

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Housing Element

The purpose of the San Rafael 2023-2031 Housing Element is to meet the housing needs of all San Rafael's residents, particularly those with lower-incomes or special housing needs. The Element affirms the City's commitment to increasing housing choices and production, ending homelessness, ensuring the long-term habitability of the existing housing stock, and promoting fair housing and fair housing choice in San Rafael.

State law requires that all cities and counties in California have a compliant Housing Element as part of their General Plan. The Element must analyze housing needs, evaluate factors that could potentially constrain housing production, and identify sites for new residential development. Each city and county must submit their Housing Element to the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) for review and certification to ensure that it meets the minimum requirements under State Housing Element law. The prior Housing Element Update covered the 2015-2023 period, while this Housing Element covers the 2023-2031 period.

The Housing Element reinforces the guiding principles of the 2040 San Rafael General Plan. These principles envision a thriving city in which fewer residents are burdened by high housing costs and challenges such as overcrowding and displacement. This Element lays out the goals, policies, and programs to become a more equitable and inclusive city, and to remove barriers that have created unequal access to housing among certain racial and ethnic groups in the past and present. The other elements of the General Plan support and advance these goals while addressing issues such as climate change, environmental quality, transportation, and economic vitality.

In addition to laying out the City's housing priorities and programs for the next eight years, the Housing Element serves other important purposes. These include:

- A critical evaluation of existing housing programs, with recommendations for improvements and changes to improve effectiveness
- A comprehensive assessment of housing needs and housing conditions
- An inventory of housing resources, including potential sites where new housing can be constructed
- An analysis of housing constraints, such as zoning regulations, permitting processes, fees, and real estate market conditions

The Housing Element is also subject to a State mandate to "affirmatively further fair housing" (AFFH). This mandate affects the data and analysis in the Element, the selection of housing sites, the community process used to create the Element, and its policies and programs. Data and mapping requirements for AFFH are addressed in an Appendix to this Housing Element, but the principle of promoting fair housing is an overarching theme throughout the document.

1.2 Location and Context

San Rafael is located in the east central part of Marin County, 18 miles north of Downtown San Francisco and 11 miles from the Golden Gate Bridge. The city is 38 miles south of Santa Rosa, 36 miles southwest of Napa, and 22 miles northwest of Oakland. The Pacific Ocean is approximately 10 miles to the southwest. The city's location is shown in Figure 1-1.

The region surrounding San Rafael—the nine county San Francisco Bay Area—is the fourth largest metropolitan area in the United States. In 2022, its total population was 7.8 million people. San Rafael is part of what is commonly referred to as the “North Bay” sub-region, including the counties of Marin, Sonoma, Napa, and Solano. There are roughly 1.3 million people and 506,000 jobs in the sub-region, with Marin County accounting for about 20 percent of its population and 23 percent of its jobs.

San Rafael has been the largest city in Marin County since its incorporation and the County seat since 1851. In 2020, San Rafael had approximately 60,000 residents and 42,000 jobs. Most of the County's population resides within 10 miles of the city, contributing to its role as the center of Marin's economy. Marin County is renowned as a place of great physical beauty, mild weather, and a high standard of living. The County ranks among the top ten in the United States in median household income.

San Rafael is the most racially, ethnically, and economically diverse city in Marin County. However, its income distribution has become less balanced over time, with growing numbers of residents in poverty and growing numbers of high-income households. In 2018, roughly 14 percent of the city's residents lived below the federal poverty line, up from 10 percent in 2000. Conversely, the percentage of families with household incomes over \$200,000 increased from 15.7 percent in 2010 to 27.7 percent in 2018. The data suggests not only a declining “middle class” but a growing number of residents facing social and economic challenges.

While local developers like Joseph Eichler pioneered fair housing practices in San Rafael during the 1950s and 60s, there were also neighborhoods subject to racial covenants. Black, Asian, and Latino households were excluded from many Marin County neighborhoods until the 1960s, and discriminatory lending practices were common. Institutional racism and the legacy of segregation remain issues today. There continue to be significant disparities between White and Non-White households in the city.

San Rafael's lower income residents are disproportionately Latino and young, with lower levels of educational attainment, higher rates of household overcrowding, and greater dependence on public transportation. Approximately 87 percent of San Rafael's Latino households are renters, compared to 40 percent among Non-Latino White households. Average household size for Latino families was 4.0, compared to 2.2 for White Non-Latino households. Nearly 50 percent of the housing units occupied by Latinos in San Rafael's meet the Census definition of overcrowding. The COVID-19 pandemic had a particularly devastating impact on the Latino community, highlighting the need for additional housing and economic resources, both at the neighborhood and citywide levels. The City also faces the continued challenge of homelessness, with a substantial population of unhoused residents and residents in need of supportive services.

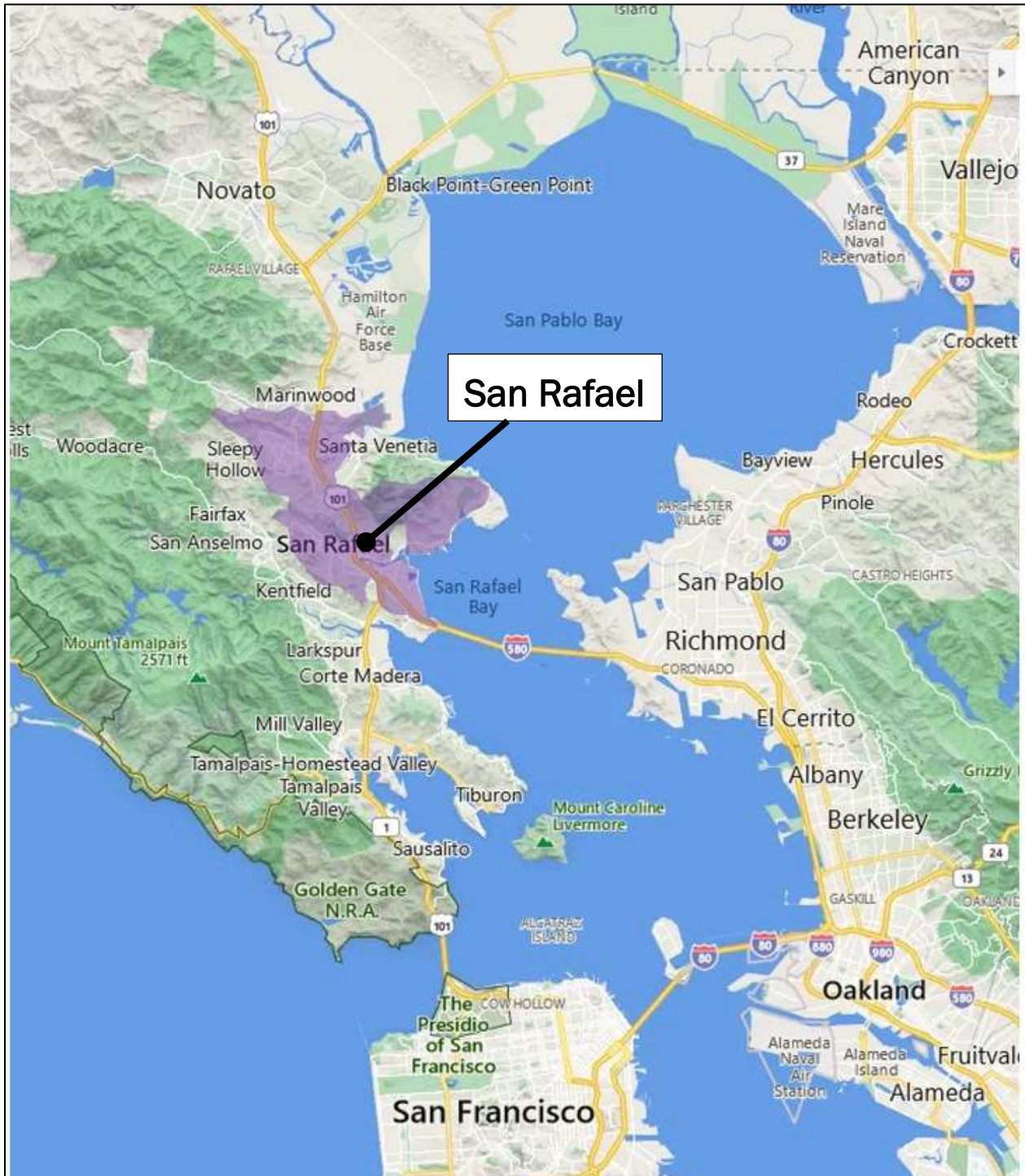


Figure 1.1: Regional Location

These factors have changed the way the City of San Rafael approaches the delivery of housing-related services, with increased focus on bilingual outreach, tenant protection, partnerships with non-profits and supportive service providers, and the coordination of housing programs with capital improvements and the delivery of other services. The City is implementing an aligned, coordinated strategy to achieve broader priorities related to equity, inclusion, and overall community resilience. While San Rafael has been a leader in planning for affordable housing in Marin County for the last 40 years, it is accelerating its efforts to engage the entire community in meaningful ways.

1.3 Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA)

The Housing Element process starts with the State determining the total need for housing in each region of California over an eight-year period. These estimates are broken down by income categories, with households categorized as very low-income, low-income, moderate-income, or above moderate income. The income limits defining these categories are based on household size and the Areawide Median Income (AMI) in each County or region. Income limits are updated annually by the State.

Regional councils of government across California are responsible for allocating their region's housing needs to individual cities and counties. This process is known as the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA). In the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area, the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) is responsible the RHNA and is tasked with determining each county and city's "fair share" of the regional total. This determination is made using a formula that considers population size, employment, proximity to transit, and access to resources such as schools, health care, parks, and services. In the most recent allocation, communities considered to be "high resource" areas received larger shares of lower income units as a strategy for improving housing equity across the region.

The total 2023-2031 RHNA for all counties and municipalities in the Bay Area is 441,176 units. This represents a 234 percent increase from the allocation for 2015-2023. Changes in state law and methodology, coupled with years of insufficient housing production, led to significantly higher assignments in this RHNA cycle.

Marin County and its 11 cities and towns received just 3.3 percent of the regional housing assignment, or 14,405 units. San Rafael received the largest allocation in the County, with 3,220 units. The City's allocation is more than three times what it was in 2015-2023. However, it represents just 0.72% (less than one percent) of the regional total and is proportional to San Rafael's share of the region's population. San Rafael's RHNA includes 857 units for very low-income households, 492 units for low-income households, 521 units for moderate-income households, and 1,350 units for above moderate-income households. This is shown in Table 1-1 below.

Table 1.1: San Rafael's Regional Housing Needs Allocation 2023-2031

Income Category		RHNA
Very Low (0-50% of AMI*)		857
	<i>Extremely Low (>30% AMI)</i>	<i>(429)</i>
	<i>Very Low (30-50% AMI)</i>	<i>(428)</i>
Low (51-80% of AMI)		492
Moderate (81-120% of AMI)		521
Above Moderate (over 120%of AMI)		1,350
TOTAL UNITS		3,220

Source: Association of Bay Area Governments, 2021

1.4 Statutory Requirements

1.4.1 Requirements for the Housing Element

Section 65583(a) of the California Government Code requires that every housing element include “an assessment of housing needs and an inventory of resources and constraints relevant to the meeting of these needs.” The law requires:

- An analysis of population and employment trends and projections
- An analysis of household characteristics, including overcrowding and cost burdens
- An inventory of land suitable for residential development
- Identification of a zone or zones where emergency shelters are permitted by right
- An analysis of the government and non-governmental constraints on the improvement, maintenance, and development of housing
- An analysis of special housing needs, including those of the elderly, persons with disabilities, large families, farmworkers, female-headed households and persons needing emergency shelter
- An analysis of opportunities for energy conservation
- An analysis of publicly assisted housing development that may convert to non-assisted housing during the planning period

These requirements help provide an understanding of housing needs so that policies and programs can be specifically tailored to reflect local conditions.

1.4.2 Consistency with Other General Plan Elements

State law requires that general plans are internally consistent documents. The Government Code (Sec 65583(c)(7)) also requires that when any element of the plan is amended, the jurisdiction must demonstrate that it is consistent, or identify the means by which consistency will be achieved. As such, the update of the San Rafael Housing Element requires an evaluation of consistency with the other elements of the San Rafael General Plan. Policies in other

elements must not conflict with those in the Housing Element, and the designations on the Land Use Map must support the density assumptions and realistic capacity estimates in the Housing Element.

The City of San Rafael completed a comprehensive General Plan update in 2021, moving the time horizon forward from 2020 to 2040. Although the Housing Element was not included in the General Plan Update, much of the policy and program focus was on increasing housing opportunities, accommodating a variety of housing types, and creating a more equitable community. The General Plan anticipated that the City's RHNA for 2023-2031 would be significantly higher than it had been before and is based on a growth forecast of 4,400 new housing units. About half of this projected growth is in Downtown San Rafael, where high density, transit-oriented housing is strongly supported.

Table 1.2 demonstrates the consistency between the Housing Element and other elements of the Plan and summarizes housing-related initiatives in each element. This Housing Element builds on the momentum of General Plan 2040 and embraces its core values. It is intended to work in tandem with the other elements of the Plan to conserve existing housing, accommodate housing growth, and promote fair housing and housing that is accessible to all residents. The Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for General Plan 2040 anticipated the amount and location of growth required to meet the RHNA and provides initial environmental clearance for much of the housing that will be built during the 2023-2031 planning period.

1.4.3 HCD Review Process

The Housing Element is unique among the mandatory elements of the General Plan. A specific process has been established for its adoption, beginning with preparation of a "working draft" for State comment. The working draft must be circulated for public comment for 30 days once it is published. This is followed by a 10-day period to consider public comments and make edits prior to transmittal to the State. Once received, the State has 90 days to review the working draft.

HCD may consult with any public agency, group, or person in its review and must consider any third party comments on the draft as they review it. At the end of the 90 days, a formal "findings" letter is issued by HCD with the results of their review, including revisions that HCD determines are required to meet State law. If the City does not modify its Element to reflect HCD's comments, it must include written findings in its adopting resolution explaining why the changes were not included.

Once the Housing Element is adopted, it is resubmitted to HCD to determine whether it "substantially complies" with State Housing Element Law. HCD has 60 days to make this determination. The City is eligible for certain grants and other funding only if HCD has found that the City's Housing Element is in substantial compliance with State law. Cities determined to be out of compliance are vulnerable to adverse consequences such as fines and penalties.

Table 1.2: Housing Element Consistency with Other General Plan Elements

Element	Housing-Related Guidance
Land Use	Includes 2040 Land Use Map identifying where housing may be built and defining allowable densities. Land Use Map provides capacity for 4,400+ housing units, which exceeds RHNA by 38%. Policies in this element strongly support new housing and a mix of housing types, create minimum densities, allow height bonuses for affordable housing, allow housing in all commercial zones, encourage mixed use on older commercial properties, encourage senior and special needs housing, promote ADUs and innovative housing types, and support conservation of existing housing throughout the City.
Neighborhoods	Provides neighborhood-specific guidance for new housing, with specific mention of housing opportunity sites in many areas, especially Downtown San Rafael and the North San Rafael Town Center and Southeast San Rafael PDAs. Strongly encourages the conservation and maintenance of existing housing, and opportunities for new housing in neighborhood commercial districts.
Community Design and Preservation	Supports infill housing and well-designed multi-family development. Provides policy framework for objective design standards and form-based codes to expedite permit processing. Encourages creative architecture and higher density design. Also addresses scale transitions and historic preservation.
Conservation and Climate Change	Directs housing away from sensitive natural resources and toward urban infill sites. Supports sustainable, green development, water conservation, energy conservation and efficiency. Provides guidance for housing in areas near freeways and other air pollution sources.
Parks, Recreation, and Open Space	Includes provisions for parks and open space as new housing is added.
Safety and Resilience	Emphasizes protection of existing housing stock from hazards such as sea level rise, wildfire, and earthquakes. Encourages the design of new housing that is resilient and sustainable.
Noise	Ensures that new housing is designed to create a healthy ambient noise environment, and that housing construction noise is managed to reduce potential adverse impacts.
Mobility	Promotes higher density housing opportunities near transit and along bus lines. Addresses housing-related issues such as parking, access to shared vehicles, and housing-transportation costs. Emphasizes equity, public safety, and access to public transportation for residents in all areas, particularly for lower income households.
Community Services and Infrastructure	Identifies need to expand water, sewer, drainage, and energy/ telecom infrastructure concurrently with housing growth, and to plan for improvements to schools, libraries, etc. as housing is added.
Economic Vitality	Expresses support for workforce housing, partnerships with the business community to house more employees locally, and programs to remove housing constraints and expedite construction.
Arts and Culture	Recognizes the arts as a tool for connecting people, promoting cultural inclusion and diversity, creating a sense of belonging.
Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion	Emphasizes housing needs of lower income and immigrant communities, fair housing, anti-displacement strategies, and the need to expand civic outreach and engagement to reach all San Rafael residents. Includes a Goal (EDI-3) focused on housing stability, including renter protection, affordable housing development, healthy homes, reducing overcrowding, and improving resources for unhoused residents.

HCD's compliance determination is based in part on a detailed checklist corresponding to California Government Code requirements and HCD guidelines. The data and analysis requirements for the Housing Element are more substantial than those required for other elements of the General Plan. Thus, this element is typically longer and more detailed than the other elements of the General Plan.

1.4.4 Other Statutory Requirements

Senate Bill (SB) 1087 requires cities to provide a copy of their Housing Element to local water and sewer service providers after adoption. It also requires that these agencies give priority to lower income housing when approving new connections. The San Rafael 2023-2031 Housing Element will be provided to these agencies upon adoption.

Assembly Bill (AB) 162 (Government Code Section 65302.g.3) requires that the Safety Element be updated either by January 1, 2014 or upon the next update of the Housing Element to address the risk of fire for land classified as Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZs). San Rafael adopted an updated Housing Element in August 2021 meeting this requirement. There are no VHFHSZs within the city limits.

Senate Bill (SB) 379 requires that the Safety Element be updated to address climate change adaptation and resiliency. This was achieved prior to the start of the Housing Element update. General Plan 2040 (August 2021) includes a Safety and Resilience Element, as well as a Conservation and Climate Change Element.

The City will be complying with AB 747 and SB 99 concurrently with Housing Element adoption. AB 747 requires that the City designate evacuation routes, while SB 99 requires the identification of residential developments with less than two means of ingress and egress. A subsequent amendment to the General Plan will be required to implement these changes.

1.4.5 Data Sources

This Housing Element was updated in accordance with California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) guidelines for the 6th Cycle Housing Element. Specific data sources are cited throughout the Housing Element, including but not limited to:

- The 2040 San Rafael General Plan
- US Census Bureau (2020 Census and American Community Survey)
- US Department of Housing and Urban Development (Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy)
- California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD)
- California Department of Finance (DOF)
- California Employment Development Department (EDD)
- Marin County Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (2020)
- Marin County Assessor's Office
- Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) Pre-Certified Housing Data
- Private industry sources (Zillow, Hotpads, Craigslist, etc.)

1.5 Organization of the Housing Element

Following this introduction, the Housing Element includes the following chapters:

Chapter 2: Evaluation of the 5th Cycle Housing Element. This chapter addresses the City's progress toward achieving the City's 2015-2023 Housing Element. It includes an assessment of the programs in the 2015-2023 Housing Element, including guidance as to whether each program should be carried forward, edited, or replaced.

Chapter 3: Housing Needs Assessment. This includes an analysis of demographic and socio-economic conditions, housing conditions, market trends, and other factors to evaluate current and future housing needs in San Rafael, including housing needs among lower-income households and populations with special housing needs.

Chapter 4: Housing Sites and Resources Analysis. This includes an evaluation of the sites that can accommodate the City's RHNA, including an analysis of site suitability and availability. This also includes a discussion of financial resources for housing and a discussion of energy conservation programs.

Chapter 5: Constraints to Housing Conservation and Production. The constraints analysis addresses governmental constraints to housing development such as zoning, development fees, development standards, and development review processes, as well as non-governmental constraints, such as high land and construction costs.

Chapter 6: Housing Plan. This chapter presents goals, policies, and programs to address the City's housing needs as well as quantified objectives for housing development and preservation during the planning period.

Appendices: The appendices contain background details and technical analysis to support the Element. They include:

- A. Assessment of Fair Housing
- B. Housing Opportunity Site Inventory
- C. Public Participation Matrix

1.6 Housing Element Community Engagement Program

State law requires that each jurisdiction make a diligent effort to obtain input from all economic segments of the community when preparing a Housing Element. While San Rafael has always been committed to robust public engagement, the State mandate to affirmatively further fair housing requires that the Housing Element go a step further. New strategies and initiatives were included in this process to engage those who are most impacted by the housing crisis in San Rafael.

1.6.1 Creating the Foundation for Expanded Engagement

In Fall 2017, the City of San Rafael launched its 2040 General Plan Update. The process included a substantial community engagement program, with over 100 public meetings. The Draft Plan was released in October 2020 and adopted in August 2021 following 12 public hearings. A Downtown Precise Plan and Program EIR were prepared and adopted concurrently with the General Plan.

While the Housing Element was not part of the General Plan Update, much of the community conversation was centered around housing production and affordability issues. The Plan resulted in many new housing-focused policies and programs, as well as increased densities, multi-family housing opportunities, and zoning changes.

A 24-member Steering Committee (with 22 alternates) was appointed by the City Council to steer the process. The Committee met 25 times between January 2018 and June 2020, discussing issues and policy choices in a public setting. The General Plan website received more than 2,500 individual comments. Several rounds of community workshops were convened over the course of the project. The City also hosted a three-day Downtown design charette, with approximately 200 participants. One of the major themes of the charette was expanding opportunities for housing.

The General Plan Update included three years of grass-roots outreach, with the planning team attending the regularly scheduled meetings of dozens of neighborhood and community-based organizations. The process included a Spanish language outreach initiative engaging over 140 residents, several student-organized initiatives, and focus group meetings on housing topics. Pop-up events were convened, and presentations were made to City Commissions and Committees. Housing issues featured prominently in these meetings. The General Plan Update raised public awareness of housing issues and provided a forum for discussing potential solutions.

In 2018, the City initiated a series of community workshops specifically focused on housing production. The need for these meetings was identified in the Housing Element Annual Progress Report, and by the City Council in their annual goal-setting exercise. In 2018, 2019, and 2020, the City convened public and community meetings that specifically focused on the removal of constraints to housing production. For-profit and non-profit housing developers were directly involved and remained involved through interviews and panel discussions. These meetings led to significant streamlining of City processes and ordinances, along with a commitment for regular reports to the City Council on housing issues and the City's progress in removing constraints.

1.6.2 Project Website, Branding, and On-Line Documents Library

The City launched its Housing Element update website in September 2021 at www.sanrafaelhousing.org. The project was also branded through a logo and the tagline "Let's House San Rafael". The website was initially populated with basic information about housing elements and the RHNA, as well as a "meeting and events" page and a "documents library." The documents library included 54 separate reports, books, articles, and videos about housing. Separate links were provided to the housing sites inventory and inventory maps.

Documents related to the Housing Element were also posted on the city’s main website (www.sanrafael.org), in the City Manager’s newsletter, and on the Planning Department website. In addition, links to meeting agendas, minutes, and streaming video were posted for each Housing Element-related meeting and event.

An electronic mailing list was developed and expanded over the course of the project. E-mail blasts were used throughout the project to provide notification of upcoming meetings and events, and to announce publication of plan-related documents.

1.6.3 Housing Element Community Workshops

The City convened three dedicated community-wide Housing Element workshops. It also co-sponsored a developer forum with the County of Marin. All three workshops were convened on Zoom due to the COVID-19 public health and safety protocols in effect at the time. Outreach flyers (paper and PDF) were prepared in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese and translation services were available at each Workshop. Workshops are summarized below:

- Workshop 1 (11/4/21): The first workshop introduced the Housing Element Update to the community. It included a presentation explaining the purpose of the Element, the housing crisis in San Rafael and the Bay Area, the RHNA and sites inventory, the work program and schedule, and opportunities for public input. This was a “town hall” style meeting with participants able to ask questions and receive real-time responses from staff. Approximately 40 people attended.
- Developer Forum (4/27/22): The City co-hosted a developer forum with the County of Marin. The forum consisted of a facilitated discussion with three San Rafael developers, including questions and comments from the virtual audience. The focus was on the removal of constraints to housing development. The meeting was advertised both on the City’s website and the County’s website. Approximately 25 people attended.
- Workshop 2 (7/14/22): The second workshop was focused on housing sites. It included opening remarks from the Mayor and a presentation by staff, followed by facilitated breakout groups in English and Spanish. Each breakout group facilitator provided a “report-out” at the end. Participants learned about the sites under consideration, had an opportunity to ask questions and suggest additional sites. Approximately 30 people attended.
- Workshop 3 (8/16/22): The third workshop addressed policy options. It included a presentation with real-time questions and commentary provided by attendees, followed by facilitated breakout groups in English and Spanish. Each breakout group facilitator provided a “report-out” at the end. The breakout groups provided an opportunity for conversation and discussion about priorities and potential policies. Approximately 80 people attended, with more than 40 participants in the Spanish language breakout group.

In addition to the formal workshops, a “pop-up” event was held at the City’s “Movies in the Park” event in the Canal neighborhood in September 2022. This provided an opportunity for informal conversations with residents on local housing issues and programs.

1.6.4 Housing Element Working Group

In November 2021, the City Council appointed a 13-member Housing Element Working Group, including representatives from various stakeholder groups and organizations. Members were selected to represent different perspectives, including housing advocates, immigrant rights and fair housing advocates, homeless service providers, businesses, tenants, non-profit and for-profit developers, and local neighborhood and environmental organizations. The Working Group was convened eight times between December 2021 and August 2022. All meetings were subject to Brown Act requirements and included opportunities for public comment at the start and finish. Meetings were noticed in advance, with agenda materials posted on-line and videos of each meeting posted afterwards.

Much of the content of the 2023-2031 Housing Element reflects input and feedback provided by Working Group members. The Working Group also advised the project team on outreach and engagement strategies. Meetings were lively and interactive; included in-depth discussions of housing needs, sites, and constraints; and helped shape housing policies and programs.

1.6.5 On-Line Survey

The City administered an on-line survey on housing in early 2022. The survey was open to all participants and included a mix of multiple choice and open-ended questions. It was made available in Spanish, English, Vietnamese, and Chinese. A number of demographic questions were included to compare survey respondents to the population at large. However, the survey was not intended to be statistically valid, but rather to provide another tool for residents and businesses to express their views on local housing issues and priorities. Approximately 180 respondents completed the survey.

1.6.6 City Council and Planning Commission Progress Meetings

Multiple meetings with the City Council and Planning Commission meeting were held over the course of the project. These included:

- Introductory City Council briefing on the Housing Element and overview of the project (8/16/21)
- Planning Commission introductory study session on the Housing Element (9/28/21)
- City Council introduction to Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) (11/1/21)
- Planning Commission Study Session on the Housing Needs Assessment (2/15/22)
- Annual Housing Progress Report to City Council (3/21/22)
- City Council Study Session on Housing Element (4/4/22)
- Planning Commission Study Session on AFFH (7/14/22)
- Planning Commission Study Session on Housing Sites (7/26/22)
- City Council meeting on Housing Sites (8/1/22)

All of these meetings included opportunities for public comment and feedback. The meetings above exclude those held to review the HCD Draft Housing Element, and those held to adopt the Housing Element in 2023.

1.6.7 Meetings with Community-Based Organizations and Individuals

Two major rounds of outreach to community organizations occurred—the first in September 2021 through May 2022, and the second from June 2022 through September 2022.

During the first round, Staff attended the regularly scheduled meetings of neighborhood groups and community-based organizations and participated in special meetings convened by housing advocates to discuss the project and solicit feedback on policies and programs. Meetings were convened with:

- Responsible Growth in Marin (9/15/21)
- League of Women Voters Marin (10/12/21)
- Federation of San Rafael Neighborhoods (10/14/21)
- Canal Alliance (11/16/21)
- Marin Center for Independent Living and Vivalon (2/14/22)
- Miller Creek School District (3/7/22)
- Marin Conservation League Monthly Meeting (4/5/22)
- Marin Organizing Committee (4/20/22)
- Chamber of Commerce Economic Vitality Committee (5/10/22)

During the second round, staff met with representatives of the business community; additional community-based organizations, non-profit housing developers, seniors, disabled residents, residents representing the protected classes, the fair housing agency, renters, property owners, and families.

1.6.8 Student and Youth Voice

The City participated in a collaborative effort with Youth-In-Arts (a San Rafael based non-profit advocating for arts education and programming) and Y-Plan (a Berkeley-based initiative advocating for youth engagement in planning and architecture) to address housing issues from the perspective of San Rafael students in Grades 4-6. Dozens of students took on the “real world” challenge of developing strategies for increasing affordable housing in San Rafael and presented solutions ranging from more accessory dwelling units to tiny homes and floating houses. The students presented their recommendations to the Housing Element working group, providing an important perspective while also generating media interest in the project.

1.6.9 Listening Sessions

As part of the outreach effort, the project team focused on those who do not normally participate in conversations with local government and with those who work with specific populations, including those from protected classes. In addition, team members met with business leaders, planning professionals, housing providers and advocates, community representatives, nonprofit organizations and young adults. Listening sessions included tenants, renters, homeowners and landlords; those who worked in the City and those who wanted to live in San Rafael but could not afford to do so. The focus of the meetings was to identify local housing challenges and

barriers to housing in San Rafael to help inform and create the policies and programs to address such challenges.

Meetings were held with representatives from the following groups:

Bridge Housing	Marin Center for Independent Living
Canal Alliance	Marin Community Foundation
Canal Community Resilience Council	Marin County Commission on Aging
Eden Housing	Marin Disability Town Hall
Fair Housing Advocates of Northern California	Marin Environmental Housing Collaborative
Federation of San Rafael Neighborhoods	Miller Creek School
First 5	Multi-Cultural Center of Marin
Homeward Bound	Residents of 400 Canal Street
Integrated Community Services	Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ)
Legal Aid of Marin	Voces de Canal

1.6.10 Focused Outreach to the Latino Community

- Canal Policy Working Group.** This working group of City and County officials, staff and local nonprofit leaders was formulated during the COVID-19 pandemic to advance a coordinated response in the Canal neighborhood, which was disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. Following crisis response, the group continued to meet approximately monthly to discuss key issues affecting the Canal neighborhood. Housing has been the foremost topic. This group initiated the rent freeze adopted in the Canal neighborhood during the pandemic and continues to identify tenant protection issues and opportunities
- Voces De Canal.** Staff met with Voces del Canal in advance of the August Community Workshop on Policies and Programs to prepare community members to actively participate. Staff presented to the group in Spanish, providing background on the Housing Element and a primer on the difference between goals, policies and programs. Following the presentation, the group had an opportunity to share concerns and ask questions about the appropriateness of sharing those concerns during the workshop.

1.6.11 Equity-Based City Initiatives

In addition to housing-focused outreach and engagement, the City has participated in several community meetings and gatherings to ensure there are opportunities for residents from all San Rafael neighborhoods to provide feedback, express their concerns, and provide recommendations for the City.

Specific and focused outreach efforts were made in the Canal neighborhood, which is the only census tract in the County that is considered an area of “high segregation and poverty”, and where the largest concentration of Latinx residents live. In addition to targeted conversations about housing, the City also engaged residents in conversations about community assets, City

services, transportation, parks and open spaces, access to food and how to increase community representation and involvement.

1.6.12 Intergovernmental Coordination

In 2019, City staff joined a countywide working group of Planning Directors and planning staff to encourage interjurisdictional collaboration on housing issues and solutions, with a specific focus on responding to new state legislation to streamline housing developments. The Planning Directors established common goals and coordinated on housing legislation, planning, production, and preservation of existing affordability. The group meets once monthly and has evolved from briefings and discussions regarding state housing legislation into collaboration on projects to facilitate the development of more housing in Marin County. The group received funds from ABAG to work collaboratively on shared Housing Element deliverables including translation dollars, Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing products, visualizations, and a countywide website.

1.7 Incorporating Community Feedback

The Housing Element policies and programs directly reflect priorities expressed through the community engagement process. In particular, concerns about homelessness prompted the addition of a goal to end homelessness and a number of proactive measures to assist unhoused residents. Public concerns about overcrowding, rapidly rising rents, and the lack of affordable housing resulted in a program focus on renter protection and increased resources and efforts to build affordable housing. Concerns about lengthy processing times, high construction and land costs, and limited access to tax credits resulted in programs on the removal of development constraints and accelerated efforts to build housing in the city.

Appendix C of the Housing Element provides a matrix summary of community engagement activities, including a summary of “take-aways” from each meeting, event, or program component. These take-aways were used to formulate the goals, policies, and programs that underpin Chapter 6 of this document. They also provide “local context” that has informed the analysis of the data in Chapters 3, 4, and 5 and Appendix A.

