62,500

Source: Costar, 2019 (excludes freestanding retailers such as Home Depot and Target)

An economic analysis performed in 2019 as part of General Plan 2040 made the following conclusions for San Rafael's retail sector:

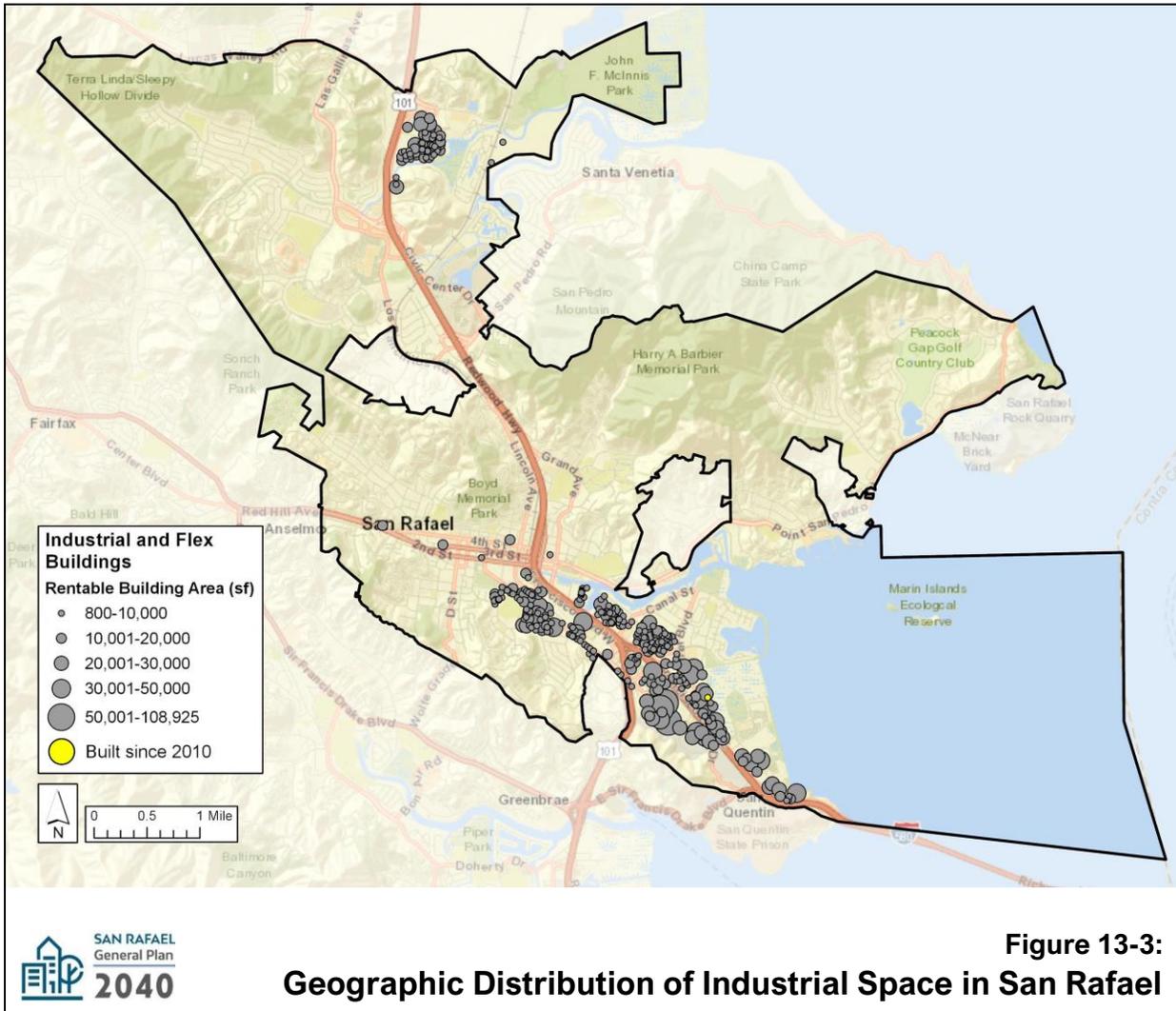
- Retail in San Rafael is supported by the high spending power of residents, residents of nearby communities, and workers.
- Consumers desire places that are conducive to social interaction and connection to community. Authenticity—such as the historic context of Downtown San Rafael—is a desired commodity.
- Effective placemaking and greater diversity of uses can improve the long-term viability of centers such as Northgate.
- Facilitating upgrades and renovations to existing storefronts and shopping centers—and ensuring that new spaces meet contemporary needs—could draw additional tenants, especially Downtown and at Northgate.
- Downtown faces retail challenges, including lack of activity during evenings and weekends, a relatively small population and employment base, issues related to homelessness, and competition from other cities and centers.
- Driving retail traffic from e-commerce to brick and mortar shopping can be facilitated by “hyper-localization” (retail branded as “local”) and an immersive retail environment that provides an experience for the consumer as well as goods. For example, cooking stores may offer classes, book stores may offer lectures, and so on.
- For underperforming shopping centers, the City could encourage mixed uses, including new multifamily rental and for-sale housing. Housing at these locations can add buying power to the consumer spending base and enliven these centers.
- A small amount of ancillary supporting retail uses in industrial areas, such as coffee shops, casual and to-go restaurants, and food trucks, could help to support the existing industrial uses in these areas.

In the post-pandemic environment, shoppers will likely place a priority on safety as well as convenience. Retailers, restaurants, personal services and other businesses will need to adapt to shifting priorities and rethink past business practices. This makes versatility and flexibility critically important.

Industrial Sector

San Rafael accounts for more than half of the industrial/ flex space in Marin County, with 4.2 million square feet of floor space in the city. As shown on Figure 13-1, the major clusters of industrial space are in the Northgate Business Park and in Southeast San Rafael, extending from Downtown to the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge. In 2019, the vacancy rate for industrial space in the city was just 1.2 percent and demand for this type of space was very strong. Given the limited amount of industrially zoned land in Marin County, it is anticipated that this sector will remain strong in the future. Industrial uses require large floor plates and loading areas to accommodate truck access, as well as flat sites and good access to freeways, making San Rafael's inventory of industrial land an important regional asset.

City policies have historically discouraged or disallowed residential uses on or adjacent to existing industrial sites. Industrial properties tend to have relatively low values, creating an incentive for redevelopment to higher-value uses such as housing when allowed. Additionally, conflicts between residential and industrial uses can hamper industrial operations, making them less viable over time. A similar dynamic exists with non-industrial tenants, such as fitness studios and churches, seeking to lease affordable space in industrial buildings. The City will evaluate these types of operations carefully, ensuring that they do not have a negative impact on adjacent industrial operations. More flexibility may be appropriate for industrial space that is obsolete or hard to market, or spaces that are close to Downtown San Rafael, where transit and other services are nearby.



Hospitality Sector

San Rafael had an inventory of nearly 800 hotel rooms in 2020 and was well positioned for an expansion of its hospitality sector. A new 140-room AC Marriott is under construction Downtown, and a 185-room hotel has been approved on Francisco Boulevard East at Bellam. These will be the first hotels constructed in San Rafael in more than 12 years. During the last few years, hotels have been complemented by short-term rentals (STRs), creating another option for visitors. The City permits STRs through a registration program, subject to specific operating requirements including payment of Transient Occupancy Taxes (TOT).

Business travel has been the primary driver of hotel demand in the city, but the potential for leisure-based demand is strong. The city is convenient to major attractions within Marin County, such as Muir Woods, Mount Tamalpais, and Stinson Beach. It is also a relatively short distance from San Francisco and the Napa and Sonoma wine regions. There may also be untapped potential for San Rafael to host visitors to special events, arts and entertainment activities, and conventions. Transient Occupancy Taxes (TOT) and potential sales taxes from visitor spending make hotels a particularly attractive use from a fiscal perspective. TOTs generated \$3.2 million in municipal revenue in 2019, roughly doubling over the last 10 years.

Policy EV-2.1: Retail Sector

Respond to changes in the retail sector so that San Rafael's commercial areas can adapt and remain an integral part of the City's economy. The City should support owners of vacant retail space in efforts to transition to new uses where retail is no longer viable, and work proactively to avoid potential net losses in tax revenues (see text box, following page).

Program EV-2.1A: Retail Evaluations. Periodically evaluate the performance of the City's retailers. Use the data to help improve retail performance or assist centers with attracting other compatible uses.

See the Land Use Element for additional policies and programs on neighborhood shopping centers and retailing.

Policy EV-2.2: Promoting Local Purchasing

Encourage purchasing of San Rafael goods and services by residents, workers, businesses and City government in order to cycle dollars back into the San Rafael economy, support local businesses, and generate revenue for the City.

Program EV-2.2A: Local Shopping Campaigns. Support campaigns to "Shop Locally" and raise awareness about the benefits of supporting local businesses rather than purchasing on-line.

Program EV-2.2B: Event Promotion. Continue to promote events that bring people to Downtown, Northgate and other community commercial centers to support local businesses.

Program EV-2.2C: Local Preference. Where other factors (such as price) are equal, the City should give preference to purchasing goods and services from both local vendors and minority-owned businesses.

Program EV-2.2D: Day and Evening Visitors. In the Downtown and North San Rafael Town Center areas, attract a variety of retail businesses to encourage patronage during both day and evening hours.



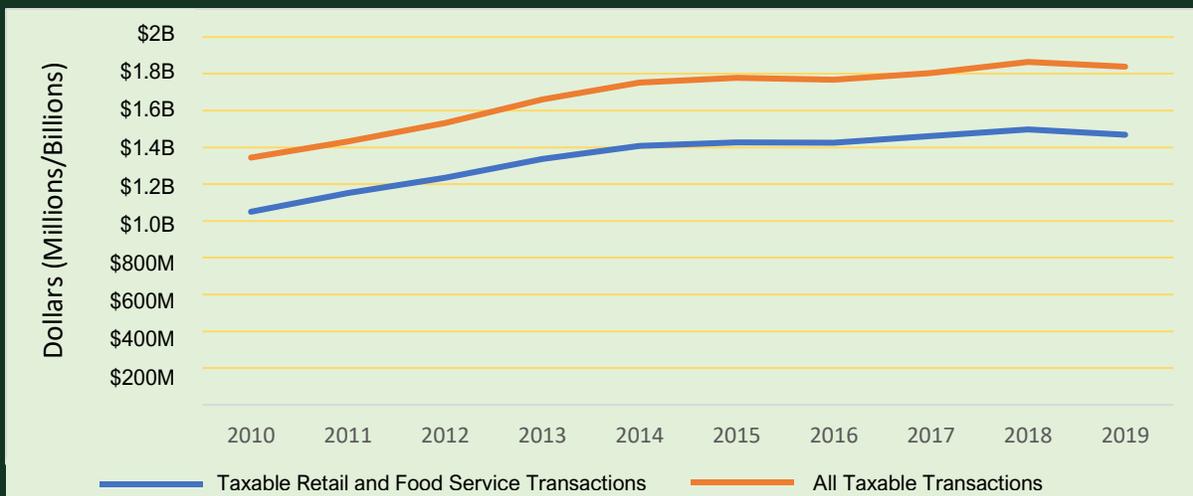
Photo Credit: Skip Mppre

Six Ideas for Adapting Retail (*)

- Malls could become community experiences (exercise, movies, food, medical, and education). Remove the roof and let the weather in to freshen spaces.
- The future of big retail needs to be friction-free and focused 100% on the customers' experience.
- Specialty retailers need to narrow choices to core offerings in order not to carry high inventory numbers.
- Big box retailers may repurpose indoor space into housing, or turn indoor space into outdoor space
- We could see micro fulfillment centers like mini Amazon warehouses.
- Curated inventory and experiences will drive brand value. Factors like ethics and inclusion, sourcing, and the environment will become essential parts of the purchase decision.



**Adapted from Forbes Magazine: The Real Future Of Retail. An Independent View of 2030 from the Lens of 2020 (9/29/20)*



Sales Tax and the City

The chart above shows annual taxable transactions in San Rafael from 2010 to 2019. The blue line indicates retail and food service transactions, while the orange line indicates all taxable transactions. Three industry groups—autos and transportation, building and construction, and general consumer goods—account for most of the transactions. Most of the growth in tax revenues over the last 10 years has been driven by auto sales, building and construction, and restaurants and hotels. Other sectors, such as food and drugs, fuel and service stations, and business and industry, have been flat or have slightly declined. In 2019, San Rafael reported approximately \$1.8 billion in taxable sales. Sales tax provides a vital source of revenue for municipal operations.

Policy EV-2.3: Industrial Land Supply

Preserve the City’s supply of industrial land.

Program EV-2.3A: Industrial Zoning. Maintain zoning for industrial areas to prevent a loss of industrial businesses (see also Program LU-2.4A on industrial zoning).



The Future of Our Industrial Land

Many cities in California are facing a dilemma: how can they deal with an acute housing shortage at the same time they support industrial land uses requiring large land areas in premium locations. This issue confronts San Rafael, where industrial land uses occupy roughly 420 acres, including some sites that are walking distance from premium public transit. While some cities in the region have decided to rezone such areas for housing, San Rafael has recognized the strategic value of this land for the local economy and the services it provides to Marin County. The General Plan 2040 Steering Committee was divided on this issue, recognizing the pros and cons of different approaches. General Plan 2040 acknowledges that a limited number sites adjacent to Downtown and existing residential areas may be appropriately converted, but generally favors a strict preservation policy for industrially zoned sites.

Policy EV-2.4: Office and Technology Market

Maintain San Rafael’s position as a regional office center, providing space for a diverse range of businesses as well as a source of revenue and local job opportunities. Encourage opportunities for new office development in transit-served locations such as the Downtown Transit Center area.

Program EV-2.4A: Responding to Workplace Trends. Work with local office building owners, managers and tenants to respond to changing workplace design requirements (including those related to public health) and to adapt to trends such as increased telecommuting and co-working,

Policy EV-2.5: Tourism and Hospitality

Recognize and support tourism and hospitality as a significant contributor to San Rafael’s economy.

Program EV-2.5A: Tourism Strategies. Explore strategies to enhance local tourism, improve hotel and conference facilities, attract destination restaurants and stores, and support tourism programs of the Chamber, Downtown Business Improvement District, and Marin County Visitors Bureau.

Program EV-2.5B: Downtown Arts District. Support the Downtown Cultural Arts District through marketing, programs, and partnerships (see also Program AC-1.8A).

Program EV-2.5C: Special Events. Encourage special events and festivals that draw visitors to San Rafael, showcase its vibrant arts and cultural scene, and have net positive effects on local businesses and City revenues. Work with local retailers to ensure they can remain open and easily accessible when these events take place (see also Policies AC-1.7 and LU-3.11).

Program EV-2.5D: Transient Occupancy Taxes (TOT). Explore ways to increase economic development program funding through TOT revenues.

See the Land Use Element for policies on home occupations. See the Mobility Element for policies on telecommuting, flextime, and other strategies to reduce peak hour commuting. See the Arts and Culture Element for additional discussion of the arts and entertainment sector.

Policy EV-2.6: Health Care

Expand the health care sector to meet the growing needs of an aging population, ensure access to health services for all residents, and improve readiness in the event of future public health emergencies.

See Goal EDI-2 for additional policies and programs on access to health care and medical facilities.

Policy EV-2.7: Government and Education

Sustain San Rafael’s role as a countywide government and education center.

Program EV-2.7A: Civic Center Modernization. Support County efforts to update the Marin County Civic Center and expand its capacity to host conferences and special events.

Program EV-2.7B: Higher Education Partnerships. Cultivate relationships with Dominican University and other Bay Area institutions of higher learning to facilitate local economic development. Consider opportunities for Dominican to increase its visibility in the community, including occupying underutilized space in Downtown or Northgate Town Center buildings.



Goal EV-3: Distinctive Business Areas

Sustain vital, attractive business areas, each with a distinctive character and emphasis.

Downtown, Northgate, West Francisco, East San Rafael, and the Miracle Mile each play a unique role in the City's economy and maintain the community's position as a full-service city. These districts are complemented by attractive, convenient neighborhood centers that provide local services and gathering places.

Each of San Rafael's business districts has a unique economic role that contributes to and helps maintain San Rafael's position as a full-service city.

- **Downtown San Rafael** is the historic center of the city and has its highest employment densities and concentration of businesses. Fourth Street has a pedestrian-oriented scale and historic character that attract residents, visitors, and workers. The City has worked to activate this area during evenings and weekends by strongly encouraging restaurants, entertainment venues, and new housing. Downtown's building inventory includes approximately 1.5 million square feet of office space and 1.6 million square feet of retail space.
- **North San Rafael** has a number of services found nowhere else in the city, including San Rafael's largest shopping center (Northgate Mall), its major medical facilities (Kaiser Hospital), its largest hotel (Embassy Suites), and the County government center. North San Rafael also has the largest concentration of office space in the city, exceeding Downtown San Rafael's inventory and accounting for about half of the City total. The area east of US 101 between Freitas Parkway and Smith Ranch Road is one of the city's major light industrial districts and includes a large inventory of office-flex space.
- **Southeast San Rafael**, which extends from Downtown's southeast edge to the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge, contains 28 percent of the city's jobs and generates roughly two-thirds of San Rafael's sales tax revenue. The area includes a mix of older manufacturing businesses, office parks, big box retailers, auto dealers, auto service businesses, construction and building materials businesses, and other general commercial and industrial activities. Southeast San Rafael is also home to several neighborhood commercial centers, some of which primarily serve the Latino community. There are also a number of utility and transportation-related businesses. The area includes a number of sub-districts, including Francisco Boulevard West, the Andersen/ Woodland corridor, the Bellam corridor (Marin Square, Kerner), East Francisco/ Canal, and the Shoreline Parkway area.

The City also includes a number of secondary business districts, including the Miracle Mile/ West End area along Fourth Street between San Anselmo and Downtown, the Lincoln Avenue corridor between Downtown and Puerto Suelo Hill, the Terra Linda Shopping Center, and smaller markets and convenience centers in Sun Valley, Loch Lomond, Bret Harte, and other neighborhoods. Dominican University is another job provider in the city, with approximately 350 employees.

Photo Credit: Downtown BID



Downtown San Rafael Business Improvement District

In 1979, approximately 125 businesses along Fourth Street between Lincoln Avenue and E Street established a Business Improvement District (BID). The BID enables businesses within the District to pay an annual tax assessment that covers improvements and activities benefitting the Downtown business community. In 2013, the City Council expanded the BID boundaries to extend east to Hetherton, south along B Street, and west of E Street to include the West End Village.

The BID is managed by a full-time staff and an Advisory Board comprised of local business representatives. Their mission is to promote the common interests of Downtown business owners and to attract shoppers and visitors. The BID undertakes activities throughout the year promoting Downtown as a great place to visit and do businesses. They organize beautification initiatives, collaborate on special events like the May Madness car show, and work with the City and local businesses to address parking, safety, marketing, and branding. The BID provides a means for businesses to network, communicate, fund-raise, and collaborate to make Downtown more successful.

Policy EV-3.1: Business Areas

Strengthen the positive qualities of each business area in San Rafael to create a stronger sense of place and brand identity.

Program EV-3.1A: Zoning Regulations.

Ensure that zoning and development regulations for each business area support their success and contribution to the City's economy.

Program EV-3.1B: Quality of Life Programs.

Implement and support programs to improve the safety, security, cleanliness, and convenience of San Rafael's business districts so that they are places where customers want to shop, dine, and visit. Providing a comfortable, enjoyable experience for residents, workers, and visitors is an important part of remaining competitive.

Policy EV-3.2: Revitalization

Support and encourage redevelopment and upgrading of commercial and industrial properties while retaining economic and business diversity. The City should work with property owners, businesses, and business organizations to address issues such as parking, beautification and landscaping, streetscape improvements, and circulation and access.

Program EV-3.2A: Business Improvement Districts.

Support the use of BIDs to improve services to business districts and provide a funding source for localized improvements.

Program EV-3.2B: Public Private Partnerships.

Encourage public/private partnerships as one means of revitalizing deteriorated and underdeveloped area (see also Policy CSI-5.6).

Program EV-3.2C: Business Assistance Programs.

Explore the feasibility of programs to assist local businesses with property improvements, such as landscaping, signage, façade improvements, and design assistance.



Photo Credit: Skip Moore

Policy EV-3.3: Economically Productive Use of Land

Encourage the use of the City's commercial and industrial land supply in a way that creates positive fiscal impacts, economic opportunities for local businesses and property owners, employment growth, and services for San Rafael residents.

Policy EV-3.4: Water-Dependent Businesses

Ensure that commercial properties along San Rafael's shoreline, including the San Rafael Creek/ Canal, leverage their waterfront locations. The City supports the continued of these sites for water-dependent activities such as boat sales, boat repair, marinas, and water-oriented restaurants.

See the Mobility Element for policies on water transportation, including water taxis. See the Conservation and Climate Change Element for policies on boating and water quality. See also Policy CSI-4.11 on canal dredging.

Policy EV-3.5: Business Infrastructure

Support investment in telecommunications infrastructure so that San Rafael's business districts remain economically competitive and can meet changing business needs and technology requirements.

See the Infrastructure Element for policies on fiber optics communication and similar services

Policy EV-3.6: Mutual Support Between Business Areas and Adjacent Neighborhoods

Promote productive relationships between residential neighborhoods and adjoining business areas.

Program EV-3.6A: Business/Neighbor Collaboration. *Seek innovative ways for businesses and their residential neighbors to collaboratively solve mutual concerns. Encourage conflict resolution between business and neighbors.*

Policy EV-3.7: Business Access

Improve access to and from the East San Rafael business district, including freeway and ramp improvements, local thoroughfare improvements, improved transit service and access to Downtown, and safer bicycle and pedestrian routes.

See the Neighborhoods Element for additional policies and programs on East San Rafael.

Policy EV-3.8: Creative Infill

Encourage creative infill development and redevelopment that maximizes existing resources and makes the best use of limited available space. Expedite the development review process by establishing clear expectations for design, and effectively involving the community.

Program EV-3.8C: Pre-Submittal Process. *Improve the efficiency and speed of the development review process by revisiting neighborhood notification and meeting procedures and updating the pre-submittal process to identify initial concerns and encourage higher quality applications.*

Photo Credit: Frank Johnson



14 Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Introduction

The Equity Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Element recognizes environmental justice and social equity as important issues in San Rafael and expresses the City’s commitment to work toward a more just and equitable future for all of its residents. In 2016, the State legislature passed SB 1000, mandating that all cities with “disadvantaged” communities incorporate environmental justice policies into their general plans upon the next revision of two or more elements beginning in 2018. Because this is a new requirement, San Rafael is one of the first cities in the Bay Area to adopt such an element. The City has interpreted the State mandate broadly, addressing not only environmental justice but other issues related to the greater inclusion of all people in local decision-making.

Acknowledging equity and environmental justice as planning issues reflects consensus among policy makers that marginalized groups, including lower-income residents, communities of color, and indigenous people, are disproportionately exposed to environmental hazards and resulting health impacts due to past land use decisions. These inequities are the result of structural factors both explicit and implicit throughout history, beginning with the displacement of Coast Miwok people from their lands more than two centuries ago. During the 20th Century, practices like exclusionary zoning, racial covenants, and discriminatory lending practices (“redlining”) by public and private entities shaped land use patterns that still define cities across the country today.

The concept of environmental justice recognizes that present-day policies may have unintentionally negative impacts on communities that are still affected by previous practices of discrimination, exclusion, and inequality. In addition to addressing these issues in a stand-alone element, environmental justice and equity are key considerations in other elements of the General Plan, including Housing, Transportation, Environmental Hazards, and Arts and Culture.

Planning with an Equity Lens

The use of an “equity lens” in planning means that decisions about the allocation of future resources should consciously consider the historic advantages or disadvantages that have affected residents, the efforts being made to authentically include residents who have been historically excluded from planning processes, and the extent to which our decisions place unfair burdens on future generations. “Opportunity for all” is a guiding principle of General Plan 2040—it is intended to inform and shape future planning, decision-making, and resource allocation. In particular, decisions about land use, transportation, housing, parks, and public services must consider their potential impacts on under-served individuals and groups, including how they may mitigate displacement and contribute to reducing inequity.

The State of California has provided guidance in how to address equity and environmental justice in the General Plan, identifying seven areas of focus:

- Pollution Exposure and Air Quality (largely addressed through Safety and Resilience Element policies to prevent and mitigate sources of air pollution and protect sensitive populations)

- Public Facilities (largely addressed through policies in the Community Services and Infrastructure Element, and also in the Mobility and EDI Elements)
- Food Access (including policies in the EDI Element to promote access to healthy food)
- Safe and Sanitary Homes (largely addressed through Housing Element policies that ensure safe and healthy living conditions, and access to affordable housing)
- Physical Activity (addressed through Mobility Element policies on safe streets and bicycle and pedestrian travel, through Park and Open Space Element policies on park access, trails, and athletics programming, and through the EDI Element on environmental health)
- Civil or Community Engagement (including policies in the EDI Element promoting equitable, inclusive, and meaningful community engagement in local planning processes).

While many of these topics are addressed in other parts of the General Plan, the EDI Element provides an opportunity to connect them to each other and to the broader issue of equity.

Photo Credit: Ross Bishop



Defining Environmental Justice

The California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA) defines Environmental Justice as “the fair treatment of people of all races, cultures and incomes with respect to the development, adoption, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.” Fair treatment means that no group of people should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from local policies.

Ancillary to this formal definition are the concepts of distributive justice, social justice, and procedural justice. Distributive justice refers to the inequitable distribution of public harms and benefits across geographies and/or other groupings. Social justice is more specific, referring to the way historical injustices have had lasting intergenerational impacts that continue to be distributed along race and class lines. An example is how indigenous people and people of color were openly discriminated against in home loan markets prior to the passage of the Civil Rights Act. As a result, families belonging to these groups in the U.S. have had far less access to property and home ownership, the primary driver of inter-generational wealth transfer and social mobility. Procedural justice refers to decision-making processes themselves as opposed to their outcomes. It ensures that all people who are potentially affected by a decision or policy can participate as equal partners in every level of decision-making.

Summary of Disadvantaged Community Data for San Rafael

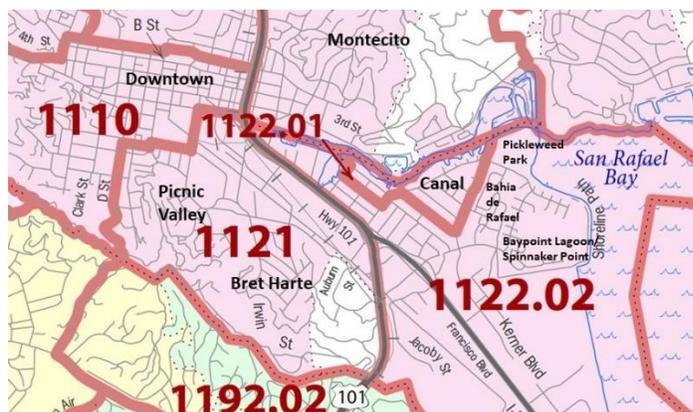
The California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) has developed specific metrics to identify “disadvantaged communities” in California. These are areas that are disproportionately affected by environmental pollution or negative public health conditions, as well as areas with high concentrations of poverty, unemployment, low levels of educational attainment, and low rates of English fluency. OEHHA has developed a mapping tool known as CalEnviroScreen to identify these areas. This program assigns a score to every census tract in California and then ranks each tract with a percentile relative to the entire State of California.

The San Rafael Planning Area includes 13 census tracts. CalEnviroScreen was used to map 19 different indicators at the census tract level in order to compare conditions in different parts of the City, and to compare San Rafael’s census tracts to the rest of the Bay Area and the State as a whole. City staff also evaluated other indicators, including access to parks and grocery stores, and overall walkability (Walkscore). The findings of this analysis are contained in a background report available on the City’s website.

As a whole, San Rafael residents are healthy, with low rates of asthma, low rates of cardiovascular disease, and very few infants born with low birth weights compared to the rest of California. Every census tract in San Rafael scores at the median or better compared to the rest of the State in terms of these three indicators, which generally correlate with high levels of pollution exposure and poverty.

Compared to the rest of California, San Rafael has very high-quality drinking water and good air quality. Areas of San Rafael near highways as well as industrial-commercial areas with high volumes of truck traffic score worse than the rest of the city in terms of air pollution but are still roughly at the median for the State as a whole. San Rafael has very low rates of pesticide exposure, and very few sites where toxic chemicals have been released. There are a few sites with hazardous materials issues (contaminated groundwater or soil, etc.); these are generally located in the southeastern industrial areas. The city’s built environment is relatively conducive to healthy physical activity: roughly two-thirds of the city has a complete sidewalk network that facilitates access to destinations like parks, transit stops, grocery stores and schools.

The Canal neighborhood stands out as having a disproportionate concentration of households facing significant socioeconomic disadvantages. Tract 1122.01—corresponding to the “Core Canal” area—scores consistently lower than the rest of the city on almost every indicator. The adjacent census tract (1122.02) covers a larger geographic area including most of southeast San Rafael (Bahia, Spinnaker, Bay Point, etc.) and also scores below the citywide average on many variables (see map inset below for tract locations).



Both of these census tracts are also vulnerable to flooding and the impacts of sea level rise. Table 14-1 displays demographic data for these two Census Tracts and for the City as a whole. While the Canal today is 80 percent Latino, it was also a gateway community for Vietnamese immigrants in the 1980s and is still culturally diverse. U.S. Census data indicates that roughly four percent of Canal area residents speak Asian languages at home, with Vietnamese being the predominant language in those cases.

Table 14-1: Socio-Economic Comparison of Canal Area Census Tracts with Entire City

Demographic Variable	Tract 1122.01		Tract 1122.02		City of San Rafael	
	Number	Percent of Total	Number	Percent of Total	Number	Percent of Total
Total Population	8,176		4,964		58,939	
Hispanic Origin	7,188	87.9%	3,430	69.1%	18,522	31.4%
Speak English “Less than Very Well” (*)	3,792	60.3%	2,325	54.8%	10,494	19.1%
Renter-Occupied Households	1,665	91.8%	786	61.8%	11,557	50.3%
Average Household Size	4.47		3.87		2.48	
Overcrowded Households	1,246	68.7%	398	31.3%	2,411	10.5%
Population Under 18	2,824	36.7%	1,353	29.4%	12,665	21.4%
Median Age	26.8		32.9		41.0	
Median Household Income	\$42,399		\$65,250		\$87,262	
Per Capita Income in 2018	\$14,928		\$29,586		\$53,559	
Percent of Residents Below Poverty Line in 2018		33.9%		13.8%		13.3%
Percent of Residents 25 or older with no high school diploma		56.3%		36.9%		14.6%
Unemployment rate (2018)		7.8%		3.1%		3.9%
Renter households spending more than 35% of income on rent (**)	944	56.7%	453	60.7%	5,264	47.5%

Source: US Census, American Community Survey (data retrieved 2020, covers 2014-2018). Citywide totals may not precisely align with other estimates in General Plan due to sampling methods.

Notes: (*) based on persons older than 5 years.; (**) In “Percent of Total” column, the “Total” refers to all renters in this Tract

As Table 14-1 indicates, the “Core Canal” census tract (roughly bordered by the San Rafael Canal, Kerner, Larkspur Street, and Mill Street) is home to 14 percent of San Rafael’s population. The adjacent tract (including Bahia de Rafael and the southeast San Rafael employment district) is home to about eight percent of the city’s population. These two tracts have significantly higher percentages of Hispanic residents, non-English speaking households, and renters than the City as a whole. The average household size in the Canal area is 80 percent higher than the city as a whole, despite the fact that most of the housing units are smaller multi-family apartments. More than two-thirds of the households in the Core Canal tract meet the Census definition of “overcrowded” (more than 1 person per room).

The Canal area (Census Tract 1122.01) also has a significantly larger percentage of children, with almost 37 percent of its population under 18. The median age is almost 15 years below the citywide average—nearly half of all residents are 26 or younger. Median household income is less than half the citywide average, but because of the larger household sizes, the median per capita income is about one-quarter the citywide average. Approximately one-third of the residents, including many children, were living below the poverty line in 2018, compared to 13 percent in the city as a whole. More than half of all residents over 25 did not have a high school diploma.

In 2018, the Canal's unemployment rate was 7.8 percent. While this was higher than the citywide average, it is still indicative of a highly engaged workforce. In fact, the less populous Canal census tract (1122.02) had an unemployment rate *below* the citywide average, and a large number of moderate income households. Many Canal residents work in essential service industries, retail positions, health care, and other services that are the foundation of the City's economy.

Evaluating finer-grained Census block group data indicates that there are disadvantaged populations in other parts of San Rafael, including Downtown, the Woodland Avenue corridor, the Contempo area of North San Rafael, and portions of Terra Linda near Northgate. San Rafael also has a relatively large population of unsheltered residents, including persons with mental health needs and chronic illnesses.

As noted elsewhere in this General Plan, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a disparate impact on Latino residents, representing 70 percent of all cases in Marin County despite a Latino population that is 16 percent of the County total. Much of the impact can be attributed to crowded housing conditions, as well as higher-risk occupations such as construction, food service, and health care. Persistent disparities in employment, income, and access to health care have contributed to increased vulnerability. Many lower-income residents in San Rafael cannot shelter in place, social distance, work from home, or even attend school remotely because they do not have the resources or life circumstances to do so.

The six goals in this Element are informed in part by the data presented above, but more broadly by parallel efforts taking place in San Rafael, ranging from improving internet access in the Canal to district-based elections. This Element also draws from best practices in urban planning, including equity-based initiatives recommended by the American Planning Association (*Planning for Equity Policy Guide, 2019*) and the State of California (SB 1000 Toolkit, 2018). As described in the text box on the following page, a Spanish language outreach and engagement program was included in General Plan 2040, providing insights into community priorities that could not be obtained through traditional methods.



Photo Credit: Susan Adler

General Plan 2040 Spanish Language Survey Findings

A Spanish-language community engagement initiative was included in General Plan 2040. Working with the non-profit Canal Alliance and Communities in Collaboration, a consulting firm, a local leadership team was created to explain the purpose of the General Plan and gather input on key issues and priorities. An important part of this effort was to provide a framework for building the community's capacity to understand and engage in future planning processes. The effort included a community survey, which was administered through in-person interviews. A total of 135 people took the survey. The work was completed in late 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Key Findings: Housing, Safety, Parking, and Quality of Life

The survey results indicate a strong message about the most urgent priorities: housing, safety, parking, and quality of life. The community is ready to engage as partners with the City in pursuing solutions to these issues. The community indicated relatively high levels of satisfaction with community services, including police and fire. However, only 31 percent were satisfied with the Canal as a “place for visiting family” and only 43 percent were satisfied with street cleanliness.

Almost 90% of respondents reported that smoke and fumes from sources such as outdoor cooking and idling cars were major nuisances. Perhaps most alarming is that 90% of residents reported that they do not “feel safe walking at night in the Canal.” Some 87% suggested that better street lighting could help improve safety. The responses indicate a higher-than-expected level of trust in police as partners for addressing these issues. There also appears to be high awareness of and concern about potential threats to the community, such as sea level rise, flooding, drought, fires, and earthquakes. This awareness is an opportunity for resilience and preparedness.

The most pressing and worrisome issue was housing; a situation that has worsened over the last few years, reaching crisis levels. Respondents were nearly all renters (97%). Of all respondents, 83% paid one third or more of their incomes on housing; of these, over half were paying 40% or more. About 40% of respondents reported that their rents had doubled in the last 5 years. Another 25% said their rent had tripled or more.

Survey Report Recommendations

- **Build on the Momentum!** The capacity-building provided to the Leadership Team resulted in momentum to continue to learn about city planning and civic engagement to drive further participation in the Canal. The momentum toward greater engagement should be continued.
- **Expand Partnerships:** The City has a remarkable opportunity to continue its partnership with the Canal Alliance to sustain long-term civic engagement. Establishing formal partnerships and standing meetings with key City staff is a critical piece to achieving lasting solutions.
- **Neighborhood Planning:** The recent designation of the Canal as a Priority Development Area, as well as a focus area for future adaptation plans, creates opportunities for deeper engagement and more specific and tangible outcomes.

A full copy of the survey report is available on the City's website at www.sanrafael.org.



Photo Credit Canal Alliance

Goal EDI-1: Authentic and Inclusive Public Participation

Provide 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 strives for clarity and transparency in city planning processes and promotes opportunities for effective public participation. It partners with residents and community-based organizations to develop, implement, and evaluate engagement strategies that meet the needs of each community. It promotes shared leadership and decision-making to empower communities that have historically been under-represented in public processes. All residents are invited and enabled to participate in government in a meaningful way.

San Rafael has actively engaged its neighborhood groups in planning and has benefited from thousands of hours of volunteer participation in its planning processes. It is essential that this input is balanced and fairly represents the perspectives of everyone in the community. Lower income and immigrant communities have been less engaged in these processes in the past, limiting the diversity of opinions that are heard. This creates the potential for outcomes that favor higher income areas. All people should have access to local decision-making.

New approaches to community engagement should be explored to involve the public more inclusively, and to ensure that renters, lower-income households, persons experiencing homelessness, youth, and people of color have a voice in City processes. The lack of participation from these groups is typically not due to apathy, but rather engagement formats that may not reflect cultural norms, work schedules, transportation access, income, and competing household priorities. Some communities have responded by providing stipends to community organizers, launching grass roots education programs in other languages, and reprioritizing the messaging of their outreach programs to be more culturally relevant. This may require a shift in resources, including staff or volunteers who speak multiple languages and are more directly aware of neighborhood needs.

An important part of more inclusive outreach is to follow this outreach with tangible results. Engagement strategies in disadvantaged communities should be linked to real change, such as local investments in parks or bike lanes, zoning changes, and approval of projects that benefit the community. Plans should be realistic and should not over-promise. Continued strong relationships with community-based organizations are key to building trust and achieving success.

Policy EDI-1.1: Leadership in Equity and Inclusion

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

Program EDI-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 EDI-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 EDI-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, age, citizenship, economic, and other barriers. Engagement should support self-determination and empowerment, as well as input on projects and plans.

Program EDI-1.2A: Community Stakeholders. *Actively provide engagement opportunities for all residents through outreach programs specifically aimed at those who are under-represented in public processes, such as immigrant communities, people of color, youth, 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 EDI-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 EDI-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 EDI-1.2D: District Elections. *Optimize the opportunity for district-based elections to increase resident participation in local government, particularly among Latino residents (for example, by considering Commission appointments by District).*

Program EDI-1.2E: CEAP Update. *Update the 2015 San Rafael Community Engagement Action Plan (CEAP) to implement General Plan 2040 EDI policies and programs.*

Policy EDI-1.3: Effective and Equitable Communication

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

Program EDI-1.3A: Removing Language Barriers. *Ensure that Latino and other non-English-speaking populations may actively participate in local decision-making through such methods as bilingual notices, translation of meeting materials, the use of accessible (non-jargon) and culturally competent language, Spanish language meetings, new platforms for commenting (such as Facebook and Zoom), and having interpreters at public meetings.*

Program EDI-1.3B: Surveys. *Regularly use multilingual, culturally appropriate surveys, focus groups, and other outreach methods to solicit input from under-represented communities. When funding is available, outsource survey work to community organizations with engagement grants or stipends for participation (see also Program CSI-5.3B and PROS-2.2B on surveys).*

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

Policy EDI-1.4: Supporting Community-Based Organizations

Support community-based organizations and advocacy groups in their efforts to communicate effectively 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 EDI-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, immigrant, and older adult populations.*

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



Photo Credit: Canal Alliance, Transit and Trails

Policy EDI-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 EDI-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.*

Program EDI-1.5B: Public Input. *Encourage public input at Board, Commission, and Committee meetings. Clearly identify issues, actions, and ways to comment, and provide information early enough to allow meaningful participation.*

Policy EDI-1.6: Youth in Government

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

Program EDI-1.6A: Youth-Focused Outreach. *Work with local school districts, schools, youth and student groups, colleges, universities, and community-based organizations to increase youth involvement in local government and public processes. This could include school "clubs" organized around topics of interest. Youth engagement should be inclusive and reflective of San Rafael's demographics (see also Program EDI-5.2A on "Buddy" programs).*

Goal EDI-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 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.

As the introduction to this Element observed, San Rafael is a healthy community, and its metrics indicate relatively low rates of asthma, heart disease, diabetes, and other illnesses, as well as long-life expectancies. In fact, Marin County is consistently ranked the healthiest county in California by several organizations. Nonetheless, the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that lower income communities in the city and county are far more vulnerable to public health emergencies than the general population, and have fewer resources available to cope with and recover from those emergencies. Moreover, San Rafael's lower income and immigrant residents have limited access to open space, while at the same time they live in the city's densest housing. There are few amenities such as street trees, gardens, and yards, and limited places for outdoor exercise and fitness. Having safe, healthy places to play, ride a bike, go for a walk, and experience nature are critical parts of childhood development.

A healthy environment also includes access to healthy food. This concept has several dimensions, including improving nutrition and healthy eating, eliminating hunger, and providing opportunities for local food production. Most of San Rafael is well-served by markets and groceries, but not all households have sufficient income to buy food for their families. Factors such as acceptance of food stamps at local markets, and access to community gardens or other places to grow fresh food, can improve health outcomes. Likewise, the City can use its land use regulations to avoid excessive concentrations of fast food or alcohol, vaping, and tobacco businesses around K-12 schools and in other places where children gather. Efforts are also needed to address the health and nutrition needs of persons experiencing homelessness and others who may be hungry or in need.

Policy EDI-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 EDI-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 EDI-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 also Goals M-5 and M-6 on connected, pedestrian-friendly streets



Photo Credit: Ross Bishop



Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL)

The Marin County HEAL Hunger Initiative is intended to align systems across government agencies and community organizations so everyone in Marin County has access to affordable, healthy food. HEAL partners work to improve access to CalFresh (the “food stamp” program) among lower income households, reducing food insecurity by removing barriers and improving food distribution systems, and improving nutrition through school gardens and public education.

Policy EDI-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 many homes lack outdoor living space.

Program EDI-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.

See also policies under Goal PROS-1 on park improvements

Policy EDI-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 (see also Policy PROS-2.5).

Program EDI-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 EDI-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 EDI-2.3C: Municipal Code Review. Periodically evaluate City codes and ordinances for their impact on health, including provisions for tobacco, vaping, and smoke-free multi-family housing; standards for indoor air quality; and HVAC systems able to sustain safe living conditions during wildfires, power outages, and extreme weather events.

Policy EDI-2.4: Access to Health Care

Promote access to health care for all residents to safeguard individual and community well-being.

Program EDI-2.4A: Local Health Care Facilities. Support the development of easily accessed health care and medical facilities in the City.

Policy EDI-2.5: 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 residents and other vulnerable populations. Work to reduce or eliminate such hazards where they currently exist.

Program EDI-2.5A: 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. Work with business owners to encourage responsiveness when these issues arise.*

Program EDI-2.5B: 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 EDI-2.5C: 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. See the Conservation and Climate Change Element for policies to improve air quality, and the Mobility Element for policies to encourage cleaner fuel vehicles.

Policy EDI-2.6: 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 EDI-2.6A: Greening Priorities. *Prioritize City-sponsored urban greening and tree planting projects in residential areas that currently have lower rates of tree cover, higher residential densities, and limited access to open space (for example, the Canal area and Montecito).*

Policy EDI-2.7: Responsible Retailing

Encourage responsible retailing of products with the potential to have adverse health impacts, such as tobacco, vaping, and alcohol. Enforce laws that prohibit the sale or provision of such products to minors. Avoid their overconcentration in areas with large numbers of K-12 students.

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

Policy EDI-2.8: 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 EDI-2.8A: Incentives. *Explore incentives for small local markets to offer healthier food options for nearby residents.*



Canal Community Garden

The Canal Community Garden is located on the corner of Bellam Boulevard and Windward Way, a short walk from the Canal neighborhood. For years, Vietnamese and Latino residents in the neighborhood expressed a desire to be able to grow and produce foods important to their heritage and culture. The Garden opened in 2013, with funding assistance provided by the Trust for Public Land. It has been operated by the City of San Rafael since 2018.

The garden includes raised beds for 92 gardeners; a greenhouse, shed, potting tables, and composting bin; a trellised outdoor classroom; vegetated rainwater treatment and educational signage; native planting; and street trees. Sustainable design features such as a rainwater catchment system have been incorporated to reduce irrigation needs and educate visitors about water conservation. A second community garden is operated by the City in Terra Linda.

Policy EDI-2.9: Urban Agriculture

Promote and support small-scale, neighborhood-based, food production, urban agriculture, and reliable food supply lines from regional growers.

Program EDI-2.9A: 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 EDI-2.10: Resiliency Planning

Improve resiliency planning for climate change, public health emergencies, and other community stressors among non-English speaking and lower-income populations. Increase awareness of sea level rise and flooding risks in the Canal area and in other vulnerable areas, as well as the importance of adaptation measures.

Goal EDI-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 provide additional housing choices for people of all incomes. It will also work with landlords and rental property owners to develop fair, workable solutions.

In 1968, the average American household paid 15 percent of its income for housing. Today, 47 percent of San Rafael's renter households and 22 percent of its owner households pay more than 35 percent of their incomes for housing. The burden is greatest for very low-income households, many of whom pay more than half of their incomes on rent. These households faced steep rent increases between 2012 and 2019, creating economic hardship, displacement, and even homelessness. The impact of rising rents has fallen disproportionately on San Rafael's Latino families, leading to overcrowding and sometimes unsanitary or unsafe housing conditions. Loss of income during the COVID-19 pandemic has made the situation even worse.

The City should ensure that its planning and development decisions proactively address these conditions and do not result disproportionate burdens on households of color. Housing should be produced for persons at all income levels, and for renters as well as owners. Measures to address the displacement of existing residents—particularly very low-income tenants—are needed. This is perhaps more important in San Rafael than anywhere else in Marin County given the vulnerability of the Canal area to sea level rise and the plans for substantial amounts of new housing in Downtown San Rafael. New and innovative housing types are encouraged, as is accelerated production of accessory dwelling units.

Safety and sanitation are two critical issues addressed in the policies below. This includes protection from excessive heat and cold, toxic building materials, mold and poor ventilation, insects and vermin. Over the years, the City has implemented a number of programs to mitigate these problems, including Residential Building Record (RBR) inspections on resale of homes and the housing inspection program. The City will also be developing programs to make housing more resilient to the impacts of sea level rise and tidal flooding, and to help those needing to relocate in the event of natural disasters.

Most of the City's housing production strategies and policies are contained in the Housing Element of the General Plan. The policies below are intended to help frame those policies around issues of equity and affordability.

Policy EDI-3.1: Preventing Displacement

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

Program EDI-3.1A: Anti-Displacement Strategies. *Evaluate anti-displacement strategies 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 EDI-3.1B: Renter Protection Measures. *Continue to explore and promote measures to protect San Rafael renters and facilitate positive communication between landlords and tenants.*

Program EDI-3.1C: Climate-Related Displacement. Consider measures to address the potential for loss or displacement of affordable or lower cost housing in the city's climate change adaptation planning.

Policy EDI-3.2: Affordable Housing Development

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

See also Housing Element H-6, H-14, H-15, H-17, and H-18 for additional policies and programs supporting affordable housing development, including Program H-17c on fee reductions and H-17d on streamlined review.

Policy EDI-3.3: Acquisition and Rehabilitation

Support efforts by local community-based organizations and other housing organizations to acquire private market rate apartment complexes and convert them to affordable housing using state and federal tax credit programs or create community land trusts to purchase existing housing in order to maintain it as affordable .

See the San Rafael Housing Element for program recommendations to facilitate implementation of Policies 3.2 and 3.3.

Policy EDI-3.4: Healthy Homes

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

Program EDI-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 and indoor air quality.



Policy EDI-3.5: Property Maintenance

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

Program EDI-3.5A: Code Enforcement. *Provide effective code enforcement efforts in all neighborhoods to abate 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 EDI-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 EDI-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 appropriate implementation measures to reduce overcrowding without displacement.

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

Policy EDI-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 EDI-3.7A: Temporary Housing for At Risk Groups. *Work with community-based organizations to develop and support temporary housing solutions for lower-income immigrants, older adults, and other at-risk groups during and after an emergency.*



Homeward Bound

The recently approved Homeward Bound facility on Mill Street will provide a much-needed housing resource for San Rafael, including 32 low-income apartments and a 60-bed emergency shelter. The complex replaces an existing homeless shelter on the same site. The new apartments will include on-site support services, helping people transition out of homelessness and find a path to housing security.

Goal EDI-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 supports the equitable distribution of City facilities and delivery of City services and prioritizes improvements in communities with the greatest needs.

One of the pillars of equity-driven planning is to prioritize projects and investments that directly benefit disadvantaged communities. Historically, these communities have experienced a lack of investment or deferred investments. Lower income communities also may have needs that are different from those of the community at large, reflecting their culture of origin. Prioritizing improvements in disadvantaged areas at the local level also may help cities leverage funding at the state and federal levels, and through foundation grants and other private sources.

The Spanish language survey conducted through General Plan 2040 (see Page 14-6) found that some of the Canal community's highest priorities related to capital improvements. More than 40 percent of respondents indicated they were "not satisfied at all" with street cleanliness and conditions, and 97 percent indicated that garbage in public spaces was a problem in the community. Survey participants also raised the need for better street lighting and a more visible police presence, with an alarming 90 percent indicating they did not feel safe walking at night in the neighborhood. Nearly two-thirds of the respondents indicated they were affected "a lot" by the lack of green space in the community. Budgeting and capital improvement planning processes should consider these factors as resources are allocated.



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

Policy EDI-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 EDI-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 EDI-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 EDI-4.3: Public Safety in Disadvantaged Communities

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

Program EDI-4.3A: Neighborhood Safety Partnerships. Encourage partnerships between lower-income 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 EDI-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 EDI-4.4A: Mobile Health Care. Facilitate the use of public buildings such as libraries and community centers for “pop up” health services and other activities that promote wellness.

Policy EDI-4.5: Food Security

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

Program EDI-4.5A: Food Assistance Programs. Support resident access to food assistance programs, including local food banks and food stamp programs. Encourage the acceptance of food subsidy vouchers at retail food outlets throughout San Rafael.

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

Policy EDI-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 and older adults are valued community partners and should remain an essential part of San Rafael’s “safety net.”

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

Program EDI-4.6B: Collaborative Service Model. Encourage and support collaborative efforts to address local health care and social service needs, including partnerships with community-based organizations and service providers, partnerships with the County of Marin and other Marin cities, and interdepartmental efforts within the City of San Rafael.

Photo Credit: Fabrice Florin





Photo Credit: Canal Alliance

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

Program EDI-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.

See the Mobility Element for additional guidance on this topic. See Program NH-3.15A on parking management in the Canal.

Policy EDI-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 (see also Policy LU-1.14 and LI-1.18 on bonuses for projects incorporating community benefits).

Goal EDI-5: Access to Education and Economic Opportunity

Reduce barriers to education and economic mobility for all San Rafael residents.

The City collaborates 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.

As the building blocks of our communities, schools should be an essential consideration in an equity-driven General Plan. Quality schools are among the highest priorities in the community, affecting real estate values and the desirability of our neighborhoods. Education shapes the life experiences of our youth, provides access to future employment, and can ultimately lift individuals out of poverty. Schools are also community hubs, providing resources for community services and places to gather.

Because they are separately governed and administered, schools have not always been integrated into local planning processes. State requirements for General Plans address functional topics such as transportation and housing, but do not directly address the role of schools or the importance of education in creating a better future for children and families. Latino students represent 54 percent of the student body in San Rafael; many of these students enter school speaking English as a second language and do not have the resources their fellow students have. The City and School Districts can work collaboratively to address these conditions, beginning with early childhood education and childcare programs, and continuing through after-school programming and partnerships between schools, local colleges and universities, and the business community.

While increasing access to economic opportunity begins with education, it further extends to policies and programs that recognize and support San Rafael's lower income workforce, many of whom provide essential services to the community. This includes working with small local businesses and entrepreneurs to facilitate their success and leveraging the Canal's designation as an "Opportunity Zone" to create new jobs and encourage investment in the community. It also includes implementing the policies and programs in the Economic Vitality Element to sustain a diverse economy.

Policy EDI-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 (see also Policy PROS 2-4).

Program EDI-5.1A: Business Partnerships. *Support partnerships with local employers to make child care more affordable and accessible for low-wage workers. Quantify the potential benefits to employers to help make these services available.*

Policy EDI-5.2: After School Activities

Provide safe, affordable after-school opportunities for children and teens, 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.

Program EDI-5.2A: Buddy Programs. Collaborate with the school districts to develop “buddy” or “host” programs enabling San Rafael families to provide social, cultural, and academic support to English learners and new students from other countries.

Program EDI-5.2B: Cultural Competency. Ensure that the City uses culturally appropriate strategies and messaging when providing information to students and parents regarding extra-curricular activities.

Policy EDI-5.3: Reducing Academic Achievement Gaps

Support local schools in their commitment to equity 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 EDI-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 EDI-5.4: Employment Readiness

Create strong partnerships between schools, community-based organizations, and the business community so that San Rafael students and adults are prepared for jobs in the local and regional economy and can access career resources in a variety of fields.

Program EDI-5.4A: Youth Employment. Encourage youth training and employment programs, partnerships with the private sector and community-based organizations, and similar measures to improve career opportunities for younger San Rafael residents.

See also Policy EV-1.8 on workforce development



Marin County School to Career (STC) Partnership

The Marin County STC Partnership brings schools, businesses, and organizations together to expand educational opportunities for students. The Marin County Office of Education coordinates this partnership on behalf of local school districts, serving students from all academic, social, and economic backgrounds. The Partnership provides internships, job shadowing, and informational interview opportunities that allow student to explore possible careers, think about their futures, and develop workplace skills. More than 200 business and organizations have been engaged in the program.

Policy EDI-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. Encourage local employers to coach and mentor students and young professionals seeking career advancement.

See the Economic Vitality Element for relevant programs

Policy EDI-5.6: Local 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 and Workforce Housing policies and programs

Policy EDI-5.7: Small Business Support

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

Program EDI-5.7A: Business Assistance. *Explore opportunities to assist San Rafael's small businesses and entrepreneurs, including minority-owned businesses. This should include partnerships with the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and similar organizations.*

Program EDI-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.*

See also Program EV-2.2A on "shop local" campaigns and EV-2.2C on local purchasing preferences

Policy EDI-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 EDI-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.*



Wi-Fi and Digital Equity in San Rafael

Access to the internet is necessary for so many facets of our lives including getting news and information, participating in civic life, applying for jobs or unemployment, access to education, and more. Residents in San Rafael do not have equal access to the internet and computers at home. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated digital equity issues as the shelter-in-place orders have led to remote learning, high levels of unemployment, and a reliance on digital civic engagement methods.

In June 2020, the City asked 1,500 residents about how they accessed the internet; 850 of the survey responses were from people living in the Canal. Among the Canal respondents, 42 percent said their internet was not fast enough to watch a video without it buffering; this compared to only 13 percent outside the Canal area. Moreover, 44 percent said it was difficult to connect to the internet.

When schools moved to an online learning model, an immediate need arose to better connect students to the internet and provide them with laptops. The City started working with the County of Marin, San Rafael City Schools, and Canal Alliance on a multi-pronged approach to the problem. These collaborative efforts include providing families with personal hotspots; promoting low-cost/free home internet programs; boosting WiFi signals at libraries, schools, and community centers; and providing Chromebooks to students. Thanks to several community volunteers and these partnerships, work is underway to create a public Wi-Fi network in the Canal, which is the area with the greatest, concentrated need.

Policy EDI-5.9: Affordable Commercial Space

Encourage below market rent space for community-based organizations, supportive service providers, and organizations that assist disadvantaged populations. Avoid the displacement of these businesses due to rising rents.

Program EDI-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.

Program EDI-5.9B: Community

Benefit. *Recognize below market space for community-based organizations as a community benefit that triggers eligibility for density or height bonuses in new development.*

Policy EDI-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. Implement strategies to make technology resources more affordable and accessible to lower income households.

See also Policy CSI-4.16 on technology infrastructure

Program EDI-5.10A: Access to On-

Line Learning and Work. *Support efforts to provide all students with access to on-line learning and the capacity to work remotely. Work with local service providers to improve access for lower income households, especially households with children.*

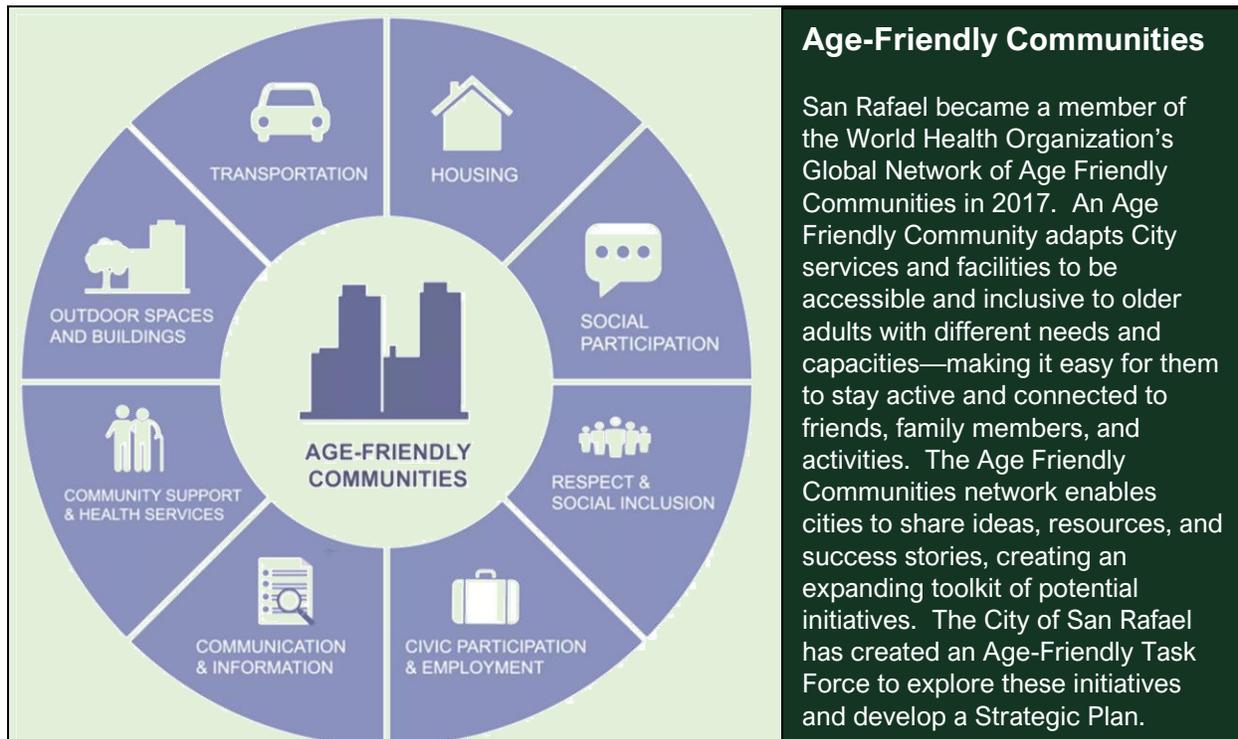
Goal EDI-6: An Age-Friendly Community

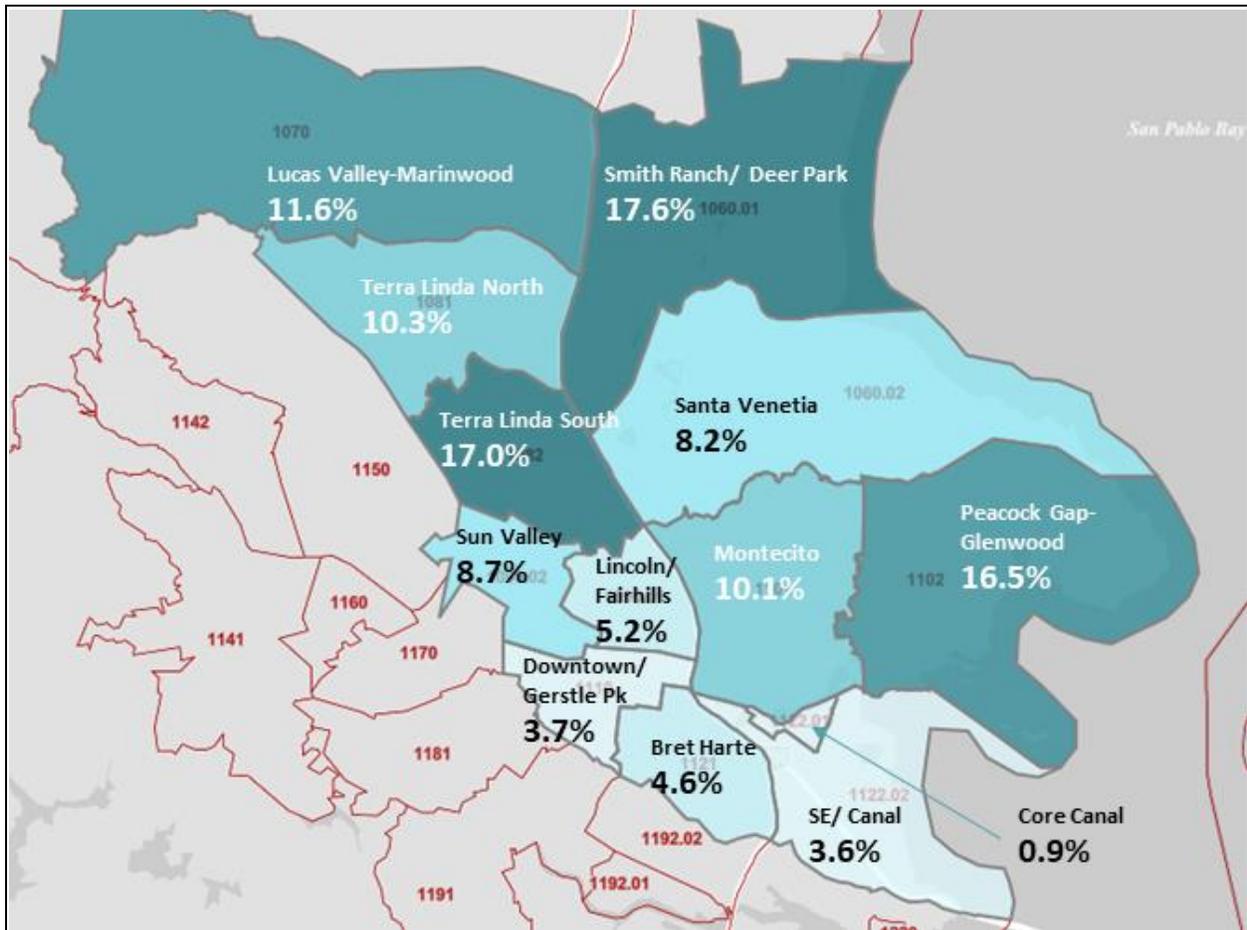
Enhance the quality of life for older adults in San Rafael.

As an inclusive community, San Rafael is a city that works for everyone, regardless of age or ability. The City provides access to services and resources that make it easier for older adults to stay active and connected. It plans and provides appropriately for older adults who need assistance.

Persons over 65 are projected to be the fastest growing segment of the population during the time horizon of the 2040 General Plan. Marin County already has the highest median age of any county in the Bay Area, and that median will rise in the future. As this population ages and increases in size, it will become more important to put strategies in place that recognize the housing, health care, mobility, social, and other needs of older adults. This is particularly important for frail elderly residents who require greater levels of care and assistance.

Figure 14-1 indicates the percentage of San Rafael residents who are 75 years or older in each census tract. The figures range from 0.9 percent in the Canal to 17.6 percent in the Smith Ranch area. In some neighborhoods—including Terra Linda, Peacock Gap, and Glenwood—roughly than one in six residents is over 75. Many of these residents reside in single family homes, most living independently and sometimes alone in one-person households. Looking forward, a growing number of residents may seek to modify their homes, making it easier to “age in place.” Others may require on-site care, or greater assistance around their homes. Single seniors may seek to share their homes or add an accessory dwelling unit. Still others may seek to downsize to smaller homes or find housing with supportive services. The City should plan for and accommodate all of these options.





Source: US Census, ACS 2020. City of San Rafael.



Figure 14-1:
Percent of Residents Over 75 by Census Tract

Housing is only one area where policies and programs may need to adapt to meet changing needs. Transportation services are critical for those who are disabled or unable to drive. The design of City facilities, parks, and other outdoor spaces should consider the needs of a growing population of older visitors. Opportunities for social engagement, ongoing participation in civic and community life, and social participation are also important. Health care services will also need to evolve, recognizing changing demographics and helping older patients access the services they need. These changes should occur in a way that recognizes the other principles of the EDI Element, ensuring that services are available to all residents, regardless of their ethnicity, income, neighborhood, or family circumstances.



Policy EDI-6.1: Planning for an Aging Population

Proactively address the needs of San Rafael’s aging population through collaboration, planning, and programs. Monitor trends and data so that services are responsive to needs.

Program EDI-6.1A: Age Friendly Plan. Prepare an Age-Friendly Strategic Plan for San Rafael that identifies specific and culturally responsive 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 EDI-6.2: Aging in Community

Improve opportunities for older adults to age in place and continue living independently in their San Rafael homes. This should include recognition of the importance of in-home support services and caregivers. 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. This includes support services and facilities for those suffering from dementia-related illnesses and those who have become homeless due to medical or mental health conditions,

Program EDI-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 EDI-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 EDI-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 EDI-6.3A: On-Demand Transportation Services. *Improve on-demand transportation options for older adults, including volunteer driver programs and programs pairing new student drivers with seniors.*

Program EDI-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 EDI-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, age-friendly technology, and social services.

Program EDI-6.4A: Access to Resources. *Improve access to community programs and resources for older adults, including increased on-line services and technology training and partnerships with Marin County In-Home Supportive Services.*

Policy EDI-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 EDI-6.5A: 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.*

See also Goal S-6 on emergency preparedness

Policy EDI-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 EDI-6.6A: Inclusion and Participation Initiatives. *Provide opportunities for social connections, including discounted or free community events, intergenerational programs (for example, pairings of students and older adults), mental health services, multicultural programs, and working with organizations such as Marin Villages to engage and empower older adults.*

