



ATTACHMENT 1

**2023-2031 SAN RAFAEL HOUSING ELEMENT UPDATE
WORKING GROUP
THURSDAY, May 19, 2022, 4:00 PM**

Attendance

Members Present: *Omar Carrera, Don Dickenson, Linda Jackson, Lorenzo Jones, Amy Likover, Diana Lopez, Rina Lopez, Jon Previtali, Daniel Rhine, Joanne Webster*
Members Absent: *Paul Fordham, Cesar Lagleva (excused), Tom Monahan,*
Staff Present: *Cristine Alilovich, Alexis Captanian, Alicia Giudice, Barry Miller*
Guests: *Liz Darby, Ricardo Huertan Nino, Alex Schafran*

(1/2) WELCOME/ RECORDING OF MEMBERS PRESENT AND ABSENT

The meeting was called to order at 4.00 PM. Roll call was taken.

(3) ACCEPTANCE OF PRIOR MEETING SUMMARIES

Following correction of a typo (page 2, offsie should be offsite), the minutes of the April 21, 2022 meeting were approved without further amendment (Likover/Jackson).

(4) INITIAL OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were received.

(5) DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH)

Barry Miller delivered a presentation on new State requirements for affirmatively furthering fair housing in the Housing Element (AB 686). The presentation provided an overview of requirements and summary of the “map book” which was provided to Working Group members prior to the meeting.

B. Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing (AFFH) – Why and How

Director Giudice introduced three invited guests-- Ricardo Huerta Niño is a Senior Initiative Officer at the San Francisco Foundation. He was a member of the General Plan 2040 outreach team and helped lay the groundwork for the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Element. Alex Schafran is a consultant, author, and advocate who specializes in housing research and policy, with the aim of creating a more just and inclusive housing system. Liz Darby is a consultant to the City on diversity, equity, and inclusion issues and is helping the City create a more inclusive Housing Element outreach program.

Each of the guests introduced themselves and provided opening remarks. Alex then provided the historic context for AFFH, the State’s AFFH Housing Element requirements, and the programs a community might consider to promote integration and fair housing. Working Group members offered thoughts, questions, and comments as follows:

- Are there any examples of predominantly white cities that successfully became more integrated over time? What actions did they take to achieve that? *Alex responded that San Leandro, El Cerrito, Concord, Santa Rosa, southern Alameda County, and certain cities in San Mateo County have become much more diverse in the last few decades. Integration became possible only after the fair housing laws and the end of redlining, as well as the creation of more townhomes, condos, and other diverse housing types.*
- The Map Book provided by staff shows San Rafael with a very small African-American population—what steps can the City take to become more diverse? Could the City consider a sister city-type initiative with Marin City? Some neighborhoods such as Gerstle Park appear more diverse than others. *Staff noted that there are numerically more African-Americans living in San Rafael than in Marin City, which may differ from public perceptions.*
- One solution is to break down roadblocks to build housing in communities with high resistance is through streamlining of planning process. We are not going to achieve integration by building two-million dollar homes.
- Language in current Housing Element seems focused on maintaining the character of neighborhoods, which can be used to block multifamily housing in neighborhoods with mostly single-family homes.
- I agree with that comment. We should increase opportunities to build multifamily housing in single family neighborhoods. How have other cities done this successfully? Did they use an overlay or precise plan? Perhaps we can try different designs and architectural styles that respect what is currently in the neighborhood to facilitate multi-family units in single family areas. How did other cities like San Leandro do this? We could potentially use such an approach to get community feedback and blend multiple types of housing through consistent architectural style. Perhaps developers can work on multiple sites at one time to increase cost efficiency. How did San Leandro and these other cities do it? *Barry indicated that in San Leandro's case, there was a lot of industrial land along the railroad corridor, and as those industries became obsolete many of these sites were rezoned to allow multi-family housing. Also, attitudes changed in San Leandro because the city was largely settled in the 1950s. As the "greatest generation" passed on, there was rapid turnover of housing stock. This resulted on more diversity and different attitudes about growth.*
- Yes, we need more housing supply but we also need to respond to the needs of low-income tenants. We should take proactive efforts to solicit and incorporate input from low-income people, most of whom are renters. This is both a legal requirement and an important way to arrive at robust, relevant policies. This has not yet happened in our current Housing Element update.
- The map on educational outcomes (page 33 in the Map Atlas) is based on graduation rates, school scores, etc. It is misleading. Why are schools serving Peacock Gap and Dominican shown in the lower quartile? This kind of data creates challenges for public education and can be used to support arguments for vouchers and charter schools. There is high quality educational instruction across the city. There are some other issues with the maps. Page 45 shows areas vulnerable to displacement. Why is Dominican included, when it is largely single family? Is it because Montecito and Dominican are lumped together? Lincoln Ave has a high number of renters, but its in the same tract as single family areas in the hills. *Barry noted that the maps were based on Census data or data provided by HCD, but often combined neighborhoods with different housing types. We need to provide the local*

perspective and explain when the data does not tell the real story. For example, Dominican may be showing up because it has a large population of students, who self-report as lower income.

- San Rafael Schools is implementing a program to increase opportunities for teachers in San Rafael to live locally through co-living opportunities. Program will start next year.
- It's a mistake to equate economic equity and racial equity. There are African-American residents in San Rafael who are wealthy, there are more Asian families living in the city than before. On the whole, however, San Rafael does seem to have a small number of Black residents.
- Agree with earlier speaker about the educational outcomes map. And to previous speaker, only 1.5% of San Rafael population is African American, which is very small. And as we seek to locate higher density close to transit, we should also take care not to place high-density housing in areas with poor air quality, e.g., along the freeways. Just because you're poor doesn't mean you have to live in an environmentally toxic setting.

At this point, Barry asked Ricardo Huerta Nino to discuss his work promoting more authentic inclusive engagement in non-English speaking communities, particularly Latino communities. Ricardo explained that his expertise was in capacity building and empowerment. In San Rafael, we have a situation where a group that represents 30% of the population and is the engine of the local economy doesn't have as loud a voice as they should. Barry added that staff was finding that our community meetings were attracting the same people each time, and that persons of color were under-represented. Cristine noted that the approach we are taking for the Housing Element is patterned on the approach we are trying to take on all City projects and was part of a larger efforts to create more effective and meaningful ways to reach groups we haven't been reaching.

Ricardo noted that he had previously worked with Omar and Barry to do a "City Planning 101" multi-week program with Canal area civic leaders so that residents could understand their rights and how decisions are made. Part of this is also building capacity among City leaders and staff to be responsive. For example, the City formed the Canal Policy Working Group as a response to the pandemic. Now we have an opportunity to make a longer term commitment: housing is a topic that disproportionately affects communities of color. We have an opportunity for transformation in San Rafael. The Latino community is a starting point and ultimately we can work with a variety of different groups. How can we do better to facilitate engagement? The City can work in partnership with existing leadership groups.

Omar Carrera noted that upon learning about General Plan 2040, many residents in the Canal did not know there was a plan in place. We cannot leave 30% of the city's population behind as we have these conversations. We need to think about how we engage residents and what the scope of the conversation will cover. Ricardo reiterated what Omar said—there is a deep desire among community members to engage, and we have an opportunity to do so. Cristine noted that the City held community conversations in December and January in Spanish. We are trying to meet people where they are instead of asking them to come to us. On the Parks and Rec Master Plan, we are working with Voces del Canal to co-create and design our outreach program. She indicated that the City had brought Liz Darby on to assist with developing a similar program for the Housing Element. Liz has done this work for the County. We want to be intentional, collaborating on next steps. Ricardo added that we need "all hands on deck" including our partners in economic development (such as the Chamber of Commerce). We should engage employees, and broaden our focus moving forward.

Cristine added that inclusive resident engagement means we need to enlist Working Group members as sponsors and connectors. For example, we'll ask you if we can come to a meeting of your organization

that's already scheduled. We will take a customized approach that creates safe spaces, providing information in a way that people can weigh in and share their lived experience. Local government needs to do better in this space and we need help to do so.

Working Group members added the following comments:

- I'm here to facilitate outreach to business owners. City needs to hear directly from the business community and I can help with that.
- There are a lot of older adults in San Rafael with lower incomes and their voices also need to be heard. I and the Commission on Aging can help with that. During the pandemic, many lost jobs and healthcare, some are now homeless and living in cars. This trend increased during the pandemic. *Barry noted that the Age-Friendly San Rafael Plan identifies housing as a top priority for the older adult population.*
- There are a lot of places to live but no one can afford them. How can we mitigate cost of available but very expensive living situations? Older adults in Marin are becoming more and more marginalized.
- It's more than just the Canal neighborhood that needs to have outreach. How do we reach the people living in affordable housing in Terra Linda and on Lincoln Ave and in the Montecito neighborhood? Time is running out. It's hard to do workshops in the summer; mid-August when school starts up again is late for this process.
- I'm sensitive right now around the conversation of why there are not many Blacks in San Rafael. I can share from my perspective: belonging and safety are central to communities. We don't necessarily have that here in San Rafael. I'm a casual musician and I go to the East Bay on the weekends to drum, for that connected experience. You can't separate racial, social, and economic justice – they are all intertwined. So how do we reach minority communities in San Rafael? Speak the language of belonging – we need your support, we need your voice. When I walk around in San Rafael, I'm surprised to see another Black person. We have on armor in an environment that doesn't reflect who we are. There are only a few Black-owned restaurants in San Rafael. If I want food that is reflective of my culture, I'm going to the East Bay and the City. If those were here, would I stay here to dine? Absolutely.
- Can we do outreach that is specifically focused toward the Black community in San Rafael?
- The map atlas indicates there are environmental issues in the Canal. But we shouldn't decide not to pursue transit-oriented development simply because there is a freeway nearby, etc. Many of the environmental issues can be mitigated. All affordable housing is built to green building standards, and the baseline is essentially LEED Gold. Any state or local funding requires this. We need to focus on reducing Vehicle Miles Travelled and greenhouse gases. Issues such as proximity to freeways needs to be balanced with the urgent need for housing.

The invited guests were asked for closing comments. Alex indicated the City should consider a variety of different strategies. The City can use the Housing Element process as an opportunity to build permanent infrastructure that will make a difference in the long term. Ricardo added that we are doing this because it's the law but also truly because it's the right thing to do. We're all in this together and we need to keep the power and the economy local. Barry noted that we are now in the process of drafting housing strategies and