

EXCERPTS FROM THE NEIGHBORHOODS ELEMENT OF THE SAN RAFAEL GENERAL PLAN 2020 (ADOPTED 2004)

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.

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

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)

NH-165. San Rafael Library Services.

Encourage library services west of Highway 101.

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

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.

V i s i o n o f N o r t h S a n R a f a e l C o m m e r c i a l C e n t e r

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.

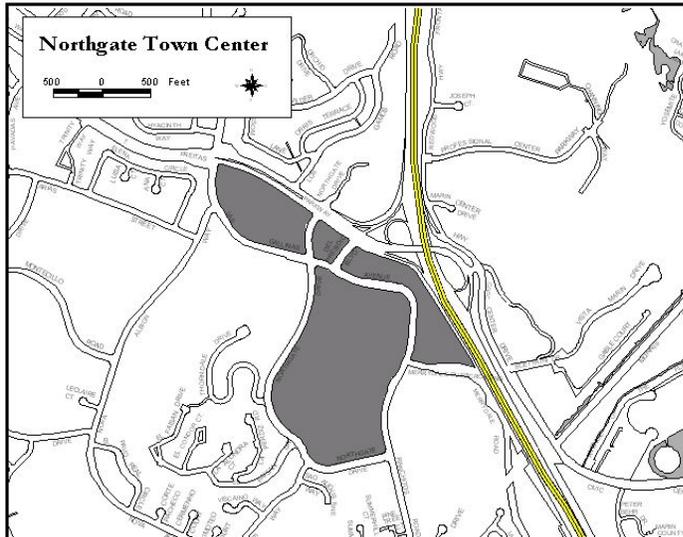
The priority actions for the Town Center are to create a

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).

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.