

Introduction

San Rafael is a city of neighborhoods. Each neighborhood is one of the basic social units and physical building blocks of San Rafael. Surrounded by great natural beauty, San Rafael's neighborhoods form a quilt of homes, shops, churches, schools and parks that together create the distinct character of the overall city. With respect for the legacy of each neighborhood, the policies and programs below are intended to encourage safe neighborhoods, excellent schools, diverse and well-maintained housing, friendly streets, investment in desired changes, convenient access to goods and services, and protection of natural resources.

The City of San Rafael has been planning for and improving neighborhoods since the 1970s. The 1974 General Plan called for a neighborhood planning process in response to changes in some of San Rafael's neighborhoods during the 1960s. Plans have been prepared for nine San Rafael neighborhoods.

This element merges the best parts of the existing neighborhood plans in order to create general policies applicable to all San Rafael neighborhoods while at the same time creating specific policies for each neighborhood. Existing neighborhood plans include the following:

- Gerstle Park (1979)
- Neighborhood 13/14 [SunValley/Fairhills] (1980)
- Peacock Gap (1980)
- Northgate Activity Center (1982)
- East San Rafael (1991)
- Our Vision of Downtown (1993)
- Montecito/Happy Valley (1996)
- Canal Voice (1996)
- Vision North San Rafael (1997)

Sources for Neighborhood Element policies include current neighborhood policies in *General Plan 2000*, policy recommendations from General Plan Task Group work in 2001, policies from individual neighborhood plans, policy statements and ideas from *Vision North San Rafael* and *Canal Voice*, and policy suggestions from neighborhood organizations and the Chamber of Commerce.

Many of the issues in San Rafael's neighborhoods are addressed in this element, yet many concerns are citywide. For example, traffic and parking, design, and housing are topics of interest throughout the city. To reduce the number of duplicated policies, citywide concerns are addressed through policies in the appropriate element, such as Circulation, Community Design, and Housing. However, where there is an issue specific to a neighborhood and a current policy speaks to that issue, the neighborhood-specific policy is included in this element.

The City has, as long-standing principle, believed that future residential development should be harmoniously integrated within existing neighborhoods, and that existing

Neighborhood Plans

A neighborhood plan is a process where there is a place at the table for everyone with an interest in the area, including residents (renters and owners), merchants, and people from the neighborhood institutions. Together, participants develop shared values, decide what to keep and what to change, and develop a plan to shape the economic, social and physical environment in which they live.

housing should be protected and conserved. San Rafael's neighborhood policies are not intended to maintain the status quo, but to foster

those actions that will make the neighborhoods more attractive and livable places. By choosing change for the better, the City can take advantage of opportunities to improve neighborhoods. In most neighborhoods, only a small amount of change is anticipated, in others residents expect some change to make the neighborhood a better place than it's been, and in some areas, such as along the Canal and waterfront, residents expect significant improvements.

In San Rafael, no neighborhood is an island. For example, the shops for one area may be in the neighborhood next door, the playing fields may be on the other side of the hill, or the class may be across town. In visiting a friend in another area, eating at a restaurant in a nearby neighborhood, or going to church in another part of town, each resident in San Rafael shares in the richness of city life. Simply, the livability of San Rafael as a whole depends on the vitality of each neighborhood.

Policies applicable to neighborhoods throughout the city appear first in this element. Following the citywide policies are policies for Downtown, a neighborhood that belongs to all who live in San Rafael, and policies for neighborhoods in the rest of the City.

Neighborhoods are included in alphabetical order. Each has a brief description about the neighborhood's character and vision of the future. Many have policies addressing specific topics of interest to the neighborhood.

Neighborhood policies are organized around four main topics. Because many of San Rafael's neighborhoods are quite small, not all four topics are discussed for each neighborhood. The topic areas are:

Neighborhood Homes includes policies for issues related to where families and friends gather, owners and renters live their lives, and residents display their identities.

Neighborhood Circulation includes policies for streets, sidewalks, and pedestrian safety and activity.

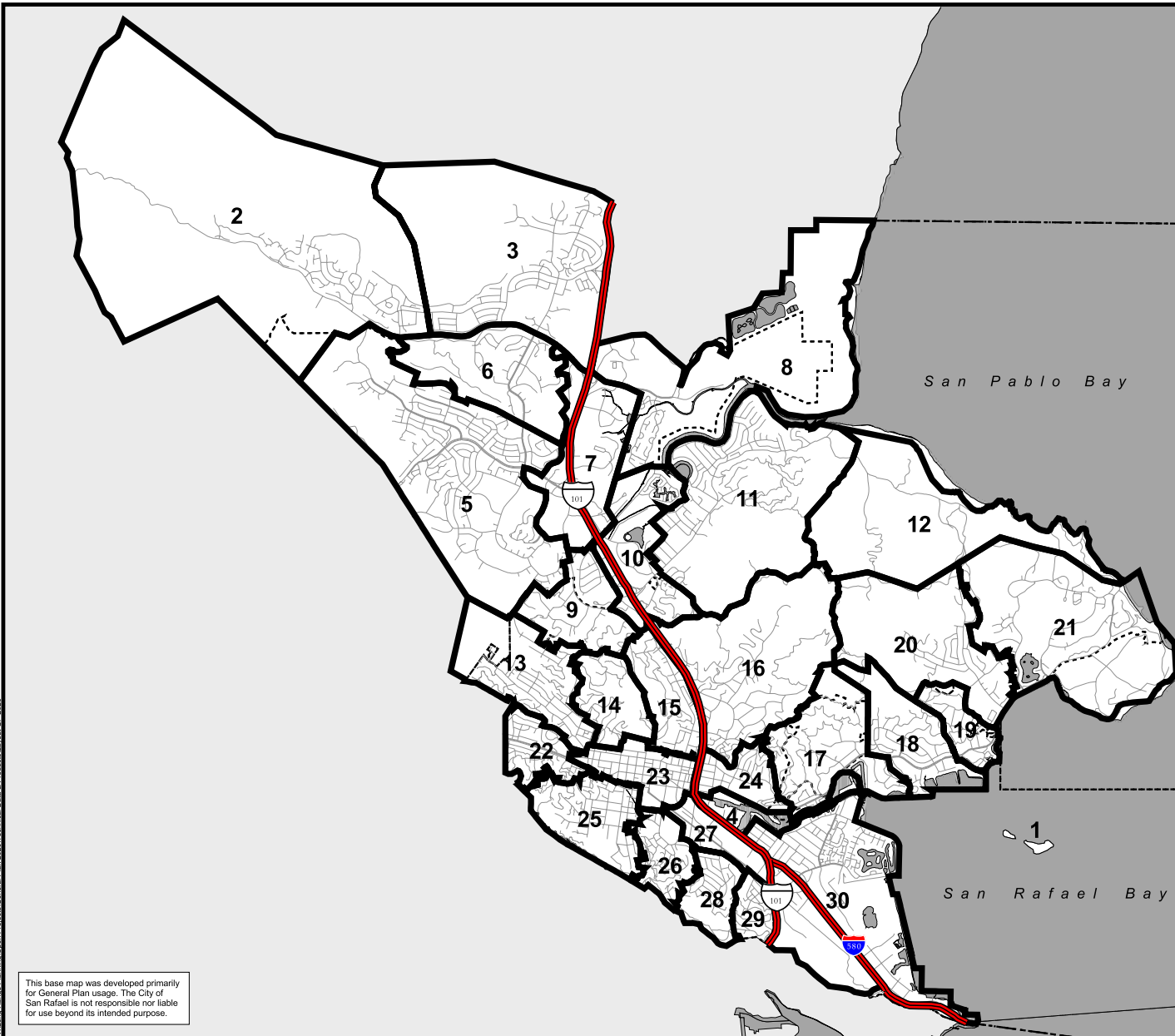
Neighborhood Economy and Culture includes policies for educational, religious and cultural places where community life is enhanced. Policies for commercial uses are also in this section.

Neighborhood Design includes policies on public places and open spaces, parks, gardens and gathering places.

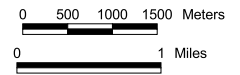
Where neighborhood policies are not listed, citywide policies apply. Additional policies on housing, local businesses, environmental protection, traffic, and design found in other elements should be consulted as well.

San Rafael Neighborhoods

1. Bay Islands
2. Lucas Valley
3. Marinwood
4. Canal Waterfront
5. Terra Linda
6. Mont Marin/San Rafael Park
7. North San Rafael Commercial Center
8. Smith Ranch
9. Rafael Meadows/Los Ranchitos
10. Civic Center
11. Santa Venetia
12. China Camp
13. Sun Valley
14. Fairhills
15. Lincoln/San Rafael Hill
16. Dominican/Black Canyon
17. Country Club
18. Loch Lomond
19. Bayside Acres
20. Glenwood
21. Peacock Gap
22. West End
23. Downtown
24. Montecito/Happy Valley
25. Gerstle Park
26. Picnic Valley
27. Francisco Boulevard West
28. Bret Harte
29. California Park
30. Canal



This base map was developed primarily for General Plan usage. The City of San Rafael is not responsible nor liable for use beyond its intended purpose.



GOAL 5: DISTINCTIVE NEIGHBORHOODS

It is the goal for San Rafael to have neighborhoods of integrity and distinctive hometown character. *San Rafael is a city of neighborhoods that support each other and provide a network of parks, gathering places and services. The unique identity, distinctive design and upkeep of each neighborhood will continue to be a source of pride.*

Each of San Rafael's neighborhoods is unique in its character, design and physical amenities, and each contributes to the diversity and vitality of the city. This uniqueness should be celebrated and preserved, but opportunities should also be taken to enhance these qualities when possible. Only through active partnerships among residents, property owners and the City can effective neighborhood planning occur and common issues be addressed.

NH-1. Neighborhood Planning.

Engage neighborhood associations in preparing neighborhood plans for their area.

NH-1a. Neighborhood Planning Process. Develop a neighborhood planning process where there is significant desire or need for a neighborhood plan. As of July, 2003, neighborhoods expressing a desire for a neighborhood plan are Bret Harte, Gerstle Park, Lincoln/San Rafael Hill, the Santa Margarita area in the Terra Linda neighborhood and the Canal.

Responsibility: Community Development

Timing: Short Term (priorities to be determined by Council)

Resources: Staff Time, Partnerships

Neighborhood Homes

NH-2. New Development in Residential Neighborhoods.

Preserve, enhance and maintain the residential character of neighborhoods to make them desirable places to live. New development should:

- Enhance neighborhood image and quality of life,
- Incorporate sensitive transitions in height and setbacks from adjacent properties to respect adjacent development character and privacy,
- Preserve historic and architecturally significant structures,
- Respect existing landforms and natural features,
- Maintain or enhance infrastructure service levels, and
- Provide adequate parking.

NH-2a. Zoning Ordinance. Continue to implement and update the Zoning Ordinance as needed to include the criteria listed above.

Responsibility: Community Development

Timeframe: Short Term

Resources: Fees, Staff Time

See CD-3b (Development Standards), CA-13b (Preservation Ordinance), LU-14a (Land Use-Compatibility), I-1a (Capital Improvement Programming), H-3a (Design Concerns of Single-Family Homes), NH-8a (Restore Parking Spaces), NH-8b (Additional On-Site Parking), NH-8c (Permit Parking) and NH-8d (Zoning Ordinance Review).

NH-3. Housing Mix.

Encourage a housing mix with a broad range of affordability, character, and sizes. In areas with a predominance of rental housing, encourage ownership units to increase the variety of housing types.

See H-10e (Retention of Mobilehomes), H-14b (Live/Work Opportunities), H-14c (Single Room Occupancy SRO Units), H-19a (Inclusionary Housing), H-23a (Zoning Standards to Encourage Mixed Use), H-25a (New Second Units) and LU-24a (Zoning Ordinance Amendments).

NH-4. Improve Property Maintenance.

Require owners to maintain their properties in good condition and appearance and to eliminate unsafe and unhealthy conditions.

NH-4a. Code Enforcement. Maintain an effective Code Enforcement program that engages with neighborhoods and business groups and works in partnerships with appropriate City staff to address nuisances and zoning code violations.

Responsibility: Community Development
Time Frame: Ongoing
Resources: Staff Time, Fines

NH-4b. Design Review Conditions of Approval. Through development review, require that design review approval include language whereby owners maintain landscaping in good condition.

Responsibility: Community Development
Time Frame: Ongoing
Resources: Fees

NH-4c. Property Maintenance Standards Ordinance. Consider adoption of a property maintenance standards ordinance to maintain minimum standards of the appearance of property, and to sustain property values in a neighborhood.

Responsibility: Community Development
Time Frame: Long Term
Resources: Staff Time

Neighborhood Circulation

NH-5. Safe Streets.

Provide neighborhood streets that are safe, pleasant, and attractive to walk, cycle and drive along.

See C-21a (Residential Traffic Calming), I-8a (Street Tree Program) and I-8b (Street Trees for New Development).

NH-6. Bicycle- and Pedestrian-Friendly Streets.

Create bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly residential streets with large street trees, sidewalks and other appropriate amenities.

NH-6a. Narrow Streets. In new streets, consider modifying street standards to allow narrower streets that promote bicycle and pedestrian activity and safety, while still providing for emergency and service access. Public streets must be designed to Caltrans and American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials standards.

Responsibility: Public Works, Community Development, Fire, Police

Timeframe: Ongoing

Resources: Staff Time, Fees.

See also C-26a (Implementation), C-27a (Implementation), I-6c (Sidewalk Repair) and C-4b (Street Design Criteria to Support Alternative Modes).

NH-7. Neighborhood Identity and Landmarks.

Enhance neighborhood identity and sense of community by retaining and creating gateways, landmarks, and landscape improvements that help to define neighborhood entries and focal points.

See CD-4a (Historic Resources Information), CD-4b (Adaptive Reuse), CD-5a (Views) and CD-8a (Gateways).

NH-8. Parking.

Maintain well-landscaped parking lots and front setbacks in commercial and institutional properties that are located in or adjacent to residential neighborhoods. Promote ways to encourage parking opportunities that are consistent with the design guidelines.

NH-8a. Restore Parking Spaces. Continue Code Enforcement efforts to work with apartment owners to restore parking spaces being used for storage.

Responsibility: Community Development

Timeframe: Ongoing

Resources: Staff Time, Fines, Fees

NH-8b. Additional On-Site Parking. In neighborhoods with excessive on-street parking, work with property owners to add on-site parking where feasible as part of review of expansion or remodels.

Responsibility: Community Development

Timeframe: Ongoing

Resources: Fees

NH-8c. Permit Parking. In neighborhoods with excessive on-street parking, evaluate the benefits and drawbacks of a Permit Parking Program (i.e. to limit cars per unit and/or to limit nonresidential cars) where supported by a significant majority of neighborhood residents.

Responsibility: Police, Public Works

Timing: Long Term

Resources: Staff Time

NH-8d. Zoning Ordinance Review. Evaluate and amend as necessary zoning regulations to ensure adequate on-site parking, and sufficient screening of parking areas adjacent to residences.

Responsibility: Community Development

Timing: Short Term

Resources: Staff Time

NH-9. Nuisance Vehicles.

Minimize the number of abandoned vehicles, excessive signs on vehicles and vehicles being used as homes, on streets and private property.

NH-9a. Abandoned Vehicle Program. Continue the abandoned vehicle abatement program.

Responsibility: Police

Timeframe: Ongoing

Resources: Staff Time

NH-9b. Vehicles as Residences. Continue to implement, and strengthen as necessary, City ordinances that prohibit overnight residential use of vehicles within the public right-of-way on public property, and on private property.

Responsibility: Police

Timeframe: Short Term

Resources: Staff Time

Neighborhood Economy and Culture

NH-10. Neighborhood Centers.

Support the vitality of attractive, viable neighborhood centers by using incentives to encourage desired mixed-use, local-services and to create areas for the community to gather. Assist these centers to adapt to changing community needs. Retain existing neighborhood centers unless it can be clearly demonstrated that local-serving uses are not economically feasible.

See LU-2a (Development Review) and EV-13 (Business Areas).

NH-11. Needed Neighborhood Serving Uses.

Give priority to "needed neighborhood serving uses". Examples of needed neighborhood serving uses are: supermarkets; craft stores; cafes; restaurants; drug stores; neighborhood shopping centers which include uses such as dry cleaners, delis and markets, video stores, etc.; health and medical facilities and services; as well as improved public uses and services such as parks, schools, child care, and police services. Other similar uses that serve primarily neighborhood residents and/or employees and receive broad neighborhood support may also qualify.

See LU-3a (Project Selection Process) and LU-15 (Convenience Shopping).

NH-12. Schools.

Work with the school districts to use active school sites as neighborhood gathering places and recreational amenities. Retain local schools where possible, but when reuse is necessary, housing development at prevailing densities in the immediate area should be the appropriate land use. Where it is in the community's interest to retain public recreation, on-site density transfers will be allowed to the remaining school site acreage, provided the resulting housing design is compatible with the neighborhood character.

See LU-11a (Zoning for School Sites) and PR-20b (School Site Recreational Facilities).



Over 5,000 people enjoy the Downtown Farmers Market each week.

NH-13. Religious Institutions, Educational Facilities, and other Community Organizations.

Support community partnerships and communication between neighborhoods and schools, religious and other institutions to enhance mutual understanding and the benefits of collaboration.

NH-13a. Community Partnerships. Through the development review process, encourage or require the establishment of committees which include both neighborhood and institutional representatives to address potential impacts and foster better communications.

Responsibility: Community Development

Timeframe: Ongoing

Resources: Fees

See G-14a (Communication with the School Districts), G-15a (Joint Use of Educational Facilities) and G-16a (Internships).

Neighborhood Design

NH-14. Gathering Places and Events.

To spark social interaction and create a greater sense of community, encourage both daytime and nighttime gathering places and events in appropriate locations, such as cafes, restaurants, outdoor eating places, bookstores, shopping facilities, libraries, schools, churches, parks, recreation facilities, community gardens, farmers' markets, transit stops, parks, recreation facilities, commercial facilities, cultural facilities, teen facilities, and City-sanctioned street closures for festivals, parades, and block parties.

Improve parks and their facilities to include active recreation and passive social interaction areas, and, where appropriate, incorporate areas that can accommodate group activities such as social events, picnics and concerts in a manner respectful of nearby residents.

NH-14a. Community Events. Explore supporting neighborhood and homeowner associations by promoting community events on the City's website.

Responsibility: City Manager, Community Services

Timeframe: Ongoing

Resources: Staff Time

NH-14b. Gathering Spaces. Through the Design Review process, consider opportunities for public gathering places, where appropriate.

Responsibility: Community Development

Timeframe: Ongoing

Resources: Fees

See also NH-19a (Downtown Events), PR-6a (Community Center Improvements) and PR-7a (Community Park Improvements).

GOAL 6: A VIBRANT DOWNTOWN

It is the goal for San Rafael to have a vibrant, active, and attractive Downtown. *San Rafael's Downtown continues to maintain its role as the center of the City's business, cultural, and historical infrastructure by offering quality shopping, a wide range of cultural and entertainment venues, a variety of restaurants, galleries, professional and financial services, employment opportunities, office space, and housing.*

DOWNTOWN

Downtown is a beloved part of San Rafael. It is the business, financial and retail center for San Rafael and Marin County. A wide range of housing, shopping and employment is provided. It has events, celebrations and festivals that attract the entire community. It is the heart and soul of San Rafael, the focal point of the community.

NH-15. Downtown Vision.

Continue to implement *Our Vision of Downtown San Rafael*.

NH-15a. Downtown Vision. Base periodic review of Downtown policies on the Vision.

Responsibility: Economic Development

Timeframe: Ongoing

Resources: Redevelopment

Downtown Economy

NH-16. Economic Success.

Substantially expand Downtown's economic success and increase opportunities for retail, office and residential development.

NH-16a. Business Development Efforts. Support business development efforts downtown to create a robust retail mix, reinforce a strong office market and promote evening activities, restaurants and entertainment. This includes encouraging cooperative and coordinated programs to manage, recruit and market Downtown businesses.

Responsibility: Economic Development

Timeframe: Ongoing

Resources: Redevelopment



Residents and visitors enjoy the vibrancy of Fourth Street in Downtown.

Our Vision of Downtown

Our Vision of Downtown San Rafael was developed in the early 1990s through a broad-based collaborative community visioning process. Our Vision contains a narrative picture of what our community wants Downtown to feel and look like in 2020. The following is a brief summary of the most important images envisioned for Downtown San Rafael from Our Vision.

Downtown, with its sense of nurturing community, remains the place where a person can rediscover one's roots and sense of history. Downtown San Rafael is our hometown. While safe, friendly, warm, welcoming, and a comfortable mix of old and new, Downtown is alive with the excitement of an urban community and multidimensional city. Downtown generates a climate of good cheer and companionship where people want to socialize, reside, or conduct business.

Downtown is a healthy economic center. Thriving and profitable retail is a barometer of the health and vitality of Downtown. Shops provide that personal touch where customers are treated as neighbors and friends whether they are visitors, entrepreneurs who work in Downtown's new class "A" office buildings and in the restored and refurbished Victorians, or those who are attracted to the ambiance of local, personalized retailing.

Downtown is a wonderful place to live. Downtown provides a plethora of housing opportunities at both affordable and market rates for those who choose the amenities and advantages of an urban community lifestyle. A young professional beginning a career, a single parent in need of nearby shopping, services, and transit, a senior couple wishing to downsize their suburban home, or a Downtown worker, can find the right living arrangement in one of the condominiums, apartments, duplexes, townhouses, single family homes, or single resident rooms in Downtown San Rafael.

Downtown flourishes as our social, cultural, recreational and entertainment center. Many activities are concentrated here, from Falkirk Cultural Center to live theater at Belrose, to movies at the Rafael Film Center, forming the most interesting entertainment venue in the Northern Bay Area. City residents, visitors from neighboring towns, and tourists enjoy our cultural riches: the bookstores, the library, the Mission, art galleries, theater, museums, displays and performances at the community center, as well as street fairs and outdoor entertainment.

Downtown puts the spotlight on life. Parades, festivals, fiestas, events, gatherings all happen Downtown: Italian Street Painting, Film Festival, Classic Cars Parade, Halloween Trick or Treat, Winter Lights, Easter Egg Roll, and the Downtown Farmers' Market Festival. The sidewalks are bustling with people meeting friends for coffee at one of the outdoor cafes or restaurants, browsing at the popular farmers' market and shopping in our specialty stores.

Downtown celebrates diversity, accepting and valuing differences, creating new relationships among groups, peoples, and individuals of all cultures, economic status and interests. Children, teens, adults, seniors all feel welcome and find something to do. Families especially feel comfortable here and enjoy their Downtown outings.

Downtown grows multicolored with the splendor of flowers in boxes and planting areas and streets lined with trees. Downtown is a beautiful place to stroll among a blend of buildings that reflect the area's history and our dynamic times. Downtown is a park-like setting where the urban landscape is softened by the workings of nature and adorned with public art.

NH-17. Competing Concerns.

In reviewing and making decisions on projects, there are competing economic, housing, environmental and design concerns that must be balanced. No one factor should dominate; however, economic and housing development are high priorities to the health of Downtown.

See LU-3 (Project Selection Process).

NH-18. Economic Center.

Strengthen Downtown's position as a major business, financial and office center for the city and the county by maintaining a diversified economic base reflecting a mutually supportive combination of retail, office, service and government uses.

NH-18a. Hotel/Cineplex. Support the development of a hotel to sustain the office market and a Cineplex to enhance the retail, restaurant and entertainment offerings in Downtown.

Responsibility: Economic Development, City Manager

Timeframe: Short Term

Resources: Redevelopment

NH-19. Healthy Retail Sector.

Promote a healthy retail sector, essential to a successful and prosperous Downtown.

See NH-15a (Downtown Vision).

NH-20. Event Center.

Expand Downtown's reputation as the event center for the city by encouraging parades, festivals, celebrations, promotional sales and sports events. These activities may occur throughout Downtown; in the streets, parking lots, sidewalks, lawn areas and private property; and are sponsored by public, private and non-profit organizations, individuals and businesses.

NH-20a. Downtown Events. Continue to encourage high profile, signature events to bring people Downtown and to promote Downtown San Rafael. These events should include, but are not limited to, promotional events, youth and family entertainment, and the activities at Downtown cultural facilities.

Responsibility: Economic Development, Community Development, Community Services

Timeframe: Ongoing

Resources: Fees, Donations

NH-20b. Entertainment Activities. Promote entertainment activities in Downtown.

Responsibility: Economic Development, Community Development

Timeframe: Ongoing

Resources: Staff Time



The City Plaza is home to local celebrations.

NH-21. Cultural and Entertainment Promotion.

Promote Downtown as the cultural and entertainment center of San Rafael and the County to bring people Downtown and stimulate other business opportunities.

See NH-18a (Hotel/Cineplex), NH-20a (Downtown Events) and CA-1a (Community Vision of Culture and Arts in San Rafael).

Downtown Homes

NH-22. Housing Downtown.

Create a popular and attractive residential environment that contributes to the activity and sense of community Downtown. This includes:

- a. Preserving and upgrading existing units,
- b. Providing incentives to encourage new private sector construction of housing, particularly affordable housing, live/work units, and single room occupancy (SRO) units,
- c. Designing units that take advantage of Downtown's views, proximity to shopping and services, and transit, and
- d. Implementing zoning standards that reflect Downtown's urban character.

See H-23a (Zoning Standards to Encourage Mixed-Use).

Downtown Circulation

NH-23. Full Use of Street System.

To enable our desired uses and activities to happen Downtown, encourage full use of streets and alleyways reflecting Downtown's urban character.



See C-3a (Transportation Technology), C-4a (Street Pattern and Traffic Flow), C-4b (Street Design Criteria to Support Alternative Modes, C-6a (Circulation Improvement).

NH-24. Full Range of Transportation Options.

In addition to autos, encourage a variety of ways for people to travel to, in, and through Downtown, including:

- Bicycle and walking paths to other neighborhoods, Boyd and Albert Parks, and along Mahon Creek,
- Bike lanes where appropriate,
- Efficient bus service,
- A rail transitway, and
- Shuttle buses.

The Mahon Creek Path is a recent pedestrian/ bicycle path and environmental enhancement.

See C-10a. (Advocating Alternative Mode Projects) and C-11a (Car and Vanpooling) C-11b (Car Sharing), C-11c (Low-Impact Alternative Vehicles) and C-11d (Bike to Work Day).

NH-25. Pedestrian Comfort and Safety.

Make Downtown's street systems more comfortable and safe for pedestrians by:

- Balancing between the needs of pedestrians and the desire for efficient traffic flow,
- Slowing traffic where necessary,
- Providing two-way traffic where feasible,
- Making pedestrian crossings direct and safe,
- Establishing pedestrian environments unique to each District,
- Improving and/or expanding sidewalks, street trees, landscaping and other sidewalk amenities,
- Increasing visibility to storefronts and businesses,
- Seeking innovative solutions and ideas.

See C-27a (Implementation), C-27b (Prioritizing Pedestrian Improvements), C-27c (Bay Trail), C-27d (Pedestrian Safety Enforcement), C-27e (Pedestrian Safety) and C-28a (Urban Trail Network Project).

NH-26. Refine Look of Lincoln, Hetherton, Lindaro and Andersen Drive.

Improve the look and function of these important streets by emphasizing safe and efficient movement of pedestrians, cars and, where feasible, bicycles traveling into and through Downtown.

NH-26a. Pedestrian Lighting. Evaluate pedestrian lighting along Lincoln Avenue for safety.

Responsibility: Public Works, Police
Timeframe: Short Term
Resources: Staff Time

See C-4a (Street Pattern and Traffic Flow), C-4b (Street Design Criteria to Support Alternative Modes) and C-23a (Better Signage).

NH-27. Parking.

Continue to make parking convenient and easy to find by encouraging solutions that address Downtown's urban parking situation. Needed improvements include:

- Providing a range of long and short-term parking.
- Facilitating the joint use of parking areas where appropriate.
- Reducing the visual impacts of parking areas through design and landscaping.
- Improving pedestrian safety in parking lots and garages.
- Alleviating parking congestion where appropriate by converting underdeveloped open lots into public and private parking lots.
- Improving signage and visibility of public parking facilities.

NH-27a. Downtown Parking Strategy. Continue to maintain a comprehensive parking strategy including the management of the operations (revenue, enforcement and maintenance).

Responsibility: Management Services, Public Works
Timeframe: Ongoing
Resources: Parking Services Fund

See C-30a (Downtown Parking District).

Downtown Urban Design

NH-28. Special Place.

Preserve Downtown's reputation as a special place by developing a design strategy that capitalizes on Downtown's existing strengths:

- Unique urban characteristics and density,
- Diversity in architectural design, and
- Historic heritage and buildings.

See NH-29a (Implement Downtown Design Guidelines).

NH-29. Downtown Design.

New and remodeled buildings must contribute to Downtown's hometown feel. Design elements that enhance Downtown's identity and complement the existing attractive environment are encouraged, and may be required for locations with high visibility or for compatibility with historic structures. Design considerations include:

- Varied and distinctive building designs,
- Sensitive treatment of historic resources,
- Generous landscaping to accent buildings,
- Appropriate materials and construction, and
- Site design and streetscape continuity.

NH-29a. Implement Downtown Design Guidelines. Implement the Downtown Design Guidelines through the design review process.

Responsibility: Community Development

Timeframe: Ongoing

Resources: Staff Time

NH-29b. Update Downtown Design Guidelines. Update the Downtown Design Guidelines and zoning regulations as needed.

Responsibility: Community

Development, Economic Development

Timeframe: Ongoing

Resources: Staff Time, General Fund



Sidewalk dining is encouraged in the downtown.

NH-30. Pedestrian Environments.

Enhance Downtown's streets by establishing pedestrian environments appropriate to each District. These environments could include the following:

- Well-designed window displays and views into retail stores,
- Outdoor businesses and street vendors,
- Signs that are easy for pedestrians to see and read,
- Sun-filled outdoor courtyards, plazas and seating areas,
- Attractive street furniture and lighting,
- Information kiosks and public art.

See NH-29a. (Implement Downtown Design Guidelines), NH-29b (Update Downtown Design Guidelines), EV-2e (Street Vendors).

NH-31. Ground Floor Designed for Pedestrians.

Ensure that all buildings, regardless of height, are comfortable for people at the street level. This includes:

- Relating wall and window heights to the height of people,
- Use of architectural elements to create visual interest,
- Adding landscaping and insets and alcoves for pedestrian interest, and,
- Stepping upper stories back as building height increases.

See NH-29a (Implement Downtown Design Guidelines), NH-29b (Update Downtown Design Guidelines).

NH-32. Historic Character.

Recognize and use the unique character of Downtown’s many attractive, well-liked, historic buildings. Encourage new development on sites in the Downtown area to be compatible with nearby historic buildings, the historic Downtown street pattern, and the area’s historic, pedestrian oriented character.

See LU-2a (Development Review), CD-4a (Historic Resources Information), CD-4b (Adaptive Reuse), CA-13a (Inventory Update) and CA-13b (Preservation Ordinance).

NH-33. Downtown’s Neighbors.

Distinguish Downtown from adjoining neighborhood areas by:

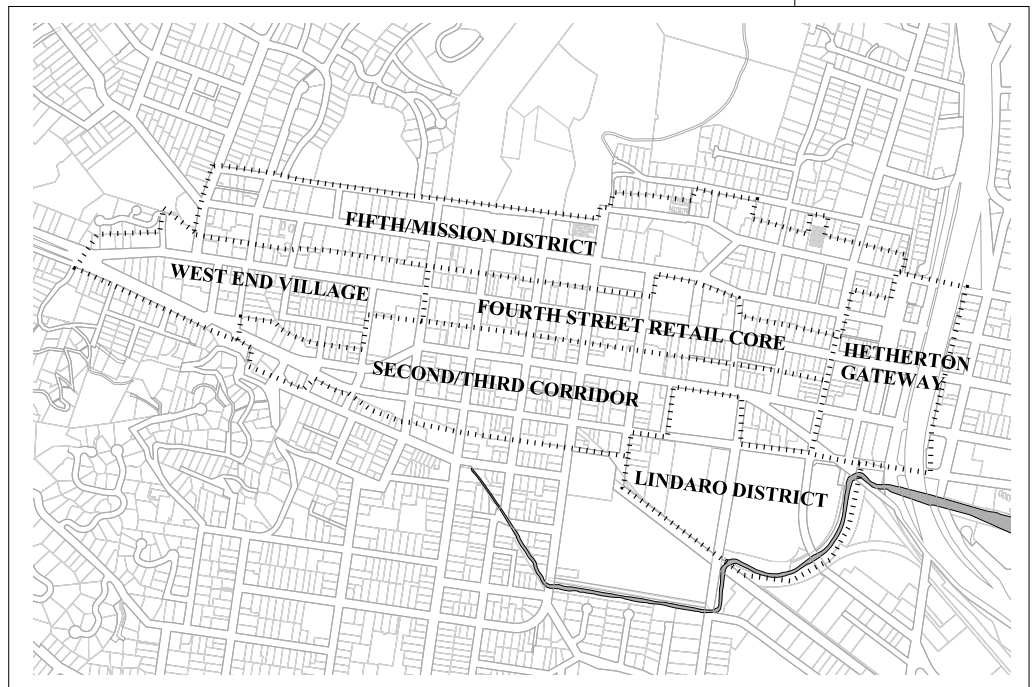
- Establishing major entrances to Downtown with gateway treatments,
- Keeping all Downtown activities within the Downtown area, and
- Providing a gradual transition into adjacent residential neighborhoods in terms of building scale and intensity of use.

See CD-1a (Gateway Enhancements) NH-29a (Implement Downtown Design Guidelines), and NH-29b (Update Downtown Design Guidelines).

Downtown Districts

Downtown San Rafael is a mosaic of six districts, each of which has a unique character. The individual character of each district is well defined; the districts are interconnected and together make up our whole Downtown. The Districts are:

- Fourth Street Retail Core
- Hetherton Office District
- Lindaro Office District



Our Vision of Downtown describes six districts within the Downtown area.

- Second/Third Mixed-Use District
- West End Village
- Fifth/Mission Residential/Office District

Vision districts have been translated into General Plan land use designations, which closely follow the boundaries described in the *Vision*. Three districts are not expected to change significantly: Fifth/Mission, the West End Village, and the Fourth Street Retail Core. Other parts of Downtown are expected to have greater changes over time, particularly the Lindero Office District, which is now partially vacant.

Fourth Street Retail Core

Fourth Street Retail Core: The heart of Downtown, the primary shopping area and the center of entertainment, public events and social activities. This district encompasses Fourth Street from Lincoln to E Street.

NH-34. Fourth Street Retail Core.

- Mix of Uses.** Make the Fourth Street Retail Core the center of San Rafael’s activities, with a diverse mix of uses including retail, service, entertainment, cultural, finance, office and housing. Housing and general office uses are encouraged on upper floors.
- Successful retail area.** Develop Downtown San Rafael as one of the most interesting and popular shopping areas in the Bay Area by making it vibrant and alive all day and evening, full of people and activities and offering a wide variety of unique shops. With uses such as restaurants, coffee houses and bookstores, Fourth Street and the cross streets will be a vigorous and growing retail center highly valued by Marin County residents.
- “Alive-after-five.”** Maintain a mix of businesses active at different times of the day and the week, especially to keep Fourth Street active and busy after 5 PM; by encouraging existing businesses to remain open in the evenings; and by attracting new businesses, that are open later in the day.
- Entertainment Center.** Encourage the location of additional entertainment venues in the Fourth Street corridor, which will attract people from throughout the Bay Area, and benefit Downtown businesses and the San Rafael community.



Restored after the 1989 earthquake, the Rafael Film Center features films from around the world.

restaurants, coffee houses and bookstores, Fourth Street and the cross streets will be a vigorous and growing retail center highly valued by Marin County residents.

NH-34a. Downtown Management. Coordinate and encourage property and business owners, the San Rafael Chamber of Commerce, city officials and the Business Improvement District (BID) in efforts to market Downtown businesses.

- Responsibility: Economic Development
- Timeframe: Ongoing
- Resources: Redevelopment

NH-34b. Fourth Street Staging Area. Use the Fourth Street Retail Core as the primary staging area for Downtown events and activities. Continue to accommodate enterprises ranging from the Downtown Farmers Market, parades, fiestas and sidewalk sales to outdoor cafes and vendors.

Responsibility: Economic Development
Timeframe: Ongoing
Resources: Staff Time, Partnerships

See LU-2a (Development Review), NH-16a (Business Development Efforts), and NH-20a (Downtown Events).

NH-35. Fourth Street Retail Core Design Considerations.

- a. **Heart of Downtown.** Enhance the image of the San Rafael City Plaza as the Heart of Downtown, so it will be the area that first comes to mind when people think of Downtown. Promote Fourth Street as a lively area where people congregate before moving on to the Rafael Theater, shopping areas and evening activities.
- b. **Outdoor Gathering Places.** Encourage a variety of inviting and safe public and private outdoor gathering places for community celebrations, people watching and recreation.
- c. **Fourth Street Core Improvements.** Improve the appearance of Fourth Street through landscaping and additional trees, street and sidewalk enhancements, infilling undeveloped lots, discouraging curb cuts, and renovating building facades.
- d. **Parking lot connections.** Improve pedestrian connections between public parking lots and Fourth Street.
- e. **Heights.** Heights of individual buildings will vary, ranging from two to four stories, with increased height permitted in some locations consistent with bonus height policies. Buildings on the south side of Fourth Street should limit the blockage of sunlight on the sidewalks on the north side of Fourth Street.



City Plaza in Downtown, created by closing part of Court Street, opened in 2002.

NH-35a. Plaza Improvements. Consider improvements for the Plaza such as additional landscaping including shade trees, seating and public art, and retain its function as a community-gathering place.

Responsibility: Public Works
Timeframe: Long Term
Resources: Capital Improvement

See NH-29a (Implement Downtown Design Guidelines), NH-29b (Update Downtown Design Guidelines) and CD-17a (Street Furnishings).

Hetherton Office District

The major gateway to Downtown and center of our transportation system. This office district is adjacent to Highway 101.

NH-36. Hetherton Office District.

- a. **Office Center.** Emphasize development related to the Transportation Center, especially office and professional service buildings, which could include limited areas for street-level retail uses. Residential is also strongly encouraged in this area.
- b. **Transportation Hub.** Use the Transportation Center to coordinate and facilitate the different ways people move to and around Downtown, including bus, rail, auto, bicycle and on foot. Include safe pedestrian and bicycle connections linking this area to the stores, services, cultural facilities, and recreational opportunities in other parts of Downtown. Expand connections from the Transportation Center to other parts of the City by:
 - Encouraging expanded bus transit,
 - Considering shuttle service to feasible locales when such service is warranted and can be funded,
 - Incorporating a rail station if rail service is initiated,
 - Improving walking and biking facilities,
 - Providing a safe connection to Mahon Path,
 - Facilitating the movement of commuters to and from the neighborhoods, and
 - Creating safer pedestrian crossings on Second and Third Streets.

NH-36a. Zoning Ordinance. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow more flexibility in uses in Hetherton Office zoning district.

Responsibility: Community Development
Timeframe: Short Term
Resources: Staff Time

NH-36b. Transit Service. Support efforts by Caltrans, the Golden Gate Bridge District, the Marin County Transit District and other transportation providers to increase transit service at the Transportation Center.

Responsibility: Public Works, Community Development
Timeframe: Short Term
Resources: Staff Time

See C-17a (SMART Service), C-20a (Transit Hubs) and LU-2a (Development Review).

NH-37. Hetherton Office District Design Considerations.

- a. **Downtown Gateway.** Transform the Hetherton Office District into an elegant transition into Downtown San Rafael. Improve the entries to Downtown at Third Street, Fifth Street, Mission Avenue, Lincoln Avenue and the freeway ramps with entrance graphics, enhanced planting and lighting. Buildings should complement the district's entryway treatment and provide an attractive facade along Hetherton Street.
- b. **Fourth and Hetherton.** Announce and mark this primary gateway to Downtown with a distinctive gateway treatment at Fourth Street and Hetherton, which is gracious and welcoming in character. Design issues to consider are:
 - Plaza or other open space areas both public and private,
 - Public art,

- Strong landscaping design, and
- Retail uses opening on to a plaza or other open space areas.

c. **Hetherton Design.** Encourage projects of high quality and varied design with landmark features that enhance the District's gateway image.

Examples include:

- Building design emphasizing the gateway character and complementing the district's transitional treatment by incorporating accent elements, public art and other feature items,
- Upper stories stepped back,
- Ground floor areas have a pedestrian scale,
- Retail uses opening onto public areas,
- Useable outdoor spaces, courtyards and arcades that are landscaped, in sunny locations and protected from freeway noise.



The San Rafael Corporate Center, a Class A office development, is a redevelopment of a Brownfield site in Downtown.

d. **Under Highway 101 Viaduct.** Work with Caltrans to make the area under the freeway attractive and safe with, for example, maintained landscaping, public art, creek enhancements or fencing.

e. **Height.** Building heights of three to five stories are allowed west of the rail transitway, and typically up to three stories east of the rail transitway.

NH-37a.Freeway Ramps. Work with Caltrans, civic organizations and neighborhood associations to beautify the freeway ramps with enhanced landscaping.

Responsibility: Public Works

Timeframe: Ongoing

Resources: Staff Time

See NH-29a (Implement Downtown Design Guidelines), NH-29b (Update Downtown Design Guidelines).

Lindaro Office District

At the southeast corner of Downtown, a major development area with office and some retail uses.

NH-38. Lindaro Office District.

- Strategically significant gateway.** Continue the transformation of the Lindaro Office District into one of the most handsome urban places in Marin County by developing landmark, well-designed buildings. This District will be a special asset to the city and enhance Downtown's image as a high quality business center. The primary purpose of this district is to attract new people that would shop and use the rest of Downtown, particularly the Fourth Street Retail Core.
- Mix of uses.** Encourage an office complex that may include limited and incidental office-serving retail uses, a major hotel, cultural or entertainment facility, or residential, if feasible. Large community-serving ("big box") retail and shopping centers are not allowed in this District. Any project must achieve the objectives described in (a) above.

- c. **San Rafael Corporate Center.** Encourage the completion of the development of the San Rafael Corporate Center as a distinctive, high quality office center, which can include a coordinated mix of uses as stated above complementing, not competing with other Downtown Districts, especially the Fourth Street Retail Core. This project's superior design quality will be the major identifying characteristic of the District and must be a graceful addition to the views of Downtown from Highway 101.

See LU-2a (Development Review), NH-16a (Business Development Efforts), NH-29a (Implement Downtown Design Guidelines), NH-29b (Update Downtown Design Guidelines).

NH-39. Lindaro Office District Design Considerations.

- a. **Building design and sense of place.** Evoke a strong sense of place through site and building design that includes:
- Buildings oriented to take advantage of the Creek frontage and views of Mt. Tamalpais,
 - Variety in architectural styles,
 - Varied setbacks on Second Street,
 - Arcades and courtyards,
 - Buildings that are inviting and attractive on all sides facing the street or pedestrian areas,
 - Reduced visual impact of parking areas through site design and landscaping,
 - Screened PG&E transformer area, and
 - Screened areas for service vehicles.
- b. **Regional and neighborhood emphasis.** Although the District should be architecturally distinctive and urban in character, appealing to the broader region, blend development carefully with neighborhoods to the south and with adjacent office development in the Second/Third Corridor and Hetherington Gateway Districts.
- c. **Active ground floor.** Enhance the pedestrians' environment through active street frontages and buildings with a human scale at the ground level.
- d. **Lindaro connections.** Tie the different properties and developments in the area together through a wide variety of elements including:
- Compatible uses and tenant mix,
 - A network of public spaces linked by pedestrian pathways, and
 - Enhanced appearances of Lincoln Avenue, Lindaro Street and Andersen Drive through continuity of streetscape features such as lighting, street trees and sidewalks.
- e. **Links to other districts.** Connect Lindaro to the rest of Downtown through site design and streetscape continuity with adjoining districts.
- f. **Mahon Creek improvements.** Continue to improve access to Mahon Creek through useable recreation areas, landscaping, bike paths and walkways.
- g. **Height.** Provide a variety of heights in individual buildings: two to four stories, with a height bonus up to six stories.

NH-39a. Mahon Creek. Complete the implementation of the adopted Mahon Creek Final Conceptual Plan.

Responsibility: Public Works

Timeframe: Long Term

Resources: Grants, Donations, Capital Improvement

See NH-29a (Implement Downtown Design Guidelines), NH-29b (Update Downtown Design Guidelines).

Second/Third Mixed Use District

An attractive, safe and efficient transportation corridor along Second and Third Streets.

NH-40. Second/Third Mixed-Use District.

- a. **Auto-oriented uses.** Allow a vital, varied and compatible mix of offices, retail uses, and residential uses, where appropriate. Uses usually accessed by car should be concentrated along the west end of Second Street to take advantage of the high traffic volumes.
- b. **Enhance pedestrian character.** Enhance the pedestrian character of the A and B cross streets by encouraging a variety of uses, including neighborhood serving and specialty retail uses, and residential uses.
- c. **PG&E office building site.** This site offers a major redevelopment opportunity as an infill site that could accommodate a mix of land uses, including residential if feasible, that would take advantage of the site's high visibility from Second and Third Streets, extend the uses on the San Rafael Corporate Center, or provide patrons for the Fourth Street Retail Core.
- d. **Transportation Corridor.** Make Second and Third Streets a very attractive, safe and efficient transportation corridor that allows smooth travel through Downtown, provides easy access to the Fourth Street Core via the cross streets and is safe to walk along and cross. Substantially improve Second and Third Streets through:
 - Screening pedestrians from the perception of traffic noise and encouraging pedestrian use of other streets,
 - Improving pedestrian connections to Fourth Street,
 - Providing safe crosswalks at all intersections,
 - Reducing the number of driveways that interrupt sidewalks, and
 - Managing traffic flow for efficiency, not speed.
- e. **Improved parking.** Develop attractive, screened and easy-to-find public and private parking areas serving both the Fourth Street Retail Core and the Second/Third Street Corridor.

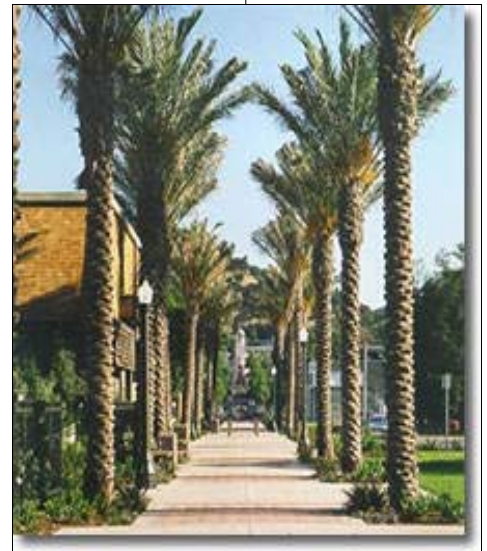
NH-40a. Zoning Ordinance. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow more flexibility in uses in CSMU, 2/3 MUE, and MUW zoning districts.

Responsibility: Community Development

Timeframe: Short Term

Resources: Staff Time

See LU-2a (Development Review), NH-18a (Hotel/Cineplex) and NH-29a (Implement Downtown Design Guidelines), NH-29b (Update Downtown Design Guidelines).



Palm trees frame the view up A Street from Albert Park to St. Raphael's Church.

NH-41. Second/Third Mixed Use District Design Considerations.

- a. **An inviting appearance.** Create an inviting appearance to people traveling Second and Third Streets. Encourage attractive, creative and varied architecture on Second and Third Streets, with design detail on all sides of buildings visible to the street or pedestrians.
- b. **Unique character of cross streets.** A, B, C and D Streets are important links from Fourth Street to neighborhoods south of Downtown. Strengthen the unique character of these cross streets by giving special treatment to:
 - A Street as an important visual and pedestrian connection between Mission San Rafael Arcangel and Albert Park and Andersen Drive,
 - B Street as an area of strong historic character, and
 - B, C and D Streets as major pedestrian connections between the Gerstle Park Neighborhood and the Fourth Street Retail Core.
- c. **Height.** Individual building heights will vary and typically range from two to four stories east of B Street, and from one to three stories generally west of B Street.

See NH-29a (Implement Downtown Design Guidelines), NH-29b (Update Downtown Design Guidelines), LU-13 (Height Bonuses), Exhibit 9 (Building Height Limits in Downtown San Rafael).

West End Village

A mixed-use village with strong connections to the Retail Core. This district is located along Fourth Street west of E Street.

NH-42. West End Village.

- a. **Village within Downtown.** Keep the West End Village a unique, friendly, desirable place to live and shop. Activities in this district help meet the needs of the surrounding neighborhoods. Encourage residential use on the upper floors of buildings.
- b. **Unique shopping district.** Continue to encourage development that makes the West End Village a unique place to shop. One-of-a-kind businesses, such as bakeries, restaurants, craft stores, art galleries and furniture stores; outdoor uses such as sidewalk cafes; and a major retail anchor use are all part of the West End's special blend of retail.
- c. **Retail anchor.** Encourage upgrading the Yardbird's Center retail anchor by:
 - Integrating all the individual properties and parking lots into a well designed center,
 - Coordinating and connecting the shopping center with the other stores and services along the west end of Fourth Street,
 - Providing a wide variety of goods and services, and
 - Including outdoor restaurants, sales and activities.

- d. **Improve parking.** Upgrade existing parking and create new, easy to find parking areas by:
 - Requiring new development to provide adequate new parking areas,
 - Screening parking areas with landscaping, and
 - Locating parking lot entrances on side streets where possible.
- e. **Parking Lots on Fourth Street.** Encourage the redevelopment of parking lot sites (such as car dealers and private, open parking lots) on Fourth Street west of Shaver Street.

See LU-2a (Development Review), NH-29a (Implement Downtown Design Guidelines), NH-29b (Update Downtown Design Guidelines).

NH-43. West End Village Design Considerations.

- a. **Residential design.** Blend new multifamily development on Second and Third Streets into the character and appearance of the Latham Street neighborhood. For example, new development should have elements similar to existing structures, entrances oriented toward the street, and driveways and garages that are recessed or under the buildings. Encourage lot consolidation for better site design.
- b. **Village identity.** Create a distinct identity for the Village with, for example, a sign program or bench program unique to the District.
- c. **Historic neighborhood shopping district.** Preserve the West End Village as a beautiful, inviting, relaxed place with a comfortable neighborhood character. Keep its historic appearance and small-scale buildings. West End Village design includes:
 - Retaining the small storefront pattern, and building to the sidewalk, and
 - Facade improvements and lighter and brighter building colors.
- d. **Attractive outdoor setting.** Increase interest for pedestrians with:
 - Outdoor cafes and other activities,
 - Streetscape improvements, such as decorative banners, benches and public art,
 - Small staging areas for events in the Village and/or extend into the Core,
 - Sidewalk repairs,
 - Views to the creek where possible, and
 - Plentiful and colorful landscaping.
- e. **Fourth Street Retail Core connection.** Visually connect the Village to the Core, for example, by installing street lighting and trees similar to those in the Core.
- f. **Height.** Respect the low scale development of buildings one to three stories in height with housing or office above ground floor retail.

See NH-29a (Implement Downtown Design Guidelines), NH-29b (Update Downtown Design Guidelines), LU-13 (Height Bonuses), Exhibit 9 (Building Height Limits in Downtown San Rafael).

Fifth/Mission Residential/Office District

Our civic center and cultural district, with residential and office uses. This district is located along Fifth and Mission, west of Irwin Street.

NH-44. Fifth/Mission Residential/Office District.

- a. **San Rafael City Hall.** Retain government services at San Rafael City Hall.
- b. **Office and residential uses.** Intermingle office and residential uses throughout the District. East of B Street is a comfortable blend of mid-sized office buildings and residential developments. Medical services, social service providers and non-profit organizations are concentrated in the attractive Victorian buildings west of E Street.
- c. **Cultural district.** Encourage a thriving cultural district, based on the many community-cultural activities at the theaters, schools, library, museum, churches and historic buildings.

See LU-2a (Development Review) and CA-11a (Facility Needs).

NH-45. Fifth/Mission Residential/Office District Design Considerations.

- a. **Culturally-rich historic district.** Reinforce the graceful, historic and cultural strengths of the District by showcasing resources, such as the Falkirk Cultural Center, the City Library building, the Boyd House and the many Victorian structures by, for example:
 - Retaining public spaces, such as the lawn area in front of Falkirk Cultural Center,
 - Opening the front of the Boyd House landscaping to the street and promoting adaptive reuse of the historic home and landscape,
 - Adding a historic museum in Boyd Park and creating a more identifiable and accessible entrance into Boyd Park,
 - Improving pedestrian safety along Mission Street, and
 - Connecting this area into the activities at Courthouse Square and the City Plaza.
- b. **Fifth Avenue and A Street.** Retain the open areas at the intersection of Fifth Avenue and A Street on the north side of Fifth Avenue in front of St. Raphael's Church, and along the Courthouse Square Building.
- c. **Fifth/Mission design.** Encourage an interesting diversity of building styles in the Fifth/Mission District ranging from historic Victorians to well-articulated new office buildings. On Fifth Avenue west of E Street and on the east and west ends of Mission Avenue:
 - Design infill office and residential development to be compatible with existing neighborhood qualities, and
 - Include landscaped front yards and historic building characteristics.
- d. **Fifth/Mission pedestrian character.** Enhance the pedestrian character by preserving mature landscaping, planting more street trees and by enhancing views down the cross streets. In addition, establish a strong visual and pedestrian access connection on B Street from Boyd Park to Albert Park, and stronger connections between the Fifth/Mission District and surrounding neighborhoods.

- e. **Height.** Heights of individual buildings will vary, but be similar in scale to existing buildings west of E Street, and on the east end of Mission. Two to three story offices are anticipated east of B Street.

See NH-29a (Implement Downtown Design Guidelines), NH-29b (Update Downtown Design Guidelines).

BAYSIDE ACRES

Bayside Acres is in an unincorporated portion of the City along Point San Pedro Road primarily developed with large single-family homes on hillside lots. Homes located west of Point San Pedro and along the Bay are developed on smaller lots. A few properties have been annexed into San Rafael in recent years.

BRET HARTE

Formerly a dairy farm, Bret Harte is a historical district developed after World War II. Land use in this neighborhood is primarily residential with single-family homes and high-density apartments along Woodland Avenue. Residents of Bret Harte travel through an adjacent industrial area to access their neighborhood, thus upgrades to Francisco Boulevard West and Woodland Avenue are of great interest. Due to the smaller size of many of the homes, Bret Harte is considered a more affordable housing area and attracts many young couples and families. The Bret Harte Park is a central fixture of the neighborhood and is the setting for many community events and activities.

NH-46. Bret Harte Neighborhood Plan.

Prepare a plan for the neighborhood to address neighborhood concerns.

See NH-1a. (Neighborhood Planning Process).

CALIFORNIA PARK

California Park is an unincorporated area of the City, east of the Bret Harte neighborhood. The 103-acre neighborhood consists of single-family homes and apartments. The undeveloped Scheutzen Subdivision, located along Auburn Street, consists of very small lots within a wetland area.

NH-47. California Park.

Absent significant environmental constraints, a medium density residential General Plan amendment could be considered for the Scheutzen site due to the subdivision's proximity to the proposed transitway and a potential transit station location. Future development on the site shall protect all on-site wetland areas.

See LU-7 (Land Use Planning in Surrounding Jurisdictions).

Vision of Bayside Acres

Bayside Acres, located in an unincorporated area of the County, is one of San Rafael's less dense neighborhoods and is not expected to change. However, annexation of more properties into the City will remain a possibility.

Vision of Bret Harte

New development in this neighborhood is expected to be minimal, with development limited to a few single-family homes on hillside lots. This area also needs to be protected from the potential impacts of nearby industrial businesses.

Vision of California Park

This neighborhood, located in an unincorporated area of the County, has some development potential remaining on the Scheutzen parcels. Any development of these parcels will need to protect the on-site wetlands.

CANAL NEIGHBORHOOD

The Canal Neighborhood encompasses the residential and nonresidential areas south of the San Rafael Canal and east of Highway 101. The residential portion, including the Canal, Spinnaker and Bay Point houses more people than any other part of San Rafael. It is comprised of many large apartment buildings, condominium complexes, townhomes and duplexes, as well as single-family homes along the Canalfront.

The nonresidential areas include an older industrial area north of Bellam Blvd. and west of Belvedere Street, a newer light industrial/office area south of Bellam Blvd., and a light industrial/office and industrial area between I-580 and Highway 101. Businesses within the neighborhood include industrial, commercial, car dealerships, and office. The neighborhood has a major impact on the local economy comprising 15 percent of the City's jobs.

The neighborhood also has outstanding natural features including the San Rafael Canal, a two-mile long Bay Shoreline Parkband featuring the Bay Trail, regionally important wetlands, and the San Quentin Ridge hillside. Parks and schools include Pickleweed Park and Bahia Vista Elementary School.

Vision of the Canal

There will not be much more development in the area. Marin Square is the Southern Gateway to San Rafael. Potential land uses include a hotel (Gary Place site), and mixed-use (neighborhood and region serving), with retail on the ground level and residential above or behind the street frontage.

The Medway/Vivian Way area is the heart of the Canal neighborhood, and should be redeveloped with neighborhood serving mixed-uses. Gathering places with pedestrian connections through the Medway-Vivian block should also be encouraged.

The corridor from Francisco Boulevard East along Medway Road to Canal Street is the major entryway into the Canal neighborhood, a true gateway for residents, business owners, students, and shoppers. Sidewalks will be widened, lighting and landscaping installed and amenities such as benches and signage will be added. All of this will make the corridor more inviting and safer by striking a balance between pedestrians and bicyclists and the numerous cars, buses and trucks that drive through the corridor every day.

General commercial should be allowed along Francisco Boulevard East, with neighborhood retail and services uses such as a health center, police station, and childcare.

Neighborhood Homes

NH-48. New Residential Areas.

Develop well-designed new residential areas at medium to high densities in the neighborhood. Provide residential development opportunities close to jobs, and support and enhance the existing residential neighborhood.

See LU-14a (Land Use Compatibility).

NH-49. Conflicting Uses.

Prevent the encroachment of new residential development into the Light Industrial/Office District to minimize conflicts. Businesses locating adjacent to residential areas shall be designed to minimize nuisance impacts.

See LU-14a (Land Use Compatibility) and CD-12a (Compatibility of Building Patterns).

NH-50. Canal Neighborhood Plan.

Prepare a new Canal Neighborhood Plan. Building on the results of Canal Voice, create a vision for the neighborhood that addresses the need for better access, more shopping and services, and improved housing.

See NH-1a. (Neighborhood Planning).

Neighborhood Economy and Culture

NH-51. Existing Business Areas.

Support and encourage the upgrading of existing business areas, consistent with infrastructure needs. Encourage redevelopment and upgrading of existing sites.

See EV-13a (Zoning Regulations).

NH-52. New Business Development.

Encourage and give priority to new business development that benefits the neighborhood through provision of needed services, low traffic impacts, or employment of a high percentage of neighborhood residents. Encourage opportunities for local residents to own and operate businesses.

See EV-2b (Infill and Reuse Opportunities), LU-3a (Project Selection Process) and LU-14a (Land Use Compatibility).

NH-53. Building and Automotive Services.

Maintain availability of sites for building, automotive and related service industries important to San Rafael's economy and needed for the convenience of its residents and businesses.

See LU-16a (Building and Automotive Services).

NH-54. Medway/Vivian Redevelopment.

Encourage the following in the Medway/Vivian Way area:

- Neighborhood serving-uses, such as a health center, neighborhood retail and services, and childcare;
- Community gathering places; and
- Pedestrian connections through the Medway/Vivian block.

NH-54a. Expansion of the NC District. Amend the zoning ordinance and map to expand the NC District to encourage neighborhood-serving commercial uses and housing.

Responsibility: Community Development

Timeframe: Short Term

Resources: Staff Time

See LU-2a (Development Review).

NH-55. Canalways.

Recognize the high resource value of the site's wetlands that provide habitat to many species, which may include rare and endangered species. In addition, recognize that this site is in an area affected by traffic congestion. With any development of this property, buffer site wetlands from buildings and parking lots, and obtain trail easements and improvements for the Jean and John Starkweather Shoreline Park. Development shall be located along the western edge of the site and to the greatest extent feasible in areas outside of delineated wetlands or areas determined as critical upland habitat for endangered species.

NH-55a. Wetlands Enhancement. Require a wetlands delineation and wetland habitat analysis to assist in identifying appropriate area for development.

Responsibility: Community Development

Timeframe: Long Term

Resources: Fees

NH-56. Windward Way (APN 009-330-01).

Allow medium density residential use on the privately owned 2.5-acre parcel with development clustered at the south end to retain views of the park site from Windward Way. Avoid conflicts with overhead wires.

See LU-2a. (Development Review) and PR-9 (New Parks).

NH-57. City Lot at Southwest Corner of Bellam and Windward Way.

Use this site, or proceeds from development of the site, to provide needed neighborhood services.

See LU-2a (Development Review).

NH-58. Marin Square/Gary Place Redevelopment.

Encourage joint planning for the Marin Square/Gary Place area, including improved access to Gary Place. With any future redevelopment of the Marin Square shopping center and Gary Place, emphasize the following land uses: mixed-use (retail on the ground level and residential above), and possibly a hotel.



Marin Square could be redeveloped as a mixed-use center, with housing and a hotel.

NH-58a. Development Review Process. As part of a development application, consider land use changes to Gary Place to allow redevelopment of the site.

Responsibility: Community Development

Timeframe: Long Term

Resources: Fees

See LU-2a (Development Review).

NH-59. Cal-Pox Site (East of Home Depot).

Allow light industrial/office and specialty retail uses. Traffic congestion in the area, prior to needed roadway improvements, may limit development on the site to low traffic-generating uses. Hotel use may be considered for the site provided that

environmental analysis demonstrates that potentially hazardous soils conditions are in compliance with State and Federal laws and that geo-seismic conditions and commercial use conflicts have been mitigated.

NH-59a. Development Review Process. As part of a development application, consider land use changes to Cal-Pox Site to allow for redevelopment.

Responsibility: Community Development

Timeframe: Long Term

Resources: Fees

See LU-2a (Development Review).

NH-60. Marin Rod & Gun Club.

Should the club discontinue use of the site for recreational activities, allow high density residential or hotel use and provide for public access.

NH-60a. Development Review Process. As part of a development application, consider land use changes to the Marin Rod and Gun Club to allow for redevelopment.

Responsibility: Community Development

Timeframe: Long Term

Resources: Fees

See LU-2a (Development Review).

Neighborhood Design

NH-61. Public Plaza.

Encourage the creation of a public plaza to serve the Canal community.

NH-61a. Public Plaza. Through development review process, encourage a public plaza area. If funding becomes available, identify a location and purchase land for a plaza.

Responsibility: Community Development, Economic Development

Timeframe: Long Term

Resources: Grants, Donations, Staff Time

NH-62. Parks and Recreation.

Increase recreation opportunities and facilities to serve neighborhood residents and employees. Complete planned Pickleweed Park and Starkweather Shoreline Park improvements, enhance Beach Park, and plan and implement park improvements at the Bellam/Windward Way site.

See PR-5a (Needs Survey), PR-7a (Community Park Improvements), PR-8a (Neighborhood Park Improvements), PR-(a) (Bellam/Windward Way site) and PR-13a (Commercial Recreation).

NH-63. Community Meeting Rooms.

Meet the need for affordable meeting/activity space, during prime times for the community for resident serving programs and activities such as English as a Second Language classes and other programs and activities, with priority given to neighborhood residents.

NH-63a. Community Use of Pickleweed Park. Continue to encourage neighborhood use of Pickleweed Community Center.

Responsibility: Community Services

Timeframe: Long Term

Resources: Staff Time, Partnerships

NH-64. Schools.

Support efforts of the School District to provide adequate space for increasing student enrollments. Encourage continued City/School dialogue on such issues.

NH-64a. Schools. Continue to support School District efforts to provide to expand or replace the existing Bahia Vista School in the Canal neighborhoods.

Responsibility: City Manager

Timeframe: Long Term

Resources: Staff Time

NH-65. Library Services.

Support expanded library services in the Canal Neighborhood.

See CA-12a (Opportunities for Community-Based Libraries).

NH-66. Childcare.

Provide more affordable, quality, childcare facilities that support the community.

See LU-19a (Zoning for Childcare Programs) and G-15a (Joint Use of Educational Facilities).

NH-67. Community Classes and Programs.

Provide more programming at Pickleweed, such as College of Marin bilingual classes, library services, Kids' Club, pre-school and after-school programs.

See PR-27a (Recreational Programs) and PR-28a (Summer Programs).

NH-68. Shoreline Embankments.

Require riprap on the outside face of levees facing the Bay. After large storms, inspect existing riprap on levee faces. Repair and replace as necessary to provide adequate wave erosion protection.

NH-68a. Riprap. When the levees are improved, require riprap of the type and size approved by the Public Works Department on the outside face of the levee.

Responsibility: Public Works

Timeframe: Long Term

Resources: Staff Time

See S-17a (Title 18 Flood Protection Standards).

NH-69. San Quentin Ridge.

Preserve San Quentin Ridge as open space through the development process due to its visual significance, importance as a community separator, slope stability problems and wildlife/endangered species habitat value. The exact delineation of "conservation" and "development" portions of the site on the land use map is schematic, with development to be limited to the lower, less steep portion of the site. Provide a public access trail.

See OS-1b (Preservation Opportunities), OS-3a (Management of Private Open Space) and CON-12a (Hillside Design Guidelines).

NH-70. Access to Open Space.

Provide public access to open space areas when projects are approved, including access to and along the shoreline, portions of the Canalfront, and San Quentin Ridge. Minimize public access conflicts with sensitive habitat areas and with nearby development, including parking conflicts.

See OS-4a (Access Points).



Starkweather Shoreline Park is a beautiful setting to enjoy the bayfront.

NH-71. Gathering Places.

Support efforts to provide places where neighbors can meet each other, such as at Pickleweed Park, the Community Center, or a public plaza.

NH-71a. Development Review Process. Through the development review process, encourage the provision of neighborhood gathering places.

Responsibility: Community Development
Timeframe: Long Term
Resources: Fees

Neighborhood Circulation

NH-72. Neighborhood Design.

Improve neighborhood entry roads and landscaping, and retain views.

NH-72a. Medway Improvements. Complete the design phase and construction of streetscape improvements of the Medway/Canal project funded in part by a grant from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission.

Responsibility: Public Works
Timeframe: Short Term
Resources: Grants, Fees, Staff Time

See CD-8a (Gateways) and CD-9a (Corridor Design Guidelines).

NH-73. I-580/101/Bellam Blvd. Interchange Improvements.

Pursue improvement of the I-580/101/Bellam Blvd. interchange.

NH-73a. Caltrans. Work with Caltrans on an effective and attractive design for the Highway 101 and I-580 interchange.

Responsibility: Public Works, Community Development
Timeframe: Long Term
Resources: State and Federal Fund, Mitigation Fees

CANAL WATERFRONT

The San Rafael Canal, stretching from Albert Park to the Bay, is an underutilized community asset. Existing uses transition from single-family homes and apartments east of Harbor Street, and commercial uses from Harbor Street to Grand Avenue. Most of these commercial uses are marine-oriented, including four marinas, yacht brokerages, boat repair, fishing supplies and commercial fishing operations. Other commercial uses include restaurants, the Montecito Shopping Center, the Harbor Shopping Center, and limited office space. Existing public access to the Canal is limited. Beach Park was improved in conjunction with the renovations at the Seafood Peddler restaurant, and Pickleweed Park has a pathway along the Canalfront. In addition, Montecito Shopping Center and the Grand Landing Office building have walkways along the waterway.

Vision of the Canal Waterfront

Improved public access to and along the Canal, both visual and pedestrian, should be actively promoted through redevelopment of properties between Grand Avenue and Harbor Street. A public promenade on either side of the Canal is a high priority. Water dependent industry will continue to be encouraged, but other pedestrian-oriented services, such as restaurants and retail, will also be allowed on ground floors, and housing allowed above. Live-aboard boats will continue to provide additional affordable housing, while adding to the marine character of the area. Improved access to commercial businesses from the water for boaters will also be encouraged. Maintenance of the Canal as a navigable waterway is essential and will require a local funding source for periodic dredging.

Neighborhood Economy and Culture

NH-74. Community-wide Asset.

Promote and improve the San Rafael Canal as a community-wide asset for public and marine related uses, where public access, use and views of the water are maximized, and sensitive wildlife habitat areas are protected. The San Rafael Canal shall be maintained as a navigable waterway.

NH-74a. Design Plan and Vision for the Canalfront. Prepare a Canal Waterway Vision to determine the land use needs of the community, provide solutions to improve the appearance of the Canal and its waterfront and to increase public access, including possible expansion of Beach Park. The Vision should continue to have a marine-related focus. Conduct a community-based vision process with merchants, residents, business people, boaters, and others who live, work near, and use the waterway.

Responsibility: Community Development

Timeframe: Short Term

Resources: Staff Time

See NH-79a (Dredging Program).

NH-75. Canal Waterfront Uses.

Promote marine-related commercial uses west of Harbor Street to serve the recreational and live-aboard boating community. Other commercial uses that encourage pedestrian traffic, such as restaurant and retail uses, will also be allowed on the ground floor. Residential and office uses are allowed above the ground floor. East of Harbor Street, residential uses are to be retained.



Redevelopment along the Canalfront to improve public access is a major goal of the plan.

NH-75a. Zoning Ordinance. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow non-marine-related and residential uses.

Responsibility: Community Development

Timeframe: Short Term

Resources: Staff Time

NH-76. Recreational Boat Facilities.

Existing recreational boat launch facilities along the canal shall not be reduced unless the demand for those facilities no longer exists or adequate substitute space can be provided. Encourage the addition of boat launch facilities, boat trailer parking, and sewage pump-out facilities where appropriate.

NH-76a. Maritime Service Demand. Evaluate the market demand for maritime service uses in developing the Canal Waterfront Vision.

Responsibility: Community Development, Economic Development, Management Services

Timeframe: Short Term

Resources: Staff Time

NH-76b. Public Boat Launching Facilities. Promote the addition of public boat launching facilities, for example for kayaks at Beach Park or behind Montecito Shopping Center.

Responsibility: Community Development, Community Services, Economic Development
Timeframe: Long Term
Resources: State Lands Mitigation Funds, Property Owners, Partnerships,
Concessionaires, Staff Time

NH-77. State Lands Commission Title Claims.

Continue to resolve public trust title claims with individual property owners and the State Lands Commission in order to assist in the redevelopment of the affected properties.

NH-77a. State Lands Commission Title Claims. To assist in redevelopment of affected properties, resolve public trust title claims consistent with State Law Chapter 1742, Statutes of 1971, which allows the City to convey or exchange, subject to approval of the State Lands Commission, certain filled lands which are found to be no longer useful or susceptible to use for the public trust purposes of harbors, commerce, navigation, fisheries, or appurtenances thereto.

Responsibility: Economic Development
Timeframe: Ongoing
Resources: Staff Time

Neighborhood Design

NH-78. Waterfront Design.

Require low scale buildings that provide public views of the water and which do not dominate the Canal. Design factors important in reviewing specific development proposals include pedestrian access, building setbacks from the water, height, landscaping, Canal view protection and enhancement, wildlife habitat protection and high quality architectural design. Until a design plan is prepared, new Canalfront buildings and substantial reconstruction of existing buildings and structures should:

- a. Be set back a minimum of 25 feet from the top of the bank or bulkhead along the Canal for creation of a public promenade,
- b. Increase public access and public view opportunities,
- c. Improve access from the water for boaters, where appropriate,
- d. Locate new structures, or relocate existing structures where feasible, to retain or open up view corridors to the water and activities along the Canal,
- e. Orient uses and buildings towards the Canal waterfront, including building entries where appropriate, and
- f. Improve the appearance of the waterfront through excellent design quality.

NH-78a. Canalfront Design Guidelines. Prepare, as part of the Canal Waterfront Vision, design guidelines in order to improve the appearance of buildings along the Canal Waterfront and incorporate opportunities for public access.

Responsibility: Community Development
Timeframe: Long Term
Resources: Staff Time, General Fund

See program N-74a (Design Plan and Vision for the Canalfront).

NH-79. Canal Maintenance.

Develop a plan for long-term maintenance of the Canal as a navigable waterway, including regular dredging. Encourage the maintenance of docks and elimination of refuse along the Canal.

NH-79a. Dredging Program. Work with property owners to develop a funding program to dredge the Canal. Continue to aggressively pursue a maintenance assessment district, federal funding and other funding sources as available.

Responsibility: Public Works, Management Services

Timeframe: Long Term

Resources: Assessment District, Grants, Federal Funding

NH-79b. Boating Sanitation and Dock Safety. Implement the new Boating Sanitation and Dock Safety Ordinance, and encourage reporting of trash issues to Code Enforcement. Require adequate on-site refuse and recycling facilities.

Responsibility: Community Development

Timeframe: Ongoing

Resources: Staff Time, Fines

See AW-10a (Sanitation Facilities in Boats), AW-10b (Sewage Pump Out Facilities) and AW-10c (Education of Boaters).

NH-80. Canal Water Quality.

Improve the Canal's water quality through regulation of boating discharges, improvement in the quality of storm water runoff, and elimination of refuse along the Canal.

NH-80a. Pump-Out Facilities. Support and co-sponsor the provision of marine pump-out facilities. Consider the need for additional pump-out facilities in conjunction with remodeling of existing marinas.

Responsibility: Community Development

Timeframe: Long Term

Resources: Staff Time, Partnerships

See also NH-78a (Canalfront Design Guidelines), and AW-7a (Countywide Stormwater Program), AW-7b (Stormwater Runoff Measures) and AW-7c (Water Quality Improvements in Canal and Other Waterways).

NH-81. Improvement of Existing Pump Station.

Improve the appearance of or relocate the City's pump station along West Francisco Boulevard near the San Rafael Yacht Harbor.

NH-81a. Improved Appearance of Pump Station. Program funds to upgrade the appearance of the pump station at the yacht harbor on West Francisco Blvd.

Responsibility: Public Work

Timeframe: Long Term

Resources: Staff Time

NH-82. Flood Control Improvements.

Coordinate development and redevelopment of uses along the Canal with needed flood control improvements, including levee improvements.

NH-82a. Flood Control. Work with the Army Corps of Engineers to prepare a cost-effective flood control program for the Canalfront area. Through development review process, require levee improvements as needed to protect existing and new development.

Responsibility: Community Development

Timeframe: Long Term

Resources: Staff Time, Federal Funds

Neighborhood Circulation

NH-83. Canal Access.

Increase and improve public access to the Canal through creation of a public promenade on either side of the waterfront between Grand Avenue and Harbor Street. Provide an improved pedestrian crossing of the Canal at the Grand Avenue bridge. Pursue a new pedestrian crossing to the east if a cost effective and practical design can be achieved. Attempt to create pedestrian and bicycle access to the Mahon Creek path in conjunction with future freeway modifications. Improve water-based access by recreational boaters to Canalfront businesses.

NH-83a. Circulation Improvements. Continue to seek funding opportunities for pedestrian and bicycle enhancements, and include in CIP as funding becomes available.

Responsibility: Public Works

Timeframe: Ongoing

Resources: Staff Time, Grants, Partnerships

NH-83b. Boat docks. Encourage the provision of boat docks in new commercial development to allow access by boaters to Canal businesses.

Responsibility: Community Development

Timeframe: Ongoing

Resources: Fees

See C-24b (Canal Crossing), C-26 (Bicycle Plan Implementation), C-27 (Pedestrian Plan Implementation), NH-78a (Canalfront Design Guidelines), and CD-5a (Views).

Vision of China Camp State Park

Future plans for the China Camp State Park, which is located in an unincorporated area of the County, are consistent with State and local priority needs: the park plan calls for continued restoration of the fishing village and an addition of a Chinese Cultural Center, biking, hiking and equestrian trails, and a small boat launch facility.

CHINA CAMP

China Camp is in the unincorporated area of the San Rafael Planning Area, located along the northern edge of Point San Pedro Road. The primary land use in this neighborhood is the 1,640-acre China Camp State Park. China Camp State Park features an historic fishing village, picnic facilities, hiking trails, campsites, and shore fishing. Park rangers reside at the park.

Neighborhood Design

NH-84. Buck's Landing.

Support limited marine and recreational use on this unincorporated site, consistent with Countywide Plan policy.

See LU-7 (Land Use Planning in Surrounding Jurisdictions).

NH-85. China Camp State Park.

Support efforts to upgrade the recreational facilities at China Camp State Park. Collaborate with County and State Park agencies to create, maintain, manage and regulate a system of interconnective trails for pedestrian, equestrian and biking uses between Barbier Park, county open space and China Camp State Park.

NH-85a. China Camp State Park. Support efforts of the State to maintain and upgrade China Camp State Park.

Responsibility: Public Works, Community Services, Community Development
Timeframe: Ongoing
Resources: Staff Time

Vision of the Civic Center

The Civic Center Master Plan identifies additional office space and more cultural and entertainment facilities, including a museum. A future transit station with parking is planned on the vacant property located adjacent to Highway 101, across from McInnis Parkway. The area also provides an excellent opportunity for the construction of approximately 200 affordable units. The salt marsh and riparian corridors along branches of Gallinas Creek should be protected, improved, and include public viewing areas where appropriate.

CIVIC CENTER

Home to the historic Marin County Civic Center complex designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, the neighborhood is developed with single-family homes, condominiums, apartments, offices and commercial uses, a hotel, a dog park, and a post office. The Civic Center complex includes county offices, courts, jail, exhibit hall, auditorium, and a lagoon park. The Marin County Farmer's Market and Marin County Fair are also held on Civic Center grounds.

Traffic congestion near the Civic Center was recently improved with the construction of a new intersection at North San Pedro Road and Civic Center Road, featuring two left-turn lanes onto Civic Center Drive.

Neighborhood Design



The Marin Civic Center is the only public building designed by Frank Lloyd Wright to be built.

NH-86. Design Considerations for Development in the Vicinity of the Civic Center.

- a. Require urban design analysis to assure compatibility of materials, color and building masses with Civic Center.
- b. Require functional inter-connection with Civic Center.
- c. Design to complement Civic Center architecture rather than compete.
- d. Site design should retain vistas where feasible to Mt. Tamalpais.
- e. Encourage retention of existing historic structures.
- f. Encourage the County to enhance the Civic Center Drive area with safe and pleasant walkways.
- g. Encourage the County to have proposals go through Design Review process, and involve North San Rafael community in evaluation of design, etc.

NH-86a. Civic Center Design. Monitor, review and comment on County development related to its properties surrounding and including the Civic Center. Encourage the County to involve the North San Rafael community in the evaluation and review of proposed changes at the Civic Center. Request that the County provide sufficient opportunity for review of major development proposals at the Civic Center by the Design Review Board, Planning Commission and City Council.

Responsibility: Community Development
Timeframe: Ongoing
Resources: Staff Time

Neighborhood Economy and Culture

NH-87. Civic Center Expansion.

Review and comment on plans for future Civic Center expansion projects, including but not limited to, office space and residential units. Support renovations and additions to cultural and entertainment facilities at the Civic Center.

See NH-86a (Civic Center Design).

Neighborhood Circulation

NH-88. Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) Station.

If rail service is initiated, support construction of a Civic Center SMART station. Encourage a plan that provides high density housing, bus transit connections, a parking lot, and incorporates pedestrian facilities and bicycle access (including bike storage facilities) consistent with the San Rafael Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan.

NH-88a. Transit-Oriented Development. Work with SMART, Marin County, Golden Gate Bridge Transit District and other transit providers to prepare a site-specific design for a transit-oriented development with housing in the vicinity of the rail station.

Responsibility: Community Development

Timeframe: Long Term

Resources: General Fund, Grants

NH-88b. Safe Walkways and Bikeways. Encourage the provision of lighting and sidewalks to ensure safe and attractive walkways and bikeways from the transit center, on both sides of Civic Center Drive, to the Northgate area.

Responsibility: Public Works

Timeframe: Long Term

Resources: Staff Time

NH-89. Bicycle and Pedestrian Walkway.

Provide a continuous walkway from the Civic Center to McInnis Park along the railroad, consistent with the San Rafael Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan.

See C-24a (North San Rafael Promenade), C-27a (Implementation) and C-27b (Prioritizing Pedestrian Improvements).

NH-90. Bus Pads.

Improve the safety for transit riders walking and biking to the bus pads on Highway 101 at Freitas Interchange.

NH-90a. Improved Pedestrian Safety at Bus Pads. Work with Golden Gate Transit to provide for safer bus pad locations and design.

Responsibility: Public Works

Timeframe: Long Term

Resources: Staff Time

NH-91. Bike Path.

Create a bike path between Dominican/Black Canyon and the Civic Center, from Villa Avenue to San Pablo Avenue, along Highway 101.

See C-26 (Bicycle Plan Implementation), C-27 (Pedestrian Plan Improvements).

NH-92. North San Rafael Promenade.

Support construction of the terminus of the Promenade to Civic Center Drive as described in the *North San Rafael Vision Promenade Conceptual Plan*.

See C-27 (Pedestrian Plan Improvements), C-24a (North San Rafael Promenade).

**Vision of
Country Club**

Country Club, located in an unincorporated area of the County, is one of San Rafael's older neighborhoods, and is not expected to change much. Annexation of some properties into the City may occur consistent with LAFCO policies.

COUNTRY CLUB

The Country Club Neighborhood is primarily an unincorporated area of the City featuring large single-family homes on hillside lots. The incorporated portion of the neighborhood, located along the San Rafael Creek, is developed with single-family homes and condominiums.

NH-93. Marin Yacht Club Tennis Courts Site.

Encourage the retention of needed recreation uses. Any future reuse of the site should be residential, compatible with the surrounding neighborhood.

See LU-2a (Development Review).

**Vision of
Dominican/Black Canyon**

Preserve and enhance the residential and historic character of the neighborhood and its natural habitats. Little change is expected in the neighborhood. While the neighborhood is virtually built-out, new residential development may occur primarily on the remaining vacant or subdivided lots. Long-standing priorities for the residents include developing a neighborhood park and playground opportunities; minimizing impacts of University facilities, activities and events on surrounding residential areas; and reducing the impact of the freeway on the neighborhood, including installation of landscaping and sound reduction material along the freeway sound wall.

The Dominican University Master Use Permit allows for the future construction of a chapel, a science and technology building, parking areas and a new soccer field. Additional student and staff housing may also be needed in the future.

DOMINICAN/BLACK CANYON

The Dominican-Black Canyon neighborhood is primarily developed with single-family homes, a number of which are historic and unique in character, as well as some duplexes and condominiums. The neighborhood is defined by its large and abundant trees, landscaped yards, and generally forested character. Residents of the neighborhood enjoy a pleasant residential setting and wealth of outdoor beauty. The Dominican hills and Barbier Park/Gold Hill, which form the northern and eastern boundary of the neighborhood, feature native landscape and trails that provide spectacular views of the City and surrounding area. Creeks also provide important natural riparian habitats. Highway 101 and its sound walls form the western boundary of the neighborhood.

Within the neighborhood, there are two long-standing community institutions. The Convent of Dominican Sisters has been located here since 1889, and in 1915 the sisters opened what was later to become Dominican University. Recent Master Use Permit approvals for the University have resulted in upgrades to existing facilities, including landscape and parking lot improvements, and the construction of student housing and a recreation center featuring a gym and a pool. The Marin Ballet, Marin Tennis Club, and Coleman School are also located within the neighborhood boundaries.

Neighborhood Economy and Culture

NH-94. Dominican University.

Construction of new facilities at Dominican University should be consistent with the approved Master Use Permit, including the Events Management Plan contained therein and any subsequent approvals. Require a Use Permit Amendment for any new housing units. Impacts of University facilities, activities and events on the residential neighborhood should be minimized. Continue to foster a cooperative relationship between the University's students, faculty and visitors and neighborhood residents through efforts such as the Dominican University Neighborhood Advisory Committee.

NH-94a. Dominican University. Monitor compliance with the Master Use Permit and Events Management Plan, and amend as necessary. As needed, participate in the Neighborhood Advisory Committee process.

Responsibility: Community Development

Timeframe: Ongoing

Resources: Staff Time, Fees

NH-94b. University Housing. Amend the Zoning Ordinance to allow residential uses.

Responsibility: Community Development

Timeframe: Short Term

Resources: Staff Time



Dominican University opened in 1917.

Neighborhood Design

NH-95. Barbier Park/Gold Hill.

Maintain public access to Barbier Park and State and County Open Space beyond and along "Gold Hill Grade," a fire road that is an important community-wide resource.

NH-95a. Barbier Park/Gold Hill. Redesignate the zoning of the publicly owned properties to Open Space.

Responsibility: Community Development

Timeframe: Short Term

Resources: Staff Time

NH-96. Dominican University Hillside Area.

The largest undeveloped parcel in the neighborhood is the approximately 24 acres of hillside land owned by Dominican University (located east of the campus). This area is mostly very steep, is heavily wooded, contains a significant riparian area and provides an important and heavily used fire road connection between the Country Club neighborhood and the Gold Hill/Barbier Park open space. Any future University use of this area should be planned through an amendment to the University's Master Use Permit. The permitted density should reflect the significant site constraints.

NH-96a. Development Review Process. Through the development review process, apply the Hillside Design Guidelines to design of housing at the site. Involve the neighborhood in the planning and review process of proposed development.

Responsibility: Community Development

Timeframe: Long Term

Resources: Staff Time, Fees

NH-97. Park or Recreation Facilities.

Pursue opportunities to provide a neighborhood park and/or recreation facilities in Dominican/Black Canyon.

See PR-9a (New Parks).

NH-98. Freeway Sound Wall.

Encourage Caltrans to landscape along the freeway sound wall and to incorporate sound-deadening technology.

NH-98a. Freeway Improvements. In reviewing plans for freeway projects, encourage adequate landscaping and use of sound-deadening materials on the sound wall and/or the roadway surface.

Responsibility: Public Works

Timeframe: Short Term

Resources: Staff Time

See N-6f (Widening of US 101 and 580).

Neighborhood Circulation

NH-99. Dominican University Traffic and Parking.

Minimize traffic and on-street parking impacts of Dominican University activities and events on surrounding residential areas and assure that appropriate on-campus parking is provided.

See NH-94a (Dominican University) and C-31 (Residential Area Parking).

FAIRHILLS

Vision of Fairhills

This neighborhood, essentially built-out, may see the future development of single-family homes on the few vacant hillside lots. Marin Academy will continue to upgrade its facilities.

The Fairhills neighborhood, located in central San Rafael, is primarily developed with large, single-family homes on hillside lots. The Neighborhood 13/14 Plan was adopted for Fairhills and Sun Valley in 1980 and became the precursor for the City’s Hillside Design Guidelines that were adopted in 1991. Other features of the neighborhood include the Red Rock Quarry, a visually significant topographic feature, and the Marin Academy, a major and historic feature of the neighborhood. Boyd Park provides recreational opportunities for residents of the neighborhood.

Neighborhood Homes

NH-100. New Development.

Retain the existing character of the neighborhood, including both historic homes and the natural setting, by:

- Maintaining the authentic historic value and ambiance of the neighborhood’s older housing,
- Assuring that new development and significant remodeling respect and enhance the character of surrounding housing, and
- Protecting hillside areas by clustering new development where appropriate to maximize open space preservation and by carefully evaluating the location, size

and height of new structures, road design and adequacy for safety vehicles, grading, structural foundations, surface and sub-soil drainage, excavation, earthfills, and other operations, in order to avoid buildings which are excessively visible or out of scale, soil erosion, scarring of the natural landscape, obstruction of scenic vistas from public vantage points, or loss of natural vegetation and wildlife habitat.

NH-100a. Development Review Process. Through the development review process, apply the Hillside Design Guidelines to the design of new housing.

Responsibility: Community Development

Timeframe: Ongoing

Resources: Fees

FRANCISCO BOULEVARD WEST

Since the early 1980s, the Francisco Boulevard West commercial area has benefited from significant large-scale development such as Toys R Us and Borders Books and Shamrock (CompUSA) retail centers, and Sonnen Motors. These specialty retail uses are important because they are major sources of retail sales tax revenue for the City. Retention of the existing industrial areas (between Woodland and the freeway frontage parcels), given the lack of replacement industrial areas in San Rafael and the importance of such uses to San Rafael's economy and job base, has been, and will continue to be, an important planning issue in this neighborhood. The Francisco Boulevard West area is predominantly developed with auto, building related, specialty retail, and manufacturing/wholesale uses. The area is also the oldest industrial area in the City.

Completed in 1998, the Andersen Drive Extension improved the area's accessibility and provided important new links between East San Rafael, Francisco Boulevard West, and Downtown. The Francisco Boulevard West neighborhood is adjacent to the residential areas of Picnic Valley, California Park and Bret Harte, along Woodland Avenue.

Neighborhood Economy and Culture

NH-101. Industrial Uses.

Protect and concentrate building industry and automotive service industry land uses which are currently located in this area due to the area's central Marin County location and lack of alternate locations south of Puerto Suello Hill. The most appropriate locations for such uses are on both sides of Andersen Drive south of Mahon Creek. Protect and maintain availability of sites for existing building industry land uses important to San Rafael's economy and needed for the convenience of its residents and businesses.

Vision of Francisco Blvd. West

Improving the appearance of the area as an attractive entryway to the City and from surrounding neighborhoods will continue to be a City priority in this area. The Highway 101 widening project has resulted in acquiring and consolidating private properties along Francisco Boulevard, eliminating older buildings, and will offer opportunities for a sidewalk and consistent landscape treatment along Francisco Boulevard.

Encourage preservation of existing industrial (including light industrial) uses, except along the Highway 101 frontage, where redevelopment of sites with high tax generating, specialty retail uses need highway visibility. Retention of the auto and building related services will continue to be important because they are found primarily in the City's Francisco Boulevard West and the Canal neighborhoods. This industrial area is unique because the properties are medium sized, and are typically occupied with a single tenant in a building that cannot be duplicated under current development standards. Street tree programs and project design review address the need to improve the appearance of industrial uses near neighborhoods and along major transportation corridors.

See LU-9a (Nonresidential Zoning), LU-15a (Land Use Compatibility), LU-17a (Building and Automotive Services), LU-18a (Retail and Service Uses in Industrial and Office Areas), EV-2a (Business Retention) and EV-8a (Industrial Zoning).

NH-102. Industrial Area and Design Improvement.

Upgrade building design and landscaping as redevelopment or remodeling occurs. Evaluate the design of projects considering views from the Bret Harte neighborhood, the proposed rail transitway, and Andersen Drive, with particular attention paid to rooftop design and screening of mechanical equipment. New building facades facing Andersen Drive and the proposed rail transitway should be given design attention equal to that of any front façade.

NH-102a. Development Review Process. Use the development review process to encourage design and use consistent with this policy.

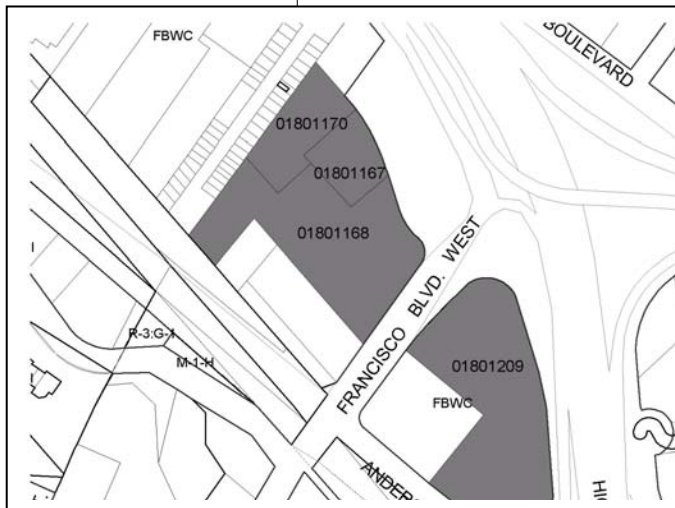
Responsibility: Community Development

Timeframe: Long Term

Resources: Fees

NH-103. Specialty Retail Uses.

Upgrade and redevelop portions of the Francisco Boulevard West area visible from Highway 101 with specialty retail commercial uses that can capitalize on the Highway 101 frontage and visibility, while minimizing traffic impacts. Specialty retail uses include automobile sales, bulk retail sales, region-serving retail uses, and hotels. Encourage relocation of manufacturing and storage uses from highway frontage locations, and consolidation of parcels for greater design flexibility



NH-103a. Development of Properties along Highway 101.

For properties visible from Highway 101 where significant redevelopment and upgrading is needed, assist cooperative development efforts among property owners to assemble individual parcels.

Responsibility: Community Development, Economic Development

Timeframe: Ongoing

Resources: Fees

See LU-2a. (Development Review).

NH-104. Existing Retail Centers Upgrade.

Facilitate the upgrade of existing retail centers (Graham and Rice Centers) at the crossroads of Andersen Drive, Highway 101 and the future transitway with improved

parking, access, landscaping and building design improvements (including rooftop screening), in keeping with their key entryway location.

NH-104a. Development Review Process. Use the development review process to encourage design and use consistent with this policy. Provide assistance in assembling lots at shopping center sites located at the crossroads of Andersen Drive, Highway 101 and Francisco Blvd. West where these actions would result in substantial upgrading of the properties and redevelopment with desired uses.

Responsibility: Community Development

Timeframe: Long Term

Resources: Fees

See LU-9 (Intensity of Nonresidential Development).

The Andersen Drive and Francisco Blvd. area is at the crossroads of highways 101 and 580.

NH-105. Unused Portions of the SMART Right-of-Way.

Encourage use, while ensuring protection of any adjacent wetland habitat, of the unused portions of the SMART right-of-way, including the section between Downtown and the Larkspur ferry terminal, to facilitate desired redevelopment of adjacent parcels and an easement for the North-South bikeway.

NH-105a. Development Review Process. Use the development review process to encourage design and use consistent with this policy. Provide assistance in assembling lots where these actions would result in substantial upgrading of the properties and redevelopment with desired uses.

Responsibility: Community Development

Timeframe: Long Term

Resources: Fees

NH-106. Land Uses Near Residential Areas.

Design new or redeveloped properties facing Woodland Avenue to create a transition between residential uses west of Woodland and heavier industrial uses in the area. Encourage light industrial uses that minimize adverse impacts. Give special attention to landscape screening of buildings and outdoor storage and to screening rooftop equipment given rooftop visibility from higher elevations.

NH-106a. Development Review Process. Use the development review process to encourage design and use consistent with this policy.

Responsibility: Community Development

Timeframe: Long Term

Resources: Fees

NH-107. Office Uses.

Discourage office uses except for existing small office uses and those that are ancillary to retail or industrial uses. New office complexes shall not be allowed.

See LU-2a (Development Review).

Neighborhood Circulation

NH-108. Entries into Bret Harte Neighborhood.

Encourage better landscaping, pedestrian sidewalks and building façade upgrades on major streets leading into the Bret Harte neighborhood, including Woodland Avenue, Irwin Street, Lovell Avenue, Lindaro Avenue and DuBois Street.

See LU-2a (Development Review).

NH-109. Andersen Drive Access.

Continue to minimize vehicular access points to Andersen Drive to maintain maximum traffic flow.

See LU-2a (Development Review).

NH-110. Highway 101 Widening Project.

Improve the appearance of the area as an entryway from Highway 101. Provide a consistent landscape treatment along the frontage road, including large street trees and landscape berms to screen parking areas.

See LU-2a (Development Review).

Vision of Gerstle Park

Gerstle Park is a unique, historic and walkable neighborhood in close proximity to Downtown. It is essentially built-out and will remain a very diverse and active residential neighborhood with relatively little change. Opportunities should be taken to visually upgrade or replace apartment buildings to be more compatible with the historic neighborhood design character, preserve historic structures and architectural character, reduce impacts of through-traffic on neighborhood streets, and restore adequate parking on neighborhood streets.

GERSTLE PARK

Gerstle Park developed as San Rafael's first residential neighborhood in the 1800s. The neighborhood in the 19th century included summer homes for wealthy San Franciscans who used these dwellings only a few months of the year. The early 1900s saw the development of working class bungalows and Arts and Crafts homes, many of which have survived. Located south of, and adjacent to, San Rafael's downtown business district, the neighborhood's northern boundary is formed by the transition of commercial to residential land use. A mix of housing including single-family, duplex and multifamily units has been built on the flat portion of the neighborhood. The residential density and architectural character of the neighborhood was altered in the 1950s and 1960s when some of the older, historic homes were replaced by apartment buildings. However, the area still retains one of San Rafael's largest concentrations of Victorian and turn-of-the-century homes. The Gerstle Park neighborhood has one of the highest residential housing densities in San Rafael. The neighborhood includes the six-acre Gerstle Park, Short School Elementary School and a mixture of residential architectural styles.

Neighborhood issues that need to be addressed are traffic problems such as lack of parking, excessive speed and protection of neighborhood streets from the impacts of through-traffic, adequate drainage, maintenance of streets and sidewalks, historic preservation, and private property maintenance.

Neighborhood Homes

NH-111. New Development.

Preserve and enhance the residential and historic character of the Gerstle Park neighborhood by:

- Protecting the existing mixed residential area, strictly limiting rezoning to higher densities,
- Prohibiting additional nonresidential development in Gerstle Park except as allowed in zoning regulations,
- Protecting hillside ridges and the visual backdrop of the ridges fringing the neighborhood,
- Preserving historic homes by encouraging new development or significant remodels that enhance the historic architectural character of the neighborhood,
- Requiring that adjacent Downtown land use designations and developments are compatible with and do not negatively affect the neighborhood and that sensitive transitions occur where Downtown development abuts neighborhood residences.

NH-111a. Development Review Process. Use the development review process to encourage design and use consistent with this policy.

Responsibility: Community Development

Timeframe: Long Term

Resources: Fees

See NH-1a (Neighborhood Planning Process), CD-10b (Compatibility of Patterns), CA-13a (Inventory Update) and CA-13b (Preservation Ordinance).

Neighborhood Design

NH-112. Architectural Design.

Preserve and enhance the distinctive design character of the neighborhood, including historic design features.

See Community Design and Historic Preservation programs.

NH-113. Albert Park.

Improve the street façade and entryway of Albert Park. Consider the addition of a public pool.

See PR-7a (Community Park Improvements) and PR-11b (Public Pool).

NH-114. Mahon Creek.

Preserve and enhance Mahon Creek.

See CON-8a (Creek Restoration), CON-8b (Tree Retention) and LU-2a (Development Review).

Neighborhood Circulation

NH-115. Pedestrian Linkages and Landscaping.

Improve bicycle and pedestrian linkages and landscape treatment of major entry roads from the Downtown area, such as B, C, and D Streets.

NH-115a. Pedestrian Improvements. Provide landscaping improvements along B, C and D Streets.

Responsibility: Public Works

Timeframe: Long Term

Resources: Staff Time

See C-26a (Bicycle Plan Implementation).

GLENWOOD

The Glenwood neighborhood, located along the Point San Pedro Peninsula, is developed with single-family homes. The open space hills above the housing developments constitute about 50 percent of the neighborhood land area and are adjacent to China Camp State Park. Most of the homes are part of the same development so they share similar characteristics and architectural style. Centers within the neighborhood include Glenwood School and Victor Jones Park.



Gerstle Park is known for its many well-preserved older homes.

Vision of Glenwood

This neighborhood is a built-out community, which will remain developed with single-family residences. Very little change is anticipated.

Lincoln/San Rafael Hill

Lincoln Avenue, a transportation artery for San Rafael, bisects the neighborhood. The street connects north and central San Rafael via Los Ranchitos Road over Puerto Suello Hill. The mixed-use neighborhood, one of the oldest neighborhoods in San Rafael, consists of single-family homes, apartments, condominiums, offices, hotels, social services, and a neighborhood delicatessen. These uses serve a diverse population. Many offices along Lincoln Avenue are converted single-family homes from the 1980s. Buildings in the Lincoln Neighborhood have a variety of architectural styles. Boyd Park provides recreational opportunities for the residents. Planning issues in the neighborhood are traffic congestion, traffic speed and safety, parking on hillside streets, and limited parking along Lincoln Avenue.

Neighborhood Homes

NH-116. Lincoln Avenue.

Maintain low-density development in the hillside areas, consistent with the existing density and environmental constraints. Allow higher density residential development along Lincoln Avenue between Hammondale Court and Mission Avenue given its good access to public transit. Promote lot consolidations to achieve higher densities

while providing adequate on-site parking and circulation and minimizing ingress/egress to Lincoln Avenue; minimize additional office conversions of residential sites; maintain 15-foot setbacks and street trees as corridor amenities to provide a landscaped streetscape. The following are more specific policies for Lincoln Avenue:

- a. Promote high-density residential development along Lincoln Avenue, consistent with its existing character and good access to public transit. Encourage redevelopment of these sites for residential use, consistent with the surrounding neighborhood. Encourage lot consolidations to achieve more efficient redevelopment project designs. Encourage underground parking for any new or substantial redevelopment project along Lincoln Avenue.
- b. Prohibit additional office conversions of residential units in residential/office areas except for mixed office/residential projects where the same or additional residential units are provided. Prohibit retail uses.
- c. Design all new projects and substantial remodels in accordance with Noise Element policies.
- d. Require setbacks and other project design features that visually reduce the wall effect along Lincoln Avenue. Encourage underground parking in new development to reduce building mass and height.

Vision of Lincoln/San Rafael Hill

The future vision of the Lincoln-San Rafael Hill neighborhood is a balanced approach to addressing the area's unique issues. The neighborhood is zoned as a mixed-use area of single-family homes, apartments, condominiums, offices, rehabilitation facilities and businesses. The area has a variety of architectural styles and history with a relatively dense and diverse population. Perspectives reflecting the future of this Neighborhood have to include the hillside areas of San Rafael Hill with those along Lincoln Ave. This neighborhood may also experience limited infill development along Lincoln Avenue with the redevelopment of single-family home lots, a nursery and existing motels.

See N-1a (Neighborhood Planning Process).

NH-117. Neighborhood Park. Pursue opportunities to provide a neighborhood park in the Lincoln/San Rafael Hill neighborhood.

See PR-9 (New Parks).

LOCH LOMOND

The Loch Lomond neighborhood is primarily developed with single-family homes on hillside lots or lots along the Bay. The hills above the neighborhood provide hiking trails and access to Harry A. Barbier Memorial Park.

The neighborhood is home to the Loch Lomond Marina and Shopping Center. This extraordinary site includes neighborhood-serving shops and a market, but is primarily a 550-slip marina. The long breakwater offers unique pedestrian access along the bay front and striking views of the San Francisco and San Rafael bays, San Rafael-Richmond Bridge, Mt. Tamalpais, and the Marin Islands National Wildlife Refuge – artists are drawn to the site to capture the Bay vista. To the east and west of the site are wetlands that support all manner of wildlife. The marina includes boat slips, a yacht club, a public boat launching facility, boat storage, and a restaurant.

Neighborhood Design

NH-118. Loch Lomond Marina.

Retain the Loch Lomond Marina uses, and enhance recreational use of the marina waterfront. Preserve and improve access to the marina and the water's edge as a welcoming place for the public to enjoy the boating activities and the waterfront. As the focal point of the site, the marina shall continue to be a distinct, accessible area. If the property owner proposes to redevelop the site, create a beautiful waterfront development that maximizes the site's location facing San Francisco Bay, consistent with the following guidelines and requirements:

- a. **Land Use.** Encourage a mixed-use development that includes all of the following land uses:
 - Marina and marina-support facilities, with boat berths, a public boat launch, day use boat trailer parking, a yacht club, boat retail and services, amenities for boaters, restaurant and shops, and parking. Sufficient dry boat storage to meet the needs of local residents should be retained.
 - Waterfront-oriented recreation along the marina, spits and breakwater. Recreational activities include picnicking, kite flying, walking, biking, fishing, bird watching, and enjoying the views. For example, bird-watching and fishing opportunities should be enhanced. Access for fishing should be provided in a way that extends a welcome to visitors.
 - Neighborhood-serving commercial uses that meet the needs of residents and visitors in the area should be included for their convenience and for trip reduction.
 - Residential, with a mix of housing types, that meets design and housing objectives. To increase the affordability of market-rate units, a majority of the

Vision of Loch Lomond

The Loch Lomond Shopping Center and Marina may be redeveloped to feature neighborhood-serving and marine-related retail and service uses including a market, neighborhood serving offices, residential units, and a restaurant. The marina should continue to feature boat slips, a yacht club and a public boat launching facility. Redevelopment of the site will protect the existing marsh and wetland areas and will be designed to be compatible with the surrounding residential uses.



Loch Lomond Marina could be improved to provide better community amenities.

dwelling units on the property shall be attached housing and/or small single-family homes. The different types of housing should be integrated into one neighborhood, and should be designed to be compatible with the marina and recreational uses. Because of the limited area for marine uses on the site, residential use is not allowed in the Marine Related District. In order to accommodate the optimal site plan for the marina and housing, the land use district boundaries on the site shall be considered approximate and may be adjusted through the master plan for the Planned District zoning.

- b. **Site Design.** Achieve an extraordinary design in an innovative development that enhances the neighborhood, San Rafael, and the bayfront. New development should draw inspiration from the marina and waterfront, provide a community gathering place with neighborhood shopping and recreational opportunities, and include attractive housing, consistent with the following guidelines:
 1. Views of the marina and waterfront should draw people into the site and retain their value to the surrounding community.
 - The view to the waterfront down the entryway into the site at the Lochinvar intersection is the major public view corridor. To enhance this corridor and to achieve an open, welcoming and inviting entrance to the marina, this corridor may include street right-of-way, open space and parking. Buildings adjacent to the view corridor should be lower scale, or incorporate larger setbacks or stepbacks of upper floors.
 - The frontage along Pt. San Pedro Road should be warm and welcoming, encouraging access through the site's principal entryway.
 - Buildings should be carefully sited and designed to enhance or minimize impacts to views of the Bay, the Marin Islands, wetlands and the marina.
 2. Improved pedestrian and bicycle access through the site to the marina and breakwater should be part of the site's design.
 3. A recreational area along the waterfront should be included to differentiate the marina functions from the new neighborhoods. This public area shall serve as a community-gathering place, and provide activities accessible to children and adults both in the immediate neighborhood and in the surrounding area. A play area with playground equipment suitable for preschool and elementary school ages, with a water play feature, is recommended, and an active recreational area such as a sports court (i.e., bocce ball or volleyball) is desired.
 4. The streets and alleyways should be designed for slow driving speeds, and there should be an enhanced transit stop on Pt. San Pedro Road.

NH-118a. Project Design and Review.

- a. Require early conceptual design review by the Design Review Board and the Planning Commission. Encourage applicants to present alternative proposals for conceptual review in that design review.
- b. Prior to submitting a proposal, the property owner must confer with Federal, State and local agencies (such as Bay Conservation and Development Commission, Association of Bay Area Government's Bay Trails Project, U.S. Fish and Wildlife) with responsibility for the Bay.
- c. The neighborhood residents and homeowner associations shall be informed and consulted on major design issues throughout the process.
- d. Require a mixed-use parking analysis to establish adequate parking requirements; require photomontage analyses as part of the evaluation of view impacts; and, require a wetlands delineation.

Responsibility: Community Development

Timeframe: Short Term

Resources: Fees

NH-118b. Common Area Maintenance. As part of the development proposal, require a reliable and efficient means to maintain common areas.

Responsibility: Community Development
Timeframe: Short Term
Resources: Fees

NH-118c. Bird-watching. Encourage the developer to provide a viewing pavilion and interpretive display for birdwatchers, and to consult with the Tiburon Audubon Center (Lyford House) about the possibility of establishing a satellite operation at Loch Lomond, as well as recommendations on needed facilities.

Responsibility: Community Development
Timeframe: Short Term
Resources: Fees

**V i s i o n o f
L u c a s V a l l e y**

Apart from the County's approval of office space at the Lucasfilm properties, this area, located in an unincorporated area of the County is not expecting any major development projects during the San Rafael 2020 planning period.

LUCAS VALLEY

This 1,629 acre unincorporated neighborhood is developed with single-family homes on large lots and incidental retail. With more than 50 percent of the neighborhood located in an open space reserve, the population density is low at 1.22 persons per acre. The Lucas Valley Open Space Preserve is located above the developed portions of the neighborhood.

MARIN ISLANDS

The East and West Marin Islands in the San Rafael Bay both have land use designations of Hillside Resource Residential but are uninhabited. The Islands are noted for their visually pleasing appeal, especially during the bird-breeding season. They are preserved for wildlife habitat as the Marin Islands National Wildlife Refuge and State Ecological Reserve.

**V i s i o n o f
M a r i n I s l a n d s**

Preservation of the Marin Islands is essential to the community of San Rafael and therefore will remain uninhabited.

NH-119. Marin Islands.

Oppose development of either island, except for that necessary for monitoring or enhancement of the wildlife habitat and which does not degrade the habitat. Encourage removal of existing buildings.

NH-119a. Rezone Marin Islands. Rezone the Marin Islands to Open Space.
Responsibility: Community Development
Timeframe: Short Term
Resources: Staff Time

V i s i o n o f M a r i n w o o d

Marinwood is in an unincorporated area of the County. The Daphne site, located west of Highway 101 next to the Lucas Valley off-ramp, is a property zoned for residential development. The City and County have entered into an agreement whereby the City will not seek to annex the property and proposed development will occur within the County. This agreement seeks dedication of the right-of-way for completion of the freeway off-ramp and maintenance of the City's traffic standards.

MARINWOOD

The Marinwood neighborhood is located in an unincorporated portion of the San Rafael Planning Area. The neighborhood is a single-family community with incidental retail. The Marinwood Community Center and the adjacent Marinwood Open Space provide recreational opportunities for residents of the neighborhood.

Neighborhood Homes

NH-120. Daphne Property.

Development of the property should be at densities consistent with Hillside Residential. Development shall be clustered to minimize impacts. Proposed development shall provide noise setbacks consistent with City standards, retention of community-wide visual resources, including preservation of hillside and ridgeline views, and creek side setbacks. Consistent with prior agreements with the County, annexation shall not be required, although development must receive approval of traffic allocation from the City. Land needed for planned highway interchange improvements should be acquired, ideally through the development review process.

See LU-7 (Land Use Planning in Surrounding Jurisdictions).

Vision of Montecito / Happy Valley

In the year 2020, our distinct neighborhood is a beautiful and desirable place with a diversity of architecture and a variety of uses within easy walking distance.

There are central gathering places where people meet each other to visit and hold events.

Our pleasant, tree shaded, narrow streets are safe to walk and drive along and we see fewer cars.

We are a community which works together

to keep our neighborhood secure, clean and attractive, and to celebrate our diversity

(From Montecito/Happy Valley Neighborhood Plan)

Future land uses should be stabilized to keep the existing mix of uses, with zoning to protect the existing uses and to minimize additional development. There is satisfaction with the mix of retail, service, office and other uses in the commercial areas. The High School's bus and maintenance yard site on Union Street may become housing, also meeting the neighborhood's goals for a new outdoor gathering place and improving the appearance of Union Street while minimizing adverse impacts to the neighborhood. There are several opportunities for adding and improving gathering places and for better recreational opportunities, particularly at the High School.

MONTECITO/HAPPY VALLEY

The area known as Montecito/Happy Valley is one of San Rafael's oldest neighborhoods. Today, most of the area is built out. There have been numerous upgrades, including a late 1980s remodel of the Montecito Shopping Center with a new front facade and a walkway along the San Rafael Canal.

The area offers a wide variety of housing, business opportunities and community services. The residential area contains many large historic homes (several of architectural significance), cottages, duplexes and diverse apartments, as well as being home to San Rafael High School. The neighborhood's commercial anchor is Montecito Shopping Center, one of San Rafael's larger centers, complete with a canalfront walkway. There are two community supermarkets on Third Street. Along Irwin Street, a gateway to San Rafael, several large office buildings offer businesses a high profile to commuters on Highway 101. Fourth Street provides a commercial link to Downtown with a wide range of office, service and retail uses. In addition, many social service agencies make their home in Montecito because of the easy accessibility to the rest of San Rafael.

Neighborhood Homes

NH-121. Mix of Housing.

Preserve the current mix of single family, duplex, medium and high density housing in the residential areas.

See LU-14a (Land Use Compatibility).

NH-122. San Rafael City School's Corporation Yard on Union Street.

Encourage the redevelopment of the School District's bus/maintenance yard with attractive multifamily housing for seniors and/or school district staff. Neighborhood childcare should be retained on the site. The project should also include a children's playground designed for use by the residents and the neighborhood. Development of this site should improve and retain views from the end of Fourth Street to the façade of the San Rafael High School building.

See LU-2a (Development Review).

Neighborhood Economy and Culture

NH-123. Commercial areas.

Retain existing mixed-use land categories and zoning districts in the commercial areas. Consistent with these districts, encourage active ground floor and retail uses on Fourth Street.

See LU-2a (Development Review).

NH-124. Improved Recreation.

Create and improve neighborhood recreational opportunities and facilities.

NH-124. Neighborhood Park. Provide a neighborhood park with appropriate play structures and activities for young children. Potential park site locations include the School District's corporation yard and the San Rafael High School site, possibly at the south end of the football field along Third Street or by the tennis courts along Mission Avenue. Consistent with City recreation policies, should San Rafael High School ever be closed or sold, attempt to secure the continued public use of existing high school recreation facilities, and provide neighborhood park facilities.

Responsibility: Community Services

Timeframe: Long Term

Resources: Park In-Lieu Fees, Grants, Dedications

See PR-9a (New Parks).

Neighborhood Design

NH-125. Design Blend.

Continue to provide a blend of architecture styles in the Montecito/Happy Valley Neighborhood compatible with and retaining the character of attractive older buildings. Newer buildings should be well designed, blend well with the existing homes and provide a "pedestrian friendly" street front.

See LU-2a (Development Review).

Neighborhood Circulation

NH-126. Traffic Control.

Enhance and design streets to provide for appropriate traffic control.

NH-126a. San Rafael High School Access. Work with the school district to improve safety and effectiveness of drop-off areas at San Rafael High School. Review the design and implementation of an improved front entrance off Pt. San Pedro Road at San Rafael High School, as well as safer and more efficient pick-up and drop-off areas including but not limited to the area in front of the gym.

Responsibility: Public Works

Timeframe: Short Term

Resources: Staff Time

NH-127. Fourth Street.

Ensure that Fourth Street provides a “pedestrian-oriented” walking street connection to Downtown. The Fourth Street view of the High School should be reestablished and improved with landscaping and fencing.

NH-127a. Fourth Street Enhancement. Through the development review process, encourage improvements that extend Fourth Street concrete benches/trash can/ landscape/ elegant sign treatment to east end of Fourth Street.

Responsibility: Community Development

Timeframe: Long Term

Resources: Staff Time

NH-128. Sidewalk Improvements.

Provide sidewalks that are safe and attractive to walk along.

NH-128a. Sidewalk Improvements. Prepare a Pedestrian Plan, identifying pedestrian right-of-ways. Using information from the neighborhood, further develop a list of sidewalks and paths for parts of Park, Jewell, Belle, one side of Union, and along the perimeter of the High School. Add safe crosswalks and striping where needed for pedestrian safety, and posting of speed limits on streets such as Grand, Park and Union.

Responsibility: Public Works

Timeframe: Long Term

Resources: Assessment District, Property Owners

NH-129. Neighborhood Parking.

Provide street parking that is convenient and does not dominate the neighborhood. Require that all new residential developments provide for attractive and adequate off-street parking.

NH-129a. Neighborhood Parking. To improve parking in the neighborhood, conduct a parking survey to further evaluate specific parking problems and identify possible solutions that allow for street parking that does not dominate the neighborhood, such as:

- Working with apartment owners to restore parking spaces being used for storage.
- Working with property owners to add on-site parking where feasible.
- Adding “no parking” signs where street clearance is too narrow for emergency vehicles to get through.
- Evaluating the benefits and drawbacks of a Permit Parking Program, i.e., to limit cars per unit or to limit nonresident cars.
- Considering time-limited parking areas.

Responsibility: Public Works

Timeframe: Long Term

Resources: Staff Time, Assessment District

NH-130. Commercial Parking.

Require well-landscaped commercial parking lots that are safe and convenient for pedestrians.

NH-130a. Commercial Public Parking in Montecito. If funding sources can be obtained, use the development review process to implement this policy. For example, encourage better use of the easternmost Montecito parking lot by designing better access from the lot to the shopping center, or requiring employees to park in this lot.

Responsibility: Community Development
Timeframe: Short Term
Funding: Fees

See LU-2a (Development Review).

**Vision of
Mont Marin/
San Rafael Park**

The Mont Marin/San Rafael Park Neighborhood is essentially built-out with little change expected.

MONT MARIN/SAN RAFAEL PARK

The Mont Marin/San Rafael Park Neighborhood is a suburban neighborhood located in North San Rafael. Most of the homes in this neighborhood are owner-occupied. A significant open space ridge is located along the eastern boundary of the neighborhood. Jerry Russom Memorial Park is located along the western boundary of the neighborhood, providing access to the Terra Linda/Sleepy Hollow Divide Open Space Preserve. The Mont Marin/San Rafael Park neighborhood experiences Highway 101 bypass traffic, which has decreased since Las Gallinas Avenue was narrowed to one lane each way to accommodate new bike lanes.

NORTH SAN RAFAEL COMMERCIAL CENTER

The North San Rafael Commercial Center includes the Northgate “Town Center” area, the Northgate Business Park, and the offices and YMCA located on Los Gamos Road. The Town Center area includes the Northgate One shopping center, the Northgate Mall, and the Northgate Three Shopping Center. This area is developed predominantly with retail and office uses. The Northgate Business Park, located east of Highway 101, is developed with a mix of office and industrial uses, providing spaces suited to small businesses and startup companies that comprise an important part of San Rafael’s economy.

This area also includes a variety of housing including “starter” condominiums, apartments, medical facilities and senior residential care facilities. The largest vacant property in this neighborhood is the former Fairchild Semiconductor site, approved for an industrial/office project. The Merrydale Overcrossing and Freitas Parkway provide pedestrian, vehicle, and bike connections between the two sections of the neighborhood. The north fork of Gallinas Creek flows through this area from along Freitas Parkway to the wetlands bordering McInnis Park.

**Vision of
North San Rafael
Commercial Center**

One of the key concepts in *Vision North San Rafael* is the development of a “town center” in the heart of the Northgate commercial area.

As described in the Vision:

A “town center” is a focal point where the values and history of the community are expressed and supported, where community identity is strengthened and neighborhood cohesion is fostered. It is a place where residents and workers can gather—formally and informally—to share community life. The Town Center will have public art, a wide variety of unique shops, many places to eat, and a number of entertainment options.

Our town center will be a major destination point on the promenade, a place where everyone feels welcome, something is always happening, and strolling is a pleasure. It will also include one of North San Rafael’s principal gathering places—in the form of a town square! Over time, the Town Center would change, expand and evolve to become the heart of the North San Rafael community.

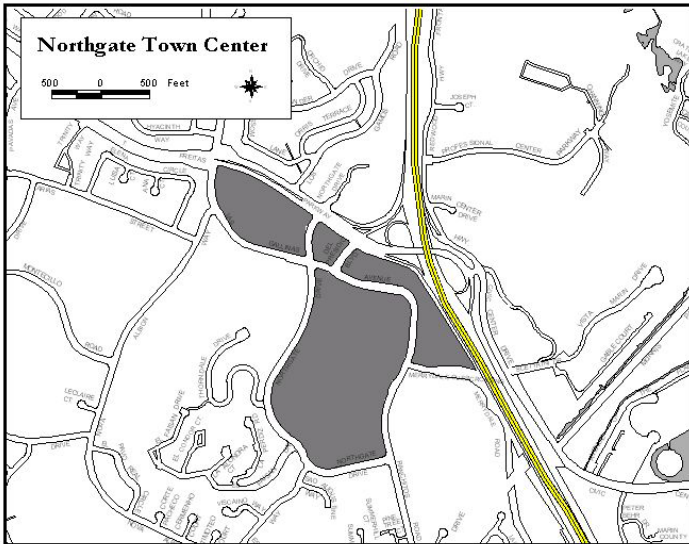
The priority actions for the Town Center are to create a sense of enclosure, pedestrian-scale and easy accessibility and to provide high quality retail stores for local residents as well as the broader community.

Neighborhood Economy and Culture

NH-131. North San Rafael Town Center.

Create an attractive, thriving heart for the North San Rafael community: a centerpiece of commerce and activity with a diversity and synergy of activities for all ages.

See LU-2a (Development Review).



NH-132. Town Center Activities.

Create a Town Center with high quality retail stores for local residents as well as the broader community. Broaden the appeal of the Town Center area by improving pedestrian traffic, increasing the number of local shoppers, and attracting a mix of high quality stores, entertainment, and services.

- a. Encourage a distinctive commercial niche for the Town Center consistent with the area's characteristics.
- b. Encourage a variety of stores and services to foster local patronage. Examples include a library; restaurants; a produce market; and music, book, family clothing, housewares, and variety stores.
- c. Encourage upgrading of anchor stores and specialty stores.
- d. Support an additional high quality retail anchor store if necessary for economic vitality, consistent with traffic circulation.
- e. Support nightlife activities, such as a late-night restaurant, diner or coffee shops that harmonize with existing theaters and cultural activities.

See LU-2a (Development Review).

NH-133. Northgate Mall.

Revitalize the economic health of the Northgate Mall and surrounding business areas. Encourage efforts to revitalize and expand Northgate Mall, including improving the mix of activities and the quality of shops, and upgrading the appearance of the buildings and landscaping, while maintaining a scale consistent with the surrounding community and not exceeding infrastructure capacity. Allow the addition of residences, maximize the potential for affordable housing, and incorporate promenade improvements as described in the *North San Rafael Promenade Conceptual Plan* in any substantial rehabilitation or expansion of the mall.

See LU-2a (Development Review) and C-24a (North San Rafael Promenade).

NH-134. Outdoor Gathering Places.

Encourage outdoor public places that support activities and facilities that will encourage people to gather (such as outdoor cafes with music, entertainment for children as families dine and shop, and periodic cultural and arts events), promote a public plaza, a small music venue, and/or a children's feature, and provide outdoor cafes, sidewalk restaurants, or other uses that provide outdoor seating.

See LU-2a (Development Review).

NH-135. Incentives.

Provide planning incentives for uses that will enhance the Town Center, including retail, office, housing, and community services. Allow a height bonus of two stories for affordable housing.

NH-135a. Development Review Process. Through the development review process, encourage improvements consistent with this policy. For example, encourage flexibility in design of retail to incorporate features, such as plazas, pedestrian walkways, entertainment, cultural events, and other community services. Foster partnership among property owners, business owners, community residents, and government agencies to plan and implement future development and changes.

Responsibility: Community Development

Timeframe: Long Term

Resources: Staff Time

See LU-13 (Height Bonuses).

NH-136. Design Excellence.

Assure quality of design by supporting policies that encourage harmonious and aesthetically pleasing design for new and existing development. Upgrade and coordinate landscaping, signage, and building design in the Town Center area, as well as improving building and landscaping maintenance.

See LU-2a (Development Review).

NH-137. Northgate Business Park.

Protect and maintain existing industrial uses and industrial sites that are important to San Rafael's economy and needed for the convenience of its residents and businesses. Allow uses such as delis and copy shops that serve businesses and employees in the area.

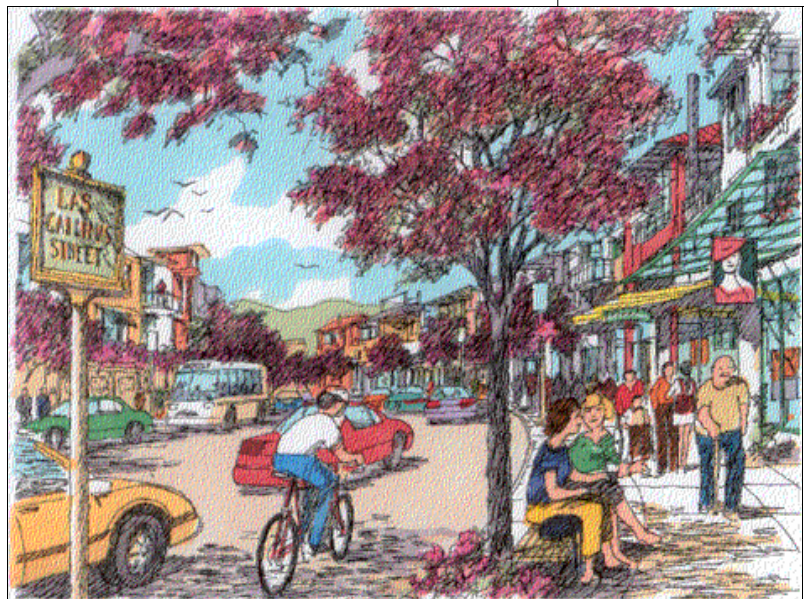
See LU-2a (Development Review).

Neighborhood Design

NH-138. Industrial Uses and Design Improvement.

Upgrade building design and landscaping with new construction and remodeling projects, particularly along Redwood Highway. Evaluate the design of projects considering the views from Highway 101, with particular attention paid to rooftop equipment and screening of mechanical equipment.

See also I-4 (Utility Undergrounding) and LU-2a (Development Review).



Las Gallinas Avenue could be 'main street' for North San Rafael.

Neighborhood Circulation

NH-139. Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety and Accessibility.

Improve access and bicycle/pedestrian connections between Northgate One, the Mall at Northgate and Northgate Three.

NH-139a. Promenade and Other Improvements. Through the development review process, encourage improvements consistent with this policy. Considerations include:

1. Support routing of the North San Rafael Promenade in the Town Center area to include safer and more convenient pedestrian and bike crossings from the Civic Center to Northgate Three, Northgate Mall, Northgate One, and along Freitas Parkway.
2. Support routing of Marin County north-south bicycle route along Northgate Drive, and increased availability of bicycle racks at the Town Center.
3. Support increased public transit to and from the Town Center.
4. Align crosswalks with bus stops.
5. Encourage shuttle service within the Town Center area during holiday season.
6. Implement traffic calming as needed on roadways in parking lots and redesign traffic flow to minimize conflict between vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians.
7. Encourage design for additional stores and parking structures to maximize pedestrian access and minimize traffic conflicts.
8. Improve pedestrian safety along Redwood Highway with improved sidewalks and parking lot landscaping.

Responsibility: Community Development

Timeframe: Long Term

Resources: Donations, Grants, Staff Time

See C-24a (North San Rafael Promenade).

NH-140. Pedestrian Scale.

Create a sense of enclosure, pedestrian-scale and easy accessibility by improving the pedestrian “feel” of the Town Center area. Examples include welcoming, pedestrian-friendly entrances to the shopping areas; pleasant, landscaped walkways between the shopping areas as part of the North San Rafael Promenade; and a focal point at a public plaza.

See LU-2a (Development Review).

NH-141. Mall Entrance.

Consider ways to improve the entrance into the mall.

NH-140a. Improved Entrance to the Mall. Support redesign of traffic flow and intersection improvements along Las Gallinas, Northgate Drive, Del Presidio, and Merrydale to expedite traffic to and from the shopping areas and to improve safety for pedestrians and bicycles. Support realignment of driveways along Las Gallinas to form safer intersections and pedestrian crossing.

Responsibility: Public Works

Timeframe: Long Term

Resources: Fees

NH-142. Redwood Highway Improvements.

Upgrade and unify the architecture, signage and landscaping along Redwood Highway on the east side of Highway 101.

See LU-2a (Development Review).

PEACOCK GAP

This neighborhood is developed with single-family homes, condominiums, and the Peacock Gap Golf and Country Club. The private country club has an 18-hole golf course, driving range, clubhouse, and pro shop. Architectural styles vary depending on the age of the single-family home and condominium developments in the neighborhood. The hills located above the developed area of the neighborhood provide an important visual backdrop, as well as trails and access to the adjacent China Camp State Park. The San Rafael Rock Quarry and McNear Brickworks are located in the southern portion of the neighborhood, along the Point San Pedro Peninsula.

Neighborhood Economy and Culture

NH-143. San Rafael Rock Quarry and McNear Brickworks.

The San Rafael Rock Quarry is currently operational, but its future is unclear at this time. The property owner has expressed an interest in continuing operations, but approval of an updated Reclamation Plan has not yet been obtained from the County. If operations cease during the timeframe of this plan, consider annexation and allow redevelopment of the San Rafael Rock Quarry and McNear Brickworks, taking into account the following factors:

- a. Consider the County's approved reclamation plan in future land use considerations. The current reclamation plan indicates a mixture of single-family and townhouse units, a marina, commercial recreation or hospitality and neighborhood-serving commercial uses. A revised reclamation plan is anticipated during the timeframe of this General Plan.
- b. Consider redevelopment of the site only if traffic capacity is available and can meet the City's level of service standards, including all intersections to and from the Downtown and freeway on- and off-ramps. Expand Pt. San Pedro Road past Riviera Drive to four lanes if needed for traffic capacity.
- c. Create a public use park band along the shoreline, at least 100 feet in width, linking McNears Beach Park with the public walkway along Pt. San Pedro Road.
- d. Reopen the saltwater marsh to tidal action. Protect the freshwater marsh.
- e. Protect freshwater ponds.
- f. Preserve the site's woodland areas and incorporate some of the historic brick works into the project design.
- g. Consider redevelopment of the site at one time to eliminate incompatibilities between the existing operation and redevelopment uses, except for the development of a possible high-speed waterway transit stop.

NH-143a. Rock Quarry Plan. Participate in preparation of a new reclamation plan and environmental impact report through the County of Marin, which should form the basis of future land uses and possible annexation.

Responsibility: Community Development, Public Works

Timeframe: Ongoing

Resources: Staff Time

Vision of Peacock Gap

Little change is expected in the residential portion of the neighborhood. Should closure of the San Rafael Rock Quarry occur, the property may be annexed to the City as part of the land use entitlement process. A Reclamation Plan is under review by the County, with opportunities for involvement by area residents and the City.

NH-144. San Rafael Rock Quarry Impacts.

While recognizing the jurisdiction of Marin County over this property, persist in efforts to minimize impacts of the existing quarry operations on surrounding residents, such as noise, air quality, vibrations, street maintenance and truck traffic.

NH-144a. Rock Quarry Impacts. Seek to have input into County code enforcement activities, land use entitlements or negotiations with the quarry operator that might reduce impacts on affected properties in the City of San Rafael and on City infrastructure.

Responsibility: Community Development, Public Works
Timeframe: Ongoing
Resources: Staff Time

See LU-2a (Development Review).

Neighborhood Streets

NH-145. Pt. San Pedro Road Widening.

Develop Pt. San Pedro Road as a four lane arterial from its intersection with Riviera to the main entrance of the San Rafael Rock Quarry property and as an improved two lane arterial from there to Biscayne Drive, including bicycle lanes consistent with the Bicycle/Pedestrian Master Plan.

See LU-2a (Development Review).

Neighborhood Design

NH-146. San Rafael Rock Quarry Shoreline Use.

Develop the San Rafael Rock Quarry shoreline as a public use park band linked to McNears Beach Park and Pt. San Pedro Road upon eventual redevelopment of the Quarry to another use. Develop the park band with a 100-foot wide width, with adjustment to include significant features, such as beaches, within the park band.

NH-146a. Rock Quarry Park. Through the development review process, establish a bay frontage park linked to McNear's Beach and the existing walkway on Point San Pedro Road.

Responsibility: Community Development
Timeframe: Long Term
Resources: Staff Time

PICNIC VALLEY

Vision of Picnic Valley

New residential development will be limited to a few vacant hillside lots within the neighborhood boundary. In-fill redevelopment projects are also possible in the area near Davidson School.

The Picnic Valley Neighborhood, one of the older neighborhoods in San Rafael, is located east of Gerstle Park. The neighborhood is developed with a mix of residential uses, featuring apartments and condominiums in the area near Davidson School, and single-family homes and some duplex units in the hillside areas. Access to the hillside homes is provided by very narrow streets, alleyways or pedestrian-only "walks." This is a unique feature within this neighborhood.

The hillside area of the neighborhood, Southern Heights, was formerly farmland. This area experiences "through" traffic as motorists use Wolfe Grade to access the adjacent industrial area and downtown.

NH-147. Residential Use by Davidson Middle School.

Encourage improvements in the area around Davidson Middle School through redevelopment that includes live/work uses.

NH-147a. Lindero Live/Work. Revise the Zoning Regulations to include a zoning district that allows live/work uses in the Light Industrial/Office and Industrial area surrounding Davidson Middle School.

Responsibility: Community Development
Timeframe: Long Term
Resources: Staff Time

RAFAEL MEADOWS/LOS RANCHITOS

Rafael Meadows is a residential area located behind and along the west side of Merrydale Road. This area is developed primarily with small older, one- and two-story single-family homes. Apartments and condominiums are located along Merrydale Road. Two churches are also located in the neighborhood.

The unincorporated Los Ranchitos area features single-family homes on larger lots. Most lots are over an acre in size and some residents house horses on their property.

NH-148. Residential Use at the End of Merrydale Road.

Evaluate amending the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance to promote residential uses at the end of Merrydale Road.

NH-148a. Zoning Change. Consider amending the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance to allow housing at the end of Merrydale Road.

Responsibility: Community Development
Timeframe: Long Term
Resources: Staff Time

SANTA VENETIA

The unincorporated Santa Venetia neighborhood is primarily developed with single family homes, condominiums and apartments, which are located near the China Camp neighborhood boundary. A neighborhood shopping center, Gallinas School, the Jewish Community Center and three small parks are also located within the boundary of this neighborhood. It includes Santa Margarita Island, Santa Venetia Marsh and San Pedro Ridge Open Space Preserves.

**Vision of
Rafael Meadows/
Los Ranchitos**

Rafael Meadow is located in the City of San Rafael; Los Ranchitos is a neighborhood in an unincorporated area of the County. Some of the properties along Merrydale Road may redevelop in the future with more housing. The newest development is Redwood Village consisting of 133 townhomes and single-family residences.

**Vision of
Santa Venetia**

This unincorporated area of the County is anticipated to remain essentially a residential area with a neighborhood school and other community institutions.

Vision of Smith Ranch

Properties in this neighborhood are essentially built-out, including the San Rafael Airport, which is limited to additional plane hangar space construction and landscape improvements in the future. Plans for a skate park at John F. McInnis Park have been approved by the County of Marin. The habitat value of the wetlands adjacent to McInnis Park, Marin Ranch Airport, and the riparian corridors along branches of Gallinas Creek will be enhanced and protected, with public viewing areas located where feasible and appropriate.

SMITH RANCH

This neighborhood, located south of the St. Vincent's/Silveira properties, consists of John F. McInnis County Park, the San Rafael Airport, Contempo Marin Mobile Home Park, the Century Theatres, Regency Center office buildings, and a mixed-use area located north of Smith Ranch Road, including the Smith Ranch Homes senior residential project, a nursing home, apartment complexes, a deli, dry cleaner, and restaurant. The San Rafael Airport is privately owned and is limited to based-aircraft only. Commercial flight activity, flight training and use by helicopters are prohibited. McInnis Park, 450 acres in size, is developed with softball fields, soccer fields, tennis courts, a canoe launch, a golf driving range, restaurant, 9-hole golf course, miniature golf, batting cages, and nature trails. Architectural styles in the neighborhood vary due to the mix of old and new developments.

Neighborhood Economy and Culture

NH-149. San Rafael Airport.

Designate the site as Airport/Recreation consistent with the land use covenant agreed to by the City, the County, and the property owner. Recognize the unique and valuable recreational and environmental characteristics of the airport site. The following uses are allowed on the property:

- Uses consistent with the 2002 Master Use Permit, including the airport and ancillary airport services and light industrial uses.
- Private and public recreational uses.
- Public utility uses as approved by the appropriate government agencies, including flood control, sanitary sewer, gas, and electric, and public safety facilities.
- Open space including wetlands.

NH-149a. San Rafael Airport. Through the development review process, require, as needed, improvements consistent with this policy.

Responsibility: Community Development

Timeframe: Long Term

Resources: Fees

Neighborhood Design

NH-150. Smith Ranch Pond.

Enhance the habitat values of Smith Ranch Pond. Include a public observation station if possible.

NH-150a. Smith Ranch Pond Maintenance. Initiate pond dredging and removal of exotic plants, as provided for in the Smith Ranch Pond Maintenance Plan. Through the development review process, require, as needed, improvements consistent with this policy.

Responsibility: Community Development

Timeframe: Short Term

Resources: Adjacent Property Owners

SUN VALLEY

The primary land use in the neighborhood is single-family residential. The neighborhood also has some duplexes and small apartments. Commercial land uses are limited to the neighborhood shopping center at the corner of Fifth and California, the West End Nursery, and the monument sales office near the Mt. Tamalpais Cemetery at the end of Fifth Avenue. Sun Valley Park and Sun Valley School provide recreational opportunities to residents of the neighborhood.

The diverse character of neighborhood housing is significant because homes were developed with the changing architectural styles over the past century. The oldest area of the neighborhood was subdivided between 1882 and 1916, the Sun Valley subdivision was built after World War II, and the hillside homes were constructed in the 1960s and 1970s. Major topographic features such as the Sun Valley slope and the upper slopes of the Red Rock Quarry are significant parts of the neighborhood.

The 1980 Neighborhood Plan was adopted, in part, to establish development standards for eight undeveloped parcels, totaling 170 acres. The Camgros and Ducca properties are the only vacant parcels remaining in Sun Valley today for development.

Neighborhood Homes

NH-151. New Development.

New development and significant remodels should retain the existing neighborhood character, particularly in areas of smaller or historic homes.

See LU-2a (Development Review).

NH-152. Camgros/Ducca Properties.

Develop these properties at densities and a scale consistent with that of the surrounding neighborhood. Seek annexation of these properties when they are developed. Development should comply with the City's Hillside Guidelines and should include enhancements along the riparian corridor.

See LU-2a (Development Review) and LU-6a (LAFCO).

Neighborhood Circulation

NH-153. Circulation.

Upgrade walkways to sidewalks as a means of safe access to Sun Valley School and the neighborhood commercial center.

See LU-2a (Development Review).

Vision of Sun Valley

The scale, diversity, and residential character of the neighborhood need to be maintained, including the existing affordable housing stock. Housing shall continue to be the dominant land use in the neighborhood. New commercial uses will only be allowed if they benefit the neighborhood and will not impair the dominant residential character. There is a desire for infrastructure improvements, including better storm drainage and sidewalks.

Neighborhood Design

NH-154. Annexation of Mt. Tamalpais Cemetery.

Consider annexation of the Mt. Tamalpais Cemetery, which constitutes an important element in the visual backdrop of the neighborhood.

See LU-2a (Development Review) and LU-6a (LAFCO).

Neighborhood Economy and Culture

NH-155. Commercial Uses.

Prohibit commercial uses in Sun Valley unless such uses would be of primary benefit to the neighborhood and would not disturb or impair its dominant residential character. Encourage retention of the existing neighborhood commercial services at Fifth and California Avenues and at West End Nursery, allowing acceptable alternative uses only if it can be clearly demonstrated that local serving uses are not economically viable.

NH-155a. Sun Valley Commercial Uses. Through the development review process, encourage improvements consistent with this policy.

Responsibility: Community Development

Timeframe: Long Term

Resources: Fees

Terra Linda and Vision North San Rafael

In November 1997, the City Council received *Vision North San Rafael*. The Vision is the result of a community-wide effort to describe the future of the northern half of San Rafael. In addition to goals and actions, the document includes a list of implementation strategies to make the vision a reality. Terra Linda is a neighborhood in north San Rafael, and covers much of the area of the Vision.

The Vision identifies needed improvements to the Terra Linda Shopping Center and encourages the construction of the North San Rafael Promenade, both located within the neighborhood boundary. The Vision establishes top priorities and goals for residential neighborhoods in the Design, Beautification and Maintenance, Homes for a Variety of People, Community Services, and Gathering Places sections of the document. Implementation of the Vision will continue to be a requirement for all new development projects in the North San Rafael neighborhoods.

TERRA LINDA

Terra Linda, one of the larger neighborhoods in San Rafael, is developed primarily with single-family homes. Condominiums and apartments are located at the end of Freitas Parkway and along Nova Albion and Los Gamos Road. Architectural styles vary throughout the neighborhood, primarily developed with Eichler, Kenny, or “ranch” style homes. There are three senior housing facilities: Villa Marin, Maria B. Freitas and the Nazareth House.

The Terra Linda Recreation Center, Santa Margarita and Freitas Parks, and sports fields and playgrounds at private and public schools offer recreational opportunities for residents. Kaiser Hospital and Terra Linda Shopping Center are also located within the neighborhood. Traffic in the area is generated by the hospital, the schools, and by Highway 101 diversions. The Terra Linda/Sleepy Hollow Open Space Preserve, located in a semi-circle around the Santa Margarita Valley, provides a community separator between San Rafael, San Anselmo and Lucas Valley. “Pocket” parks are located along Freitas Parkway.

Neighborhood Homes

NH-156 Eichler Homes.

Preserve the design character of Eichler homes.

NH-156a. Eichler Homes. Consider preparation of design guidelines and/or zoning regulations to preserve Eichler Homes.

Responsibility: Community Development

Timeframe: Short Term

Resources: Staff Time

NH-157. Hillside Parcels, East of Los Gamos Drive.

These steep, highly visible parcels above the YMCA and office building have limited access. Development shall be clustered to retain community-wide visible hillside resources. Access to the northern parcel is very difficult and should be considered through the adjacent southern parcel.

See LU-2a (Development Review).

NH-158. Santa Margarita Neighborhood Plan.

Prepare a neighborhood plan for Santa Margarita to address neighborhood concerns.

See NH-1a (Neighborhood Planning Process).

Neighborhood Circulation

NH-159. North San Rafael Promenade.

Support implementation of the North San Rafael Promenade.

See C-24a (North San Rafael Promenade).

NH-160. Freitas Parkway Overhead Utilities.

Support and seek funding to underground utilities along Freitas Parkway.

See I-4a (Funding Undergrounding Utilities) and I-4b (Neighborhood Efforts).

Neighborhood Economy and Culture

NH-161. Terra Linda Shopping Center.

Encourage improvements to Terra Linda Shopping Center. Incorporate improvements for the North San Rafael Promenade into upgrades at the shopping center. Examples include:

- Coordinated design and colors at the Terra Linda Shopping Center.
- Tenant identification signs for Terra Linda Shopping Center consistent with the center's appearance.
- Pedestrian friendly plaza in front of Scotty's Market and entry signage at Freitas and Del Ganado.
- Housing when possible, thereby adding to the vitality of this area and facilitating the use of public transit.

See LU-2a (Development Review) and C-24a (North San Rafael Promenade).

Neighborhood Economy and Culture

NH-162. Kaiser Permanente Medical Center.

Retain uses at the Kaiser Permanente Medical Center and seek ways to improve traffic and parking.

See LU-2a (Development Review).

Neighborhood Design

NH-163. Youth Recreation Facilities in North San Rafael.

Encourage safe places for the young people in the North San Rafael Community to gather and to explore and pursue their interests.

NH-163a. Youth Facilities. Through the development review process, require, as needed, improvements consistent with this policy. Provide and maintain additional recreation facilities in North San Rafael, including a teen center and skate park.

Responsibility: Community Development

Timeframe: Short Term

Resources: Fees

NH-164. Santa Margarita Creek.

Improve the appearance of the Santa Margarita Creek on Del Ganado Road while maintaining storm drain capabilities.

See CON-8a (Creek Restoration) and CON-8b (Enhancement of Creeks and Drainageways)



The Terra Linda pool is one of the most popular recreation facilities in San Rafael.

NH-165. San Rafael Library Services.

Encourage library services west of Highway 101.

See CA-12a (Opportunities for Community Based Libraries)

Vision of West End

Development of mixed-use projects on underutilized properties along the "Miracle Mile" is a possibility during the planning period of San Rafael 2020.

WEST END

The West End neighborhood, located west of Downtown, is a mixed-use area consisting of single-family homes, apartments, and commercial uses. The "Miracle Mile," a commercial corridor extending from the Downtown area, bisects the community and provides vehicular access to San Anselmo and beyond to West Marin.

Neighborhood Economy and Culture

NH-166. Miracle Mile.

Existing commercial uses along the Miracle Mile (Fourth Street west of the “Y” at Second and Fourth Streets) shall be retained and improved in terms of visual appearance, parking, landscaping and vehicular access from side streets where possible. New development or redevelopment should be of a scale and intensity consistent with existing development.

See LU-2a (Development Review).

NH-167. Miracle Mile Noise Abatement.

Consider the benefits and practicality of noise abatement techniques when designing or implementing capital improvements along the Miracle Mile.

NH-167a. Miracle Mile Noise Abatement. Through the capital improvement program, consider the implementation of noise abatement techniques, including the use of attractive fencing, trees and landscaping, and noise mitigation pavement.

Responsibility: Public Works

Timeframe: Long Term

Resources: Staff Time

