



San Rafael General Plan 2040

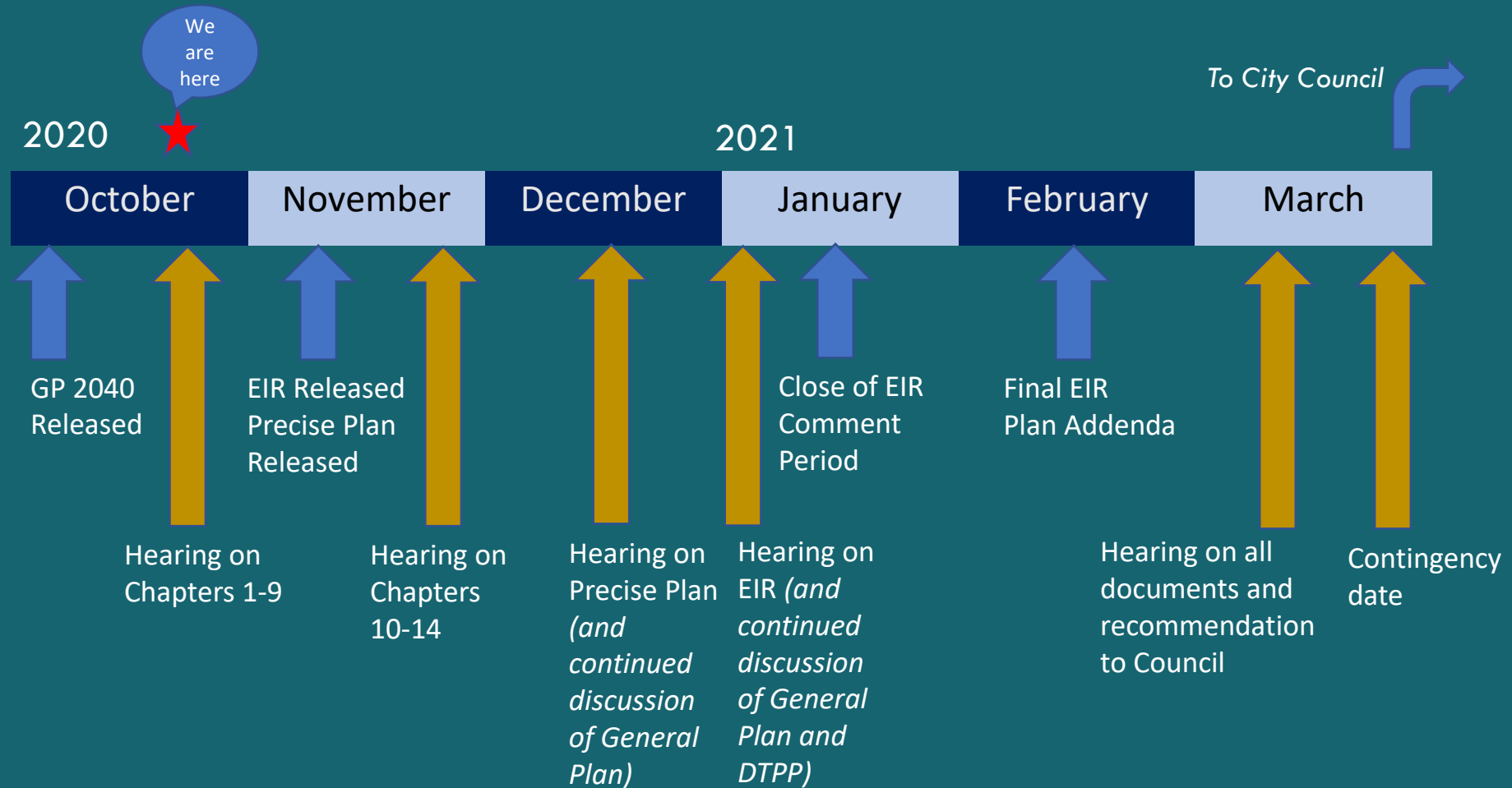
San Rafael Planning Commission Public Hearing: October 27, 2020



Context for General Plan Update

- Not starting from scratch
- Moving General Plan 2020 time horizon forward to 2040
- Integrating recent plans and addressing new State laws
- Reflecting current issues and trends
- Incorporating public input
 - 24-member Steering Committee served as “sounding board” for policy and program updates
 - Diverse perspectives and views on Plan topics

Planning Commission Hearings (tentative)



General Plan Organization

Context

1. Introduction
2. Framework and Guiding Principles

Our Built Environment

3. Land Use
4. Neighborhoods
5. Community Design and Preservation

Our Natural Environment

6. Conservation and Climate Change
7. Parks and Open Space
8. Safety and Resilience
9. Noise

Connecting the City

10. *Mobility*
11. *Community Services and Infrastructure*
12. *Arts and Culture*

Opportunity for All

13. *Economic Vitality*
14. *Equity, Diversity, Inclusion*
15. *Housing*

Introduction and Framework

1. Introduction

- Explains GP 2040 purpose
- How to use the Plan
- Relationship to other plans
- Plan Update process
- Organization of document

2. Framework and Guiding Principles

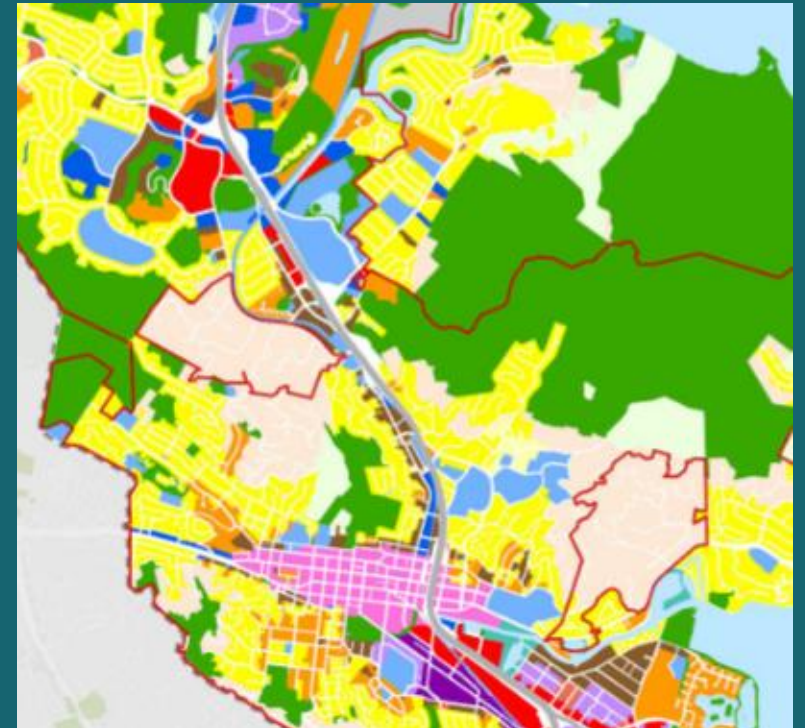


New

- Regional context and history
- Forces driving change
- Forecasts for 2040
- Guiding Principles

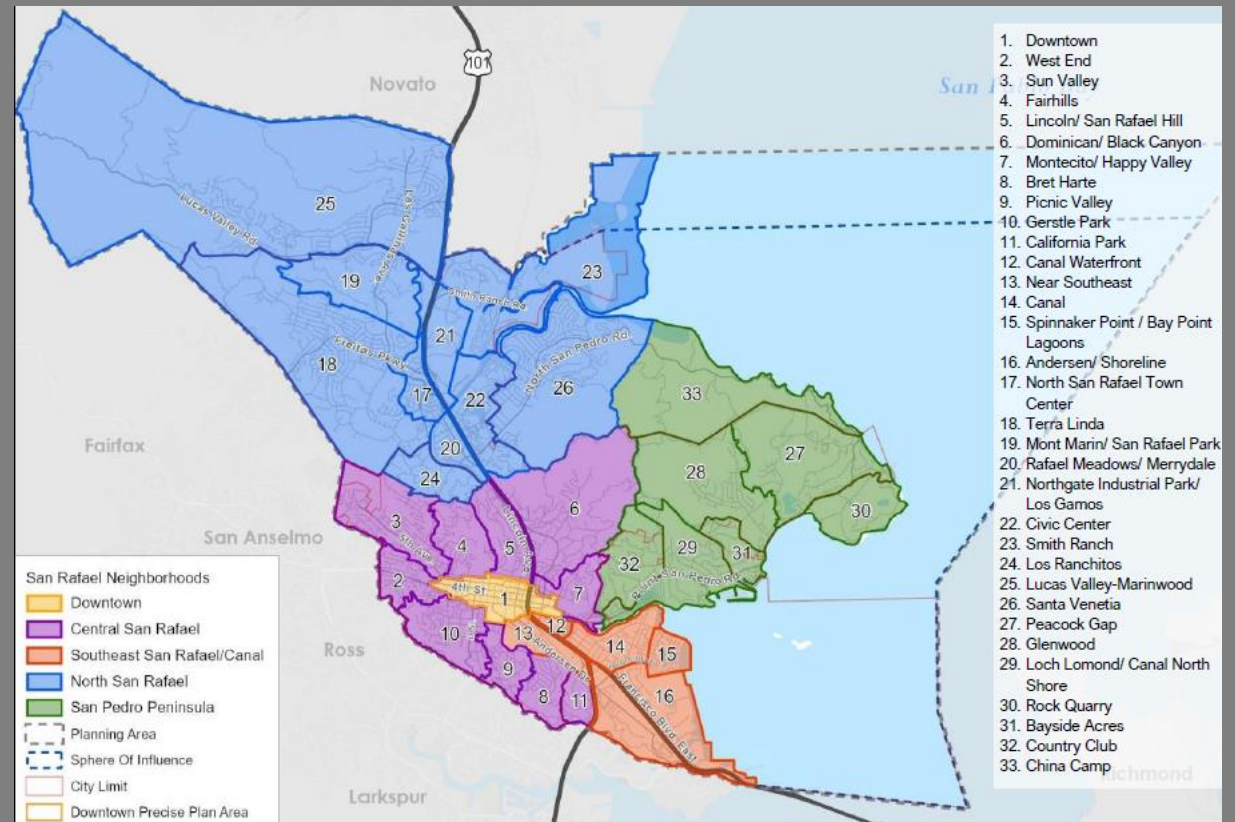
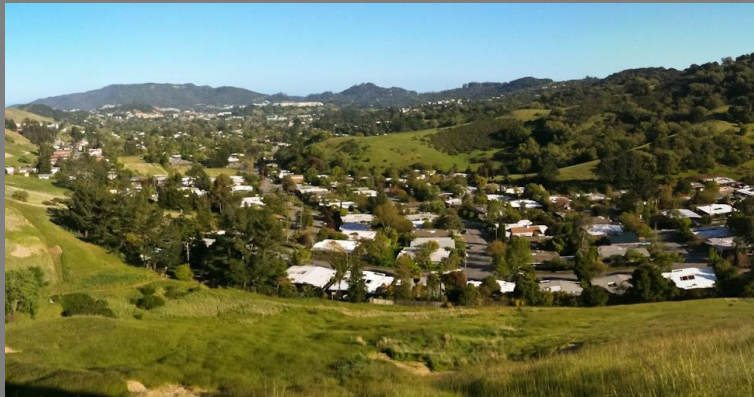
Land Use Element

- Profile of existing land uses
- Key Plan concepts
- Land Use Map and classification system
- Height Map and Floor Area Ratio Map
- Goals, Policies, and Programs
 - Well Managed Growth and Change
 - A Complete Community
 - Distinctive Neighborhoods



- Five Planning Areas:
33 Neighborhoods

Neighborhoods Element



Community Design and Preservation Element



- Introduction
- Existing Design Characteristics
- Maps of natural setting, topography, views, gateways, waterfront, place types
- Goals Reorganized
 - A beautiful city
 - A strong sense of place
 - Attractive streets and public spaces
 - Quality construction and design
 - Protected cultural heritage

Conservation and Climate Change Element



- Essential policies are carried forward and expanded
 - Wetlands
 - Creeks
 - Hillside protection
 - Habitat and invasive species
 - Special status species
 - Air and quality
- Policies added
 - Urban forestry
 - Mineral resource management
 - Light pollution/ dark skies
 - Low impact development/ green infrastructure
 - Renewable energy
 - 2030 Climate Action policy “platform”

Parks, Recreation and Open Space Element



- Park policies expanded
 - Parks Master Plan
 - Park classification system
 - Updated acreage standards
 - Joint use of school properties
 - Public-private partnerships
 - Equity and cultural competence issues
 - Expanded programming
- Open space focus is on management
 - Invasive species control
 - Wildfire prevention
 - Trails
 - Illegal encampments
 - Environmental education
 - Lesser focus on acquisition

**Essential policies are carried forward
and expanded**

New Sea Level Rise Adaption Focus

- Sea Level Adaptation Report
- New policies and programs

Wildfire Prevention and Response

- New policies and programs added

Other Issues

- Power shutoffs
- Public health emergencies
- Emergency preparedness
- Hazardous materials

Safety and Resilience Element



Noise Element



- Introduction
- How Noise is Measured
- Existing Noise Environment in San Rafael
- Noise Compatibility Matrix
- Noise Contour Diagrams
- Policies and programs to reduce potential noise conflicts

Policy / Program Development Process

CON-10a. Oak Savanna/Woodland Habitat Protection. Require that proposed developments with potential impacts to oak savanna/woodland habitat to either avoid, minimize, or compensate for the loss of oak savanna/woodland habitat. Avoidance would be the preferred measure where feasible. If it is deemed that an impact is unavoidable, minimization of direct and indirect impacts or compensation through habitat restoration, creation, or enhancement would be required.
 Responsibility: Community Development
 Timeframe: Ongoing
 Resources: Staff Time

See LU-2a (Development Review).

CON-11. Wildlife Corridors.

Preserve and protect areas that function as wildlife corridors, particularly those areas that provide natural connections permitting wildlife movement between designated sensitive habitats.

See LU-2a (Development Review).

CON-12. Preservation of Hillside.

Encourage preservation of hillsides, ridgelines and other open areas that serve as habitat and erosion protection as well as visual backdrops to urban areas.

CON-12a. Hillside Design Guidelines. Continue to implement the Hillside Design Guidelines.

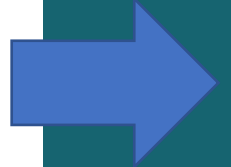
Responsibility: Community Development
 Timeframe: Ongoing
 Resources: Fees

See CD-5a (Views) and CD-6a (Hillside Design Guidelines).



CONSERVATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENTS POLICY MATRIX

Reference	Statement	Staff Comments	Comments from Committee Members
<i>Program CON-10a</i>	Oak Savanna/Woodland Habitat Protection. Require that proposed developments with potential impacts to oak savanna/woodland habitat to either avoid, minimize, or compensate for the loss of oak savanna/woodland habitat. Avoidance would be the preferred measure where feasible. If it is deemed that an impact is unavoidable, minimization of direct and indirect impacts or compensation through habitat restoration, creation, or enhancement would be required.	<i>Carry forward—EIR may recommend more aggressive language to protect oak savanna/ woodland and other sensitive habitats.</i>	
Policy CON-11	Wildlife Corridors Preserve and protect areas that function as wildlife corridors, particularly those areas that provide natural connections permitting wildlife movement between designated sensitive habitats.	<i>Carry forward.</i>	
Policy CON-12	Preservation of Hillside Encourage preservation of hillsides, ridgelines and other open areas that serve as habitat and erosion protection as well as visual backdrops to urban areas.	<i>Good - Carry forward. Add a second sentence "Hillsides should be managed to balance aesthetic and habitat objectives with the need to reduce fuel loads and wildfire risks." Cross-reference Community Design policies to protect ridgelines.</i>	
<i>Program CON-12a</i>	Hillside Design Guidelines. Continue to implement the Hillside Design Guidelines.	<i>Carry forward. Also, add a program to implement grading regulations.</i>	
Policy CON-13	Threatened and Endangered Species Preserve and protect threatened and endangered species of plants and animals formally listed consistent with the state and federal endangered species acts including protection of their habitat.	<i>Change "Preserve" to "Conserve"—carry forward. EIR will indicate if more specific habitat protection requirements need to be in the General Plan.</i>	
<i>Program CON-13a</i>	List of Species. Maintain a current list of threatened and endangered and special status species.	<i>...and maps indicating areas where these species are present or potentially present.</i>	

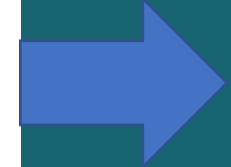


General Plan 2020 (2004)

January 2019 Policy Audit

Policy / Program Development Process

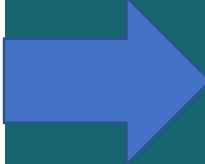
<p>Program CON-10a</p>	<p>Oak Savanna/Woodland Habitat Protection. Require that proposed developments with potential impacts to oak savanna/woodland habitat to either avoid, minimize, or compensate for the loss of oak savanna/woodland habitat. Avoidance would be the preferred measure where feasible. If it is deemed that an impact is unavoidable, minimization of direct and indirect impacts or compensation through habitat restoration, creation, or enhancement would be required.</p>	<p>Carry forward—EIR may recommend more aggressive language to protect oak savanna/ woodland and other sensitive habitats.</p>	<p>Move to #12b <i>Agree with staff</i></p> <p><i>Explain the technical definition of an "oak savannah". Is it anywhere that there is grass and oak trees? How are they endangered? Perhaps add some standard of "significant" potential impacts, as opposed to any impact at all.</i></p> <p><i>I think the language is fine and we do not need to make it more aggressive. I would leave it alone.</i></p>
<p>Policy CON-11</p>	<p>Wildlife Corridors Preserve and protect areas that function as wildlife corridors, particularly those areas that provide natural connections permitting wildlife movement between designated sensitive habitats.</p>	<p>Carry forward.</p>	<p>Yes <i>Agree</i> <i>What are we trying to <u>achieve</u></i> <i>OK</i> <i>Agree</i></p>
<p>Policy CON-12</p>	<p>Preservation of Hillside Encourage preservation of hillsides, ridgelines and other open areas that serve as habitat and erosion protection as well as visual backdrops to urban areas.</p>	<p>Good - Carry forward. Add a second sentence "Hillsides should be managed to balance aesthetic and habitat objectives with the need to reduce fuel loads and wildfire risks." Cross-reference Community Design policies to protect ridgelines.</p>	<p>Broaden this policy. Reword staff suggestion: "... be managed for aesthetic and habitat objectives and to reduce fuel loads and wildfire risks." <i>x-ref Safety policies</i> <i>At what point does fire suppression become more important than preservation? Hard to have both. Removal of grass and brush and trimming trees, etc, has an environmental impact.</i> <i>I agree with staff here. The need to reduce wildfire risks is more important right now than the preservation of certain grasses especially if they are non-native.</i></p>



February 2019 Committee Discussion of Audit/
Written Comments

Policy / Program Development Process

2020 Plan	2040 Plan	Committee Comments
<p>Policy CON-12: Preservation of Hillside Encourage preservation of hillsides, ridgelines and other open areas that serve as habitat and erosion protection as well as visual backdrops to urban areas.</p>	<p>Policy OSC-2.11: Hillside Preservation Encourage preservation of hillsides, ridgelines, and other open areas that serve as habitat and erosion protection as well as visual backdrops to urban areas. <u>Hillsides should be managed for aesthetic, and habitat and carbon sequestration objectives, and to reduce fuel loads, wildfire risks, and landslide hazards.</u></p>	<p><i>Move the last sentence into the program below.</i></p> <p><i>New sentence is good addition</i></p> <p><i>Looks OK</i></p> <p><i>Delete 2nd sentence. Reduction of wildfire risks starts with the home, not the vegetation. Hillside homes, not hillsides, need to be managed. Firesafe Marin tells how to harden your home. Removal of small, dead vegetation is removing refugia for wildlife. Removal of large fallen trees is counterproductive and unnecessary.</i></p> <p><i>We have suppressed fire for too long—but removing vegetation without understanding the science, dries out the land and is counterproductive. Harden the home. The house is the largest source of fuel on one's property. Properly irrigated vegetation does not burn.</i></p>
<p>Program CON-12a: Hillside Design Guidelines. Continue to implement the Hillside Design Guidelines.</p>	<p>Program OSC-2.11A: Hillside Design Guidelines. Continue to implement Hillside Design Guidelines. <u>Consult ecologically sound practices developed in association with Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority for management of wildlands.</u></p>	<p>Alternatively, this could be a separate program, "Hillside Management Guidelines."</p> <p><i>Given the current panic re: wildfire, San Rafael needs to halt all development in the WUI.</i></p> <p><i>Good</i></p>
<p>Policy CON-11: Wildlife Corridors Preserve and protect areas that function as wildlife corridors, particularly those areas that provide natural connections permitting wildlife movement between designated sensitive habitats.</p>	<p>Policy OSC-2.12: Wildlife Corridors Preserve and protect areas that function as wildlife corridors, particularly those areas that provide natural connections permitting wildlife movement between designated sensitive habitats.</p>	<p>Add a program tying this policy to development approval process, e.g., requiring that wildlife corridors be incorporated into new subdivisions or developments of an acre or more, as appropriate</p> <p><i>Delete "between designated sensitive habitats".</i></p> <p><i>End sentence at the word "corridors." We should be focusing on the importance of the corridor, not the habitat. Its more about where wildlife is trying to move, and not about whether that movement is in high-quality habitat.</i></p> <p>Are the corridors mapped?</p>



September 2019
Committee Small Group
Discussion of proposed
2040 policies



Policy / Program Development Process

Policy C-1.104: Hillside Preservation

Encourage preservation of hillsides, ridgelines, and other open areas that serve as habitat and erosion protection as well as visual backdrops to urban areas. ~~Hillsides should be managed for aesthetic and habitat objectives, and to reduce fuel loads, wildfire risks, and landslide hazards.~~

See the Environmental Hazards Element for policies addressing protection of steep slopes and the Community Design Element for policies on hillside and ridgeline protection.

General Plan 2040 Draft Conservation and Climate Change Policies with Tracked Changes * May 2020 Page C-4

Program C-1.104A: Hillside Management and Design Guidelines. Continue to implement Hillside Design Guidelines ~~as well as management practices that promote ecological health, hazard reduction, and climate change mitigation.~~

Policy C-1.112: Wildlife Corridors

Preserve and protect areas that function as wildlife corridors, particularly those areas that provide natural connections permitting wildlife movement ~~between designated sensitive habitats.~~

Program C-1.11A: Mapping of Wildlife Corridors. Support mapping of wildlife corridors in the Planning Area and use this data to determine where conservation easements may be appropriate in the event properties within these corridors are subdivided.

Policy C-1.123: Native or Sensitive Habitats

Protect habitats that are sensitive, rare, declining, unique, or represent a valuable biological resource. Potential impacts to such habitats should be minimized through ~~careful planning and~~ compliance with applicable laws and regulations ~~including biological resource surveys, reduction of noise and light impacts, restricted use of toxic pesticides, pollution and trash control, and similar measures.~~

Program C-1.123A: Non-Native Invasive Predators. Support efforts by non-profit conservation groups, state and federal agencies, the Marin Humane Society and other organizations to reduce conflicts between human settlement and native wildlife. This includes protecting the habitat of birds and small mammals from ~~non-native invasive predators and restricting the use of toxic pesticides, such as feral cats.~~

Program C-1.123B: Oak Savanna and Oak Woodland Habitat Protection. Require proposed developments with the potential to impact oak savanna/woodland habitat to either avoid, minimize, or compensate for the loss of ~~oak trees such habitat.~~ Avoidance is the preferred measure where feasible. ~~If the loss of oak trees an impact is deemed unavoidable, require that direct and indirect impacts be mitigated through habitat restoration, creation, or enhancement.~~

Policy C-1.10: Hillside Preservation

Encourage preservation of hillsides, ridgelines, and other open areas that serve as habitat and erosion protection as well as visual backdrops to urban areas.

See the Environmental Hazards Element for policies addressing protection of steep slopes and the Community Design Element for policies on hillside and ridgeline protection.

Program C-1.10A: Hillside Management and Design Guidelines. Continue to implement Hillside Design Guidelines as well as management practices that promote ecological health, hazard reduction, and climate change mitigation.

Policy C-1.11: Wildlife Corridors

Preserve and protect areas that function as wildlife corridors, particularly those areas that provide natural connections permitting wildlife movement.

Program C-1.11A: Mapping of Wildlife Corridors. Support mapping of wildlife corridors in the Planning Area and use this data to determine where conservation easements may be appropriate in the event properties within these corridors are subdivided.

Policy C-1.12: Native or Sensitive Habitats

Protect habitats that are sensitive, rare, declining, unique, or represent a valuable biological resource. Potential impacts to such habitats should be minimized through compliance with applicable laws and regulations, including biological resource surveys, reduction of noise and light impacts, restricted use of toxic pesticides, pollution and trash control, and similar measures.

Program C-1.12A: Non-Native Predators. Support efforts by non-profit conservation groups, state and federal agencies, the Marin Humane Society and other organizations to reduce conflicts between human settlement and native wildlife. This includes protecting the habitat of birds and small mammals from non-native predators and restricting the use of toxic pesticides.

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San Rafael GENERAL PLAN 2040 | Draft Policies May 2020

CONSERVATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE ELEMENT

Program C-1.12B: Oak Savanna and Oak Woodland Habitat Protection. Require proposed developments with the potential to impact oak savanna/woodland habitat to either avoid, minimize, or compensate for the loss of oak trees. Avoidance is the preferred measure where feasible. If the loss of oak trees is deemed unavoidable, require that direct and indirect impacts be mitigated through habitat restoration, creation, or enhancement.

November 2019

Policies edited to incorporate Committee feedback

March 2020

Policies formatted and assembled in master list

Policy / Program Development Process

Add text box on City's plastic bag and polystyrene foam bans and "ask first" campaign on plastic utensils

Policy C-1.10: Hillside Preservation
Encourage preservation of hillsides, ridgelines, and other open areas that serve as habitat and erosion protection as well as visual backdrops to urban areas.

See the [Safety Environmental Hazards Element](#) for policies addressing protection of steep slopes [and wildfire prevention and protection actions on hillsides](#). See [and](#) the [Community Design Element](#) for policies on hillside and ridgeline protection.

Program C-1.10A: Hillside Management and Design Guidelines. Continue to implement Hillside Design Guidelines as well as management practices that promote ecological health, hazard reduction, and climate change mitigation.

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CONSERVATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE ELEMENT

Policy C-1.11: Wildlife Corridors
Preserve and protect areas that function as wildlife corridors, particularly those areas that provide **natural** connections permitting wildlife movement **between larger natural areas**.

Program C-1.11A: Mapping of Wildlife Corridors. Support mapping of wildlife corridors in the Planning Area, ~~and use~~ **Use** this data to determine where conservation easements may be appropriate in the event properties within these corridors are subdivided, **or when other opportunities arise for securing such easements**.


Policy C-1.12: Native or Sensitive Habitats
Protect habitats that are sensitive, rare, declining, unique, or represent a valuable biological resource. Potential impacts to such habitats should be minimized through compliance with applicable laws and regulations, including biological resource surveys, reduction of noise and light impacts, restricted use of toxic pesticides, pollution and trash control, and similar measures.

Program C-1.12A: Non-Native Predators. Support efforts by non-profit conservation groups, state and federal agencies, the Marin Humane Society and other organizations to reduce conflicts between human settlement and native wildlife. This includes protecting the habitat of birds and small mammals from non-native predators and restricting the use of ~~toxic~~ pesticides.

Program C-1.12B: Oak Savanna and Oak Woodland Habitat Protection. Require proposed developments with the potential to impact oak savanna/woodland habitat to either avoid, minimize, or compensate for the loss of **such habitat/oak trees**. Avoidance is the preferred measure where feasible. ~~If the habitat loss of oak trees is deemed unavoidable, require that direct~~



CONSERVATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE ELEMENT



Hillsides

Elevation in the Planning Area ranges from sea level to 1,800 feet. Much of the Planning Area consists of steep hillsides. Hillsides have important scenic value and shape the City's identity. There are also landslide and erosion hazards associated with building on steep slopes. The City has adopted a hillside development overlay zoning district to identify hillside areas, and applies special standards and design guidelines in these areas.

Policy C-1.10: Hillside Preservation
Encourage preservation of hillsides, ridgelines, and other open areas that serve as habitat and erosion protection as well as visual backdrops to urban areas.

See the [Safety and Resilience Element](#) for policies addressing protection of steep slopes and wildfire prevention and protection actions on hillsides. See the [Community Design Element](#) for policies on hillside and ridgeline protection.

Program C-1.10A: Hillside Management and Design Guidelines. Continue to implement Hillside Design Guidelines as well as management practices that promote ecological health, hazard

Final Pre-draft edits: July 2020

September 2020: General Plan 2040

Neighborhoods Element Update Process



October 3, 2019

Dear San Rafael Neighborhood Leaders:

The City of San Rafael is in the process of updating its General Plan, the policy document that guides the city's future growth and development. We are writing to request your assistance in updating the "Neighborhoods Element" of the Plan. This is the chapter of the Plan that includes policies for individual San Rafael neighborhoods. The General Plan Update provides an opportunity to identify neighborhood priorities and recognize the issues that are unique to specific parts of the city. This letter includes background information on the project, as well as links to a website where you can provide feedback.

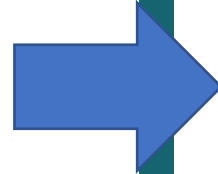
The Draft General Plan is projected to be completed in Spring 2020. Your feedback is requested by December 31, 2019.

Background

Every city and county in California is required to prepare a general plan for its future development. The plan addresses a number of required topics, such as land use, transportation, housing, safety, conservation, and open space. The existing San Rafael General Plan was adopted in 2004 and guided development through 2020. The new General Plan will have a horizon year of 2040. The updated Plan will respond to emerging issues and challenges, new state laws, updated forecasts, and community input. A 24-member Steering Committee appointed by the City Council has been meeting monthly for the last 20 months to guide the Update process.



The screenshot shows the San Rafael website with a dark blue header. The main content area is titled "We're updating the Neighborhoods Element!" and provides instructions for residents to provide feedback. A list of neighborhoods is displayed, with "Dominican / Black Canyon" highlighted in blue. The sidebar on the left contains links for "Meetings & Events", "Environmental Review", "General Plan Documents", "Share Your Ideas", "How Should San Rafael Grow?", and "Call for Amendments".



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL "monkey.com/FFDLIRK7". The survey title is "Dominican / Black Canyon". The first question is "1. Do you live in the Dominican/ Black Canyon neighborhood?" with radio buttons for "Yes" and "No", and a text input field for "Other (please indicate your neighborhood, if not local)". The second question is "2. Are you submitting this survey on behalf of a neighborhood association or organized group?" with radio buttons for "Yes" and "No", and a text input field for "Please indicate the name of the group, or the organization you represent". The third question is "3. What do you like most about the Dominican/ Black Canyon neighborhood?" with a text input field. The fourth question is "4. What are your biggest concerns about the Dominican/ Black Canyon neighborhood?" with a text input field.



Tonight's Hearing

- Clarifying Questions/ Accept Report
- Accept Public Comments on Chapters 1-9
- Commission Discussion of Public Comments and Chapters 1-9
- Continue hearing to November 12 for discussion of Chapters 10-14 and outstanding issues on Chapters 1-9
- Staff will return on Dec 15 with responses to issues raised this evening
- Opportunities for public comment will continue through early 2021

Comments Received to Date (12 PM 10/27)

- 10 requests to add language preserving redwood trees
- Letter from Sierra Club endorsing MCL comments
- Letter from Victoria DeWitt re: Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8
- Letter from Marin Audubon regarding Canalways and wetlands policies
- Letter from San Rafael Heritage regarding preservation policies
- Letter from S. Fischer regarding Conservation/ Climate Change policies
- Letter from Responsible Growth in Marin on Land Use, Neighborhoods, and Conservation/Climate Change Elements
- Letter from Terra Linda Homeowners Association on Land Use, Neighborhoods, and Conservation/Climate Change Elements



Thank You!
All documents are on-line at
www.sanrafael2040.org

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