
GOAL 4: A DIVERSE HOUSING SUPPLY

It is the goal of San Rafael to have an adequate housing supply and mix that matches the needs of people of all ages, income levels, and special requirements. *San Rafael has a wide range of housing types. People who work in San Rafael should be able to live here and there should be adequate housing for seniors and very low-income households.*

Shelter is an essential need of life. The City recognizes shelter as basic to human dignity. The present housing situation in San Rafael effectively limits the right to shelter to the well-to-do, and limits opportunities for seniors and young adults to remain in their community. It limits the ability of teachers and other public service employees, people who work in local businesses and people who provide childcare and elder care to find housing so that they can live in the community where they work.

More housing choices can be created through mixed-use housing, shared housing, live-work units, higher density housing close to public transit and services, and sensitive development of unused or underutilized lands. Recent changes in California State law make it easier for single-family property owners to add a second unit. At the same time, the City will continue to pursue abatement of illegal units – units built without required building permits. The City will assist property owners in legalizing units where feasible.

Protection and Maintenance of Existing Housing

H-10. Protection of the Existing Housing Stock.

Continue to protect existing housing from conversion to nonresidential uses and encourage rental subsidy programs that can be applied to existing housing.

H-10a. Condominium Conversion Ordinance. As stated in the zoning ordinance, prohibit conversion of existing multifamily rental units to market rate condominium units unless the City's rental vacancy rate is above 5.0 percent, as determined by the State of California Finance Department annual Population Estimates. Exceptions include limited equity cooperatives, co-housing and other innovative housing proposals that are affordable to low- and moderate-income households.

Responsibility: Community Development

Timeframe: Ongoing

Resources: Fees

H-10b. Rental Housing to Provide Ongoing Affordability Restrictions. Continue to work with housing developers seeking to acquire and rehabilitate affordable rental housing units in order to maintain ongoing affordability of the units.

Responsibility: Economic Development

Timeframe: Ongoing

Resources: Redevelopment

H-10c. Canal Housing Improvement Program. Expand the Canal Housing Improvement Program (CAHIP) citywide to provide financial assistance to acquire and rehabilitate existing poorly maintained rental units and assure long-term affordability of the units.

Responsibility: Economic Development
Timeframe: Ongoing
Resources: Redevelopment

H-10d. Canal Affordable Safe and Healthy Housing. Expand the Canal Affordable Safe and Healthy Housing (CASH) program citywide to provide forgivable rehabilitation loans to private owners in exchange for long-term affordability of a certain portion of units.

Responsibility: Economic Development
Timeframe: Ongoing
Resources: Redevelopment

H-10e. Retention of Mobilehomes and Preservation of Existing Mobilehome Sites.

Retain where possible this type of housing, which includes the 400-home Contempo Marin and the 30-home B-Bar-A mobilehome park, and its affordability by continuing to implement the Mobilehome Rent Stabilization Ordinance. Mobilehomes typically provide lower cost housing by the nature of their size and design.

Responsibility: City Attorney
Timeframe: Ongoing
Resources: Staff Time

H-11. Housing Conditions and Maintenance.

Protect and conserve the existing housing stock and existing residential areas. Protect residents and maintain the housing stock by enforcing the housing code for all types of residential units. Support good management practices and the long-term maintenance and improvement of existing housing.

H-11a. Apartment Inspection Program. To assure safe living conditions, continue to enforce housing codes for all apartment projects three units or larger in size.

Responsibility: Community Development
Timeframe: Ongoing
Resources: Fees

H-11b. Code Enforcement and Public Information Programs. Coordinate housing, building and fire code enforcement to ensure compliance with basic health and safety building standards and provide information about rehabilitation loan programs for use by qualifying property owners.

Responsibility: Community Development
Timeframe: Ongoing
Resources: Staff Time

H-11c. Rehabilitation and Energy Loan Programs. Coordinate with other organizations, including the Marin Housing Authority and PG&E, to continue to provide and expand rehabilitation loan and grant programs to eligible homeowners and renter households.

Responsibility: Community Development
Timeframe: Ongoing
Resources: Grants (Community Development Block Grant)