

ATTACHMENT 2:

General Plan 2040 Planning Commission Comments and Responses (as of 12/10/20)

Comment	Response
GLOBAL COMMENTS	
Would like to see more direction on the actionable items that need to occur in relation to the policies	This is being addressed through the Implementation Appendices now being developed (see example in Attachment 4).
There are thematic items in the plan that are connected. How do we identify and build on these connections?	This will be addressed in a number of ways: (1) When we discuss the “forces driving change” in Chapter 2, we will identify the Elements(s) in which each topic is discussed; (2) we will add a chart to Chapter 1 indicating the other Plans that flow from the General Plan; (3) we will prepare a General Plan Index in the future that helps the reader navigate the document and see where various topics are addressed; (4) see later comment on “Call for Action”.
How does the Plan influence decisions on 101/ 580, since they are under state control?	While State agencies are not governed by the Plan directly, they consult the Plan to evaluate the consistency of their actions. The General Plan also provides a platform for the City to engage with these agencies.
How did you select which directives are framed as mandatory (shall) and advisory (should)?	There was a strategic process, including the Steering Committee, to determine the appropriate verb (or auxiliary verb) for each policy. The choice is based on factors such as state law, code requirements, health and safety, CEQA compliance, economic factors, etc. The Plan sets forth competing objectives which require flexibility in many policies and balancing of priorities. See General Plan 2040 Page 1-5 for further explanation.
There aren’t many metrics to measure success in the General Plan. Tangible metrics would help define our progress and clarify what we’re aiming for.	We will be adding metrics for each Element to the Implementation Appendix. There are measurable objectives throughout the Plan but they are not explicitly highlighted. Overall, the General Plan is intended as a broad policy framework rather than a Strategic Plan or “dashboard” – but Staff acknowledges the value of having key benchmarks to monitor progress.
(in response to public comment): I support the statement that we should acknowledge that we are occupying Miwok land and should be good stewards.	Comment noted.
Some of the public comment calls for very prescriptive changes that seem out of place in a General Plan (on home renovations, etc). How do you respond to those comments?	It depends on the comment and whether it is consistent with other General Plan policies and Steering Committee direction. In some cases, the feedback may be used to help inform future plans that are more detailed, such as the PDA plans.

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(From 11/12): At the first meeting, the Commission discussed how we might develop objective standards related to economic vitality. What kind of format works best for providing comments and ideas? We still need more discussion about what kind of job growth we envision, what our targets are, what will replace retail, and so on.	Staff welcomes Commission input on possible standards and ideas, either submitted in writing or provided through discussion at hearings. Per responses above, we are developing potential Plan metrics and implementation matrices, as well as a Call for Action regarding the City's economic future. Ultimately, the "deep dive" needed to produce economic standards would come from an Economic Development Strategy or strategic plan. These metrics could be incorporated in the General Plan Appendix as they are developed.
I understand the desire for measurable goals, but the GP is intended to be the 30,000 ft view. The goals are ultimately set by the City Council.	Comment noted. We will provide more information on the Annual General Plan and Housing Element Progress reports in Chapter 1, as well as the City Council goal-setting process.
Chapter 1: Introduction	
It would be helpful to identify the other plans that flow from the General Plan, where more specific direction on individual topics is provided.	Staff will develop a diagram showing the various plans in the City and how they relate to the General Plan.
Chapter 2: Framework	
The "Forces Driving Change" discussion (p 2-5 through 2-15) is so significant that it bears mentioning where these issues are addressed later in the document.	Under each of the "forces" described, we will add a reference to where the topic is addressed in the General Plan. There are also background reports on each topic that will be referenced.
This chapter should identify what new and emerging industries will replace the industries that are declining. The Plan should call for an intersectional assembly to identify objective and key results related to the issues addressed throughout this chapter. A call to action should be added regarding this point.	Staff will add a "Call to Action" text box that acknowledges the ramifications of economic changes and other changes for the future, and calls for follow-up steps (such as community summits on the future of the economy, and an economic development strategy)
Address the need for electric vehicle infrastructure throughout the City, and possible impacts of EVs on the distribution system.	This will be added to the Mobility Element, where electric vehicles are discussed.
Does the Plan address high-speed internet and fiber?	Yes, this is in the Community Services and Infrastructure Element.
The pandemic has demonstrated that many of us can work at home and prefer to work at home. How can the General Plan make this more viable? (Another commissioner also noted that we are entering an era of hybrid living and office space, creating new options for places like Northgate Mall)	This is acknowledged in a few places in the Plan, but primarily as a way to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We will look for ways to add this point in the Land Use Element.
The discussion of demographics should acknowledge historically discriminatory lending practices, covenants, etc. as another factor that kept Marin less diverse in the past. explains pas kept the city white for so long.	This will be added in Chapter 2. It is also addressed in the Equity Diversity and Inclusion Element.
Chapter 3: Land Use Element	

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<p>Much of the Canal and North San Rafael areas will be impacted by Sea Level Rise. Is the City’s intent to rezone other areas to make up for the density and development that we can’t accommodate in those areas?</p>	<p>The General Plan focuses new development outside of the Sea Level Rise overlay area, especially in Downtown and around Northgate. However, it does not propose wholesale relocation of existing communities (or “retreat”). The Plan looks at long-term adaptation and how we can harden vulnerable areas and make them more resilient and flood resistant.</p>
<p>Concur with the approach described by staff, which is to focus on adaptation rather than moving businesses and people out sea level rise areas. There is no cookie cutter solution—different areas need solutions tailored to their conditions. Look to other countries for examples.</p>	<p>Comment noted.</p>
<p>Good to see Form Based Codes (FBCs) referenced in this Plan. Perhaps this can be applied in other areas and discussed elsewhere in the Plan.</p>	<p>Based on Steering Committee discussion, FBCs are only recommended in the Downtown area at this time. The City may consider expanded use of FBCs in the future based on how well it works Downtown.</p>
<p>Objective design standards (e.g., SB 35) are a good example of how policies can be translated into measurable standards. Can we incorporate language in this Element that leads us to similar metrics for other aspects of development—such as impacts on infrastructure, achieving our business goals, etc.?</p>	<p>See earlier response about adding metrics to the Appendix. In general, this is achieved through specific plans (such as the Downtown Precise Plan), system plans (such as the Climate Action Plan), and regulatory documents (zoning, ordinances, etc.)</p>
<p>Program LU-2.10A: Short term rentals. The wording is going in the right direction (Monitor the effectiveness of STR regulations, etc.) but doesn’t really tell us what we’re looking for.</p>	<p>We will tie the program back to the issues addressed in Policy LU-10, including parking, rental housing supply, and neighborhood compatibility.</p>
<p>Consider fleshing out Policy LU-2.12 (encourage innovative housing types) a bit more to address changes to the way we are living and working.</p>	<p>A sentence will be added to the policy to specifically point out how the pandemic has changed the paradigm for living and working. There will be additional community conversations on this topic in 2021-2022 as part of the Housing Element update.</p>
<p>Consider creating an Economic Development body or other review body to strategically understand how the city is changing and how structural changes in our economy, lifestyles, etc. will affect land use and development.</p>	<p>This will be addressed in the Call to Action in Chapter 2 and could be achieved through an Economic Development Strategic Plan or future partnership with the Marin Economic Forum, Chamber of Commerce, etc. – potentially an innovation forum or similar platform to discuss these issues.</p>
<p>Chapter 4: Neighborhoods Element</p>	
<p>(in response to public comment): I concur with the public comment that the General Plan should not pre-determine the outcome of the PDA process. We should not be calling for Mall expansion.</p>	<p>Comment noted. See Attachment 2.</p>
<p>(In response to public comment): While I understand the public’s concerns about the Northgate Mall language, the concept of revenue generation and new housing on the site are not mutually exclusive. Both of these objectives can be accomplished.</p>	<p>Comment noted. See Attachment 2.</p>

Comment	Response
Is the Spanish language survey referenced in the Neighborhoods Element? Can we highlight the need to improve the Canal area?	The survey is discussed in detail in the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Element. A cross-reference will be added to the Neighborhoods Element "Canal" discussion on Page 4-41 to 4-46.
In the Downtown section of the Neighborhoods Element, can we reference the success of recent street closures for outdoor dining and encourage sustaining this in the future?	Yes. This will be acknowledged.
Chapter 5: Community Design and Preservation Element	
Only one tribal resource is noted on the Historic Resources Map. Are there more? Can we consult with tribal representatives as part of this process?	Disclosure of the location of these resources is limited to protect them from vandalism (we will edit text to explain this). Consultation with tribal representatives has taken place during the General Plan.
Chapter 6: Conservation and Climate Change Element	
Take another look at the suggested language for trees, per the letters received. Some of the language is pushing toward a stronger tree protection ordinance (not just tree replacement), which is appropriate.	Comment noted. See responses to public comment in Attachment 2.
(in response to public comment) I agree with public that we should also limit removal of redwoods over 12"	Comment noted. See response to public comment in Attachment 2.
Reference Countywide greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction goals as well as those in Project Drawdown	We will cite the County of Marin's goals in this chapter as well.
(in response to public comment) We should be careful about being overly prescriptive in our wetland policies. Given the focus of this Plan on sea level rise adaptation, we should not box ourselves in with policies and standards that prevent innovative solutions and approaches.	Comment noted. This will likely be addressed at length during sea level rise adaptation planning. Future General Plan Amendments are possible.
Does the Plan address recent State mandates regarding electric vehicle targets for 2035? How are the infrastructure requirements addressed?	This is covered in the Mobility Element. We will update the text to note recent state targets for 2035. We will also acknowledge the potential impacts of expanded electric vehicle use on the need for electric power and infrastructure.
Is it realistic to include programs for wildlife and ecosystem master plans given all the other priorities?	These are envisioned as longer-term programs and would be completed as funding allows or as grants become available. Including them in the General Plan can help improve the City's eligibility for future grants and other funding sources.
If the Plan EIR identifies additional policies that need to be added as mitigation measures, what's the process for that?	Such policies would be added through a Plan Addendum before the Plan is forwarded to the City Council by the Planning Commission.

Comment	Response
Chapter 7: Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element	
Is there any way to measure how well we are doing in serving the entire community with park and recreation services? What equity metrics might be included?	The Plan acknowledges the need for more park investment in higher density, lower income areas and calls for a shift in capital improvement and budget priorities to acknowledge this. A Parks Master Plan is needed to quantify neighborhood needs and establish equity metrics for funding.
How do we reconcile the conflicts between hikers and mountain bikers in this Plan?	This would be addressed in a Trails Master Plan or Parks and Open Space Master Plan.
I strongly support the policy calling for more joint use of school grounds for recreation.	Comment noted. This is a major recommendation of the Plan and will be the most effective way to meet recreational needs in many neighborhoods.
Chapter 8: Safety and Resilience Element	
Consider a program to add emergency egress roads in Wildland Urban Interface areas, e.g., some of the West End neighborhood streets do not have sufficient emergency vehicle access.	This is addressed to some extent by Policy S-6.7 but we will add a program to Policy S-4.3 that specifically makes this point. This is also addressed by the City's Wildfire Prevention and Protection Plan. Regarding the West End, Policy NH-2.4 addresses this issue.
The City needs a funding plan to cover expected sea level rise adaptation costs.	Funding will be one of the major topics addressed by the proposed Adaptation Plan.
The Plan's emphasis on community engagement in emergency evacuation and safety plans is important.	Comment noted.
How do these policies relate to enforcement, particularly for fire prevention standards? It is disheartening to develop policies when the standards that implement them are not being enforced.	Comment noted. Enforcement is an operational issue that is not covered by the General Plan, but it is addressed through the annual budgeting process and Fire Department practices and procedures.
Chapter 9: Noise Element	
There's a lot of vehicle-related noise in the West End associated with people gunning their vehicles on Fourth Street.	Comment noted. The City's noise standards are codified in its Noise Ordinance. Compliance with these standards is an enforcement issue.
Chapter 10: Mobility Element	
Program M-3.6A sets a goal that 25% of all vehicles should be zero emissions by 2030. How was that number derived, why was this selected?	This target was adopted as part of the Climate Change Action Plan Update in 2019, based on a public process similar to the General Plan Update. The target was calculated to complement and reinforce the State's target of 5 million zero emission vehicles on the road by 2030.
Program M-3.6A- I support the 25% EV by 2030 goal. Some cities are designating zero emission zones and aiming for zero emission delivery vehicles and taxis.	This would be addressed through the ZEV Plan, as recommended by the Climate Change Action Plan.
Policy M-2.10: Sea Level Rise. Should note that we are working with Caltrans to reduce flooding on 101	Will add Program M-2-10A to work with Caltrans and TAM to address this issue on 101 and 580
Policy M-3.4- Reduce Commute Length. City should zone for restaurants and cafes in neighborhoods, because more people are working from home.	We will add a cross-reference to Land Use Element policies that encourage these uses in neighborhood centers.

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Program M-4.7B- 1 st /last mile-this is a very important program. Each freeway off ramp should be a transit hub. Make sure transit systems are coordinated so people don't have to wait as much.	Will add a cross-reference from Policy M-4.7 to Policy M-5.4 about transit connections at freeway interchanges.
Policy M-5.6 Truck Impacts. Acknowledge that trucks generate diesel particulates that present a conflict with schools, homes, and other sensitive uses.	Policy will be edited to reference diesel particulates
Program M-6.1C CBTP update. Need to redevelop the Canal area in a way that doesn't displace—but rather benefits—the existing population. Think about water taxis in the CBTP update—may benefit more people.	Will add water transportation to this program.
Goal M-7 Parking. Consider EV and e-bike charging stations in this section. Not just for people working there but also shoppers and tourists. And EV infrastructure for homes	M-7.8A addresses the need for additional electric vehicle charging stations. Will expand to address e-bikes and also improved electric vehicle infrastructure in general.
Policy M-7.7: I agree with earlier speakers to make sure that neighborhoods are not negatively affected by overflow parking	See responses to public comments in Attachment 2.
Consider turning 4 th Street into a walking only street	This is addressed in detail in the Downtown Precise Plan
Chapter 11: Community Services and Infrastructure Element	
Acknowledge the importance of private schools and the potential for partnerships, just as we do with public schools.	Will add private schools to Policy CSI-1.1 and Program CSI-1.1B. Policy CSI-6 acknowledges the role of private schools as community partners and resources.
Parkside Childcare Center in Albert Park is a very high demand center—there is a lot of unmet demand. The need for this kind of care is much greater than the supply. Look for sites where we can expand these services for residents.	Will include a cross-reference in this section to Policy EDI-5.1 and Policy PROS-2.4 which address the need for expanded child care.
With respect to libraries, there should be a priority on community spaces that can be rented by various groups (scouts, etc.). There is insufficient space and demand is very high—this is important to facilitate connections amongst our residents.	Will add new Program CSI-3.2C to include additional community space in future libraries and library improvements.
Public Safety/ Fire and EMS. Consider adding a pilot program to provide alternatives to full ambulance response for frequent 9-1-1 users (so that ambulances are used for those most in need). Also consider more on acute mental health needs.	Will consult with Fire Department regarding the need/ feasibility of adding a program like this. It may be better communicated through a document other than the General Plan. Will add cross-reference to Policy EDI-4.6 and acknowledge mental health needs there.
Public Safety. We should ensure that all roads are accessible by Fire and EMS vehicles. Reference CA Code Section 1710.	See responses to public letters (Hillside Neighbors) in Attachment 2. Staff is conferring with the Fire Department to determine if additional language relating to Section 1710 is warranted.
Policy CSI-4.4 Sustainable design. Reference low carbon concrete as an example.	Program C-4.2B references low carbon concrete.
Policy CSI-4.9 and CSI-4.17: mention potential for co-generation and recapture of energy/ bio gas for energy.	Will add reference to waste-to-energy programs to CSI-4.9A and will broaden Program CSI-4.17F to cover waste-to-energy (not just food-to-energy)

Comment	Response
County of Marin is looking at new fire standards for roads. Emergency access should remain on the front burner, as this is a big issue for the community.	Comment noted.
Chapter 12: Arts and Culture Element	
The previous Plan Update (20 years ago) also called for an Arts Commission. The City considered expanding the purview of the Parks and Rec Commission but didn't. We could consider this again.	Given recent budget reductions, staff does not recommend creating new Commissions or expanding existing Commissions at this time. An Arts Master Plan is recommended to identify possible reviewing bodies.
Program AC-1.6C – central performance spaces. Add the Canal area (as well as Downtown and Northgate, which are already mentioned). Also consider these spaces in parks and schoolyards, and possibly add an action to bring electric power to these spaces.	We will edit Program AC-1.6C to address these issues.
I concur with public speakers that an Arts Master Plan and/or decision-making entity is needed to support implementation.	Comment noted
Chapter 13: Economic Vitality Element	
The sector-based breakdown in this element is helpful. There seems to be a disconnect in that much of the focus is on the importance of retail at the same time we say retail is dying. We should shift the focus to how we are going to replace retail. Retail is not our future. It also produces low-wage jobs that aren't consistent with our equity focus and that don't provide the wages need to live in San Rafael. We should think about what businesses can generate revenue and provide opportunities for career ladders and income growth. This can help provide more clarity on decisions to save industrial land, etc. Is there a companion document that will do this?	These are excellent points and they should be addressed in an Economic Development Strategy or citywide Strategic Plan. See earlier comment on the "Call to Action" to have these conversations in the immediate future. It is possible that General Plan Amendments may be developed in the future based on the findings and recommendations.
Policy EV-3.4 on water-dependent businesses. Connect this idea to redevelopment of the Canal to create public amenities like a river walk, new restaurants and businesses, etc. and also link to adaptation planning and anti-displacement.	Policy will be expanded to make this connection, and also to include cross-references to policies about adaptation planning elsewhere in document.
Pandemic conditions make it hard to think about our economic future. Can we adjust these policies as more data about our economy becomes available? This section needs periodic check-ins.	See comment above about Economic Development Strategy. Also, the General Plan can be amended after its adoption and is not set in stone for the next 20 years. Future amendments are likely.
Chapter 14: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion	
Was there consideration given to providing a stipend for elected positions? That would encourage greater participation among lower income households.	This is a policy matter for Council consideration and would not be addressed by the General Plan. Program EDI-1.3.B acknowledges that stipends can help improve community engagement.
Do we ensure that disaster preparedness info is provided in Spanish?	Program S-6.2D calls for emergency preparedness outreach to be in multiple languages. Policy EDI-2.10 also recommends multi-lingual resiliency planning.

Comment	Response
In light of the Black Lives Matter mural incident in Terra Linda, is there consideration for providing alternative approaches for sanctioned expression in the City? It would be helpful to establish a different approach.	Recommend adding a new program to Policy EDI-1.3; creating sanctioned spaces of platforms for public expression on issues of social equity and racial justice.
Is it possible to add a program to raise awareness about racism in the community and do anti-racism education?	Add new program under EDI-1.2 to encourage and support an ongoing dialogue around race, equity, and social justice issues.
This section of the Plan is very helpful as an expression of the things we value and aspire to as a community.	Comment noted.
How will the City balance its economic and arts goals with the potential for displacement? We need to make sure we are not pricing residents out of the city.	This is the major focus of the Housing Element, to be updated in 2021-22. The Downtown Precise Plan includes an Anti-Displacement Strategy.
It may be unrealistic to support revitalization of the Canal without some displacement.	One way to mitigate displacement is to convert existing market-rate units to affordable, income-restricted units. This will be addressed in the Housing Element. Additional information will be provided to the Planning Commission on this topic related to the Canal's designation as an Opportunity Zone.
There are some terminology issues in this Chapter that need to be nuanced. Be careful about lumping everyone together in groups (e.g., Latino)—when possible identify individual communities such as Guatemalans, Salvadorans, etc. to enhance inclusion.	We will provide additional socio-economic data on page 14-4 that acknowledge the demographic diversity of the Canal, and the City in general
When we address "inclusion", we should also acknowledge citizenship status.	Comment noted. This will be added as appropriate.
Inclusion discussion should also address the LGBTQI community	We will expand the language to address the LGBTQI community.