

## SUMMARY

### MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission Statement of the Redwood City Strategic General Plan reads as follows:

*Improve the quality of urban life in Redwood City;*

*Maintain those features which make Redwood City unique and desirable;*

*Generate awareness of Redwood City's heritage and community assets, and encourage public participation in local decision making;*

*Promote public health, public safety, general welfare, urban beauty, and civic pride in Redwood City; and*

*Recognize the cultural and economic diversity of Redwood city, and preserve its stability and well-being as hallmarks of a good place to live.*

### STRATEGIC GENERAL PLAN SUMMARY

Redwood City's future should be as exciting as its past. The oldest community in San Mateo County will be completing a "new town" called Redwood Shores at the same time it is resolving issues which can be associated with a community that is over 120 years old. The dynamics of Redwood City are not found in any other community on the Peninsula, and the opportunity to blend the old with the new gives Redwood City its character.

The internal dynamics of the city must also be weighed against the external pressures on Redwood City from increased traffic, provision of affordable housing, significant increases in property values, changing demographics, and changing economic trends.

The following discussion is categorized by issues, not by General Plan elements, because many of these issues involve more than one element.

### RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS:

Pleasant residential neighborhoods free of traffic, noise, and pollution is a primary goal of the Strategic General Plan. With the increasing value of residential properties, home ownership has become more difficult and those people able to afford their own home are extremely protective of their investment. As some dwellings in the older neighborhoods are rehabilitated the remaining unkempt dwellings stand out by contrast. The Land Use Element shows no increases in density in any of the residential neighborhoods. The Circulation Element shows no arterials, only collectors, through residential neighborhoods and proposes no increases in capacity for existing residential streets.

### GROWTH AREAS:

Future growth, both commercial and residential, will primarily be located east of El Camino Real in the downtown (redevelopment area) and in Redwood Shores. These two growth areas will have distinctively different growth patterns due to their obviously different characteristics. In Redwood Shores we can expect to see large office buildings near the Bayshore Freeway on relatively large parcels of five to ten acres. Residential projects will be located at the end of Redwood Peninsula and will be primarily single family dwellings on small lots fronting on private streets with densities of approximately six units per acre and multifamily condominium projects with densities of approximately 15 to 20 unit per acre. Redwood Shores is now only 20 years old and most of the structures are less than ten years old. The landscaped parkways and large setbacks contrast with the portion of Redwood City west of the Freeway.

The downtown area will have much smaller projects due to the lack of availability of large parcels. The original subdivision for Redwood City created blocks with one and one quarter acres per block and lots having 5,000 square feet. Even with the help of the Redevelopment Agency, it will be difficult to assemble development parcels of one acre or more except in certain rare instances. Historic structures must also be preserved, requiring a great deal of sensitivity by new projects to

# REDWOOD CITY STRATEGIC GENERAL PLAN

prevent the downtown from becoming a patchwork of buildings, but instead become a "quilt" of many fabrics creating a beautiful design. Land use downtown will also be quite different. Instead of land uses being separated in zoning districts, a mix of uses is encouraged, particularly commercial uses at ground level with residential dwellings above. Bringing people into the downtown will make the area more exciting and will also allow greater use of transit for work and shopping trips.

## **OPEN SPACE AND URBAN RESERVE:**

Large areas of Redwood City are designated for Open Space and Urban Reserve. The open space primarily consists of the Leslie Salt crystallizers, the South San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge, and publicly owned park and recreational facilities. Due to the sensitive nature of these open space areas, it should be assumed that they will remain as open space forever.

The open space areas in Redwood City, the single largest land use category, are not designated as such because they are considered marginal for development but because they are extremely important from an ecological standpoint. Many endangered species are located on Bair Island and it is one of the largest areas where migratory birds can be found. The marsh areas help clean the bay waters and air. Much of this land is under the ownership of State and Federal agencies for its protection.

The existing parkland in Redwood City is extensively used by the current population. Additional parkland is not expected to be provided except in portions of the Redwood Shores area where development is still taking place. These public parks provide the majority of areas for both active and passive recreation.

Another recreational facility to be considered is bicycle and pedestrian pathways. Local pathways are found on the dikes in Redwood Shores and around salt pond A-12 (at the foot of Whipple Avenue). In addition to these pathways, there is a system of bicycle paths being developed which would go around the entire bay. Redwood City has

supported this trail system but there are still some missing links through Redwood City.

The areas designated "Urban Reserve" present an unusual issue with which the City must deal. The areas of "Urban Reserve" are at the end of Redwood Peninsula, the area known as "South Shores", and approximately one-third of the salt crystallizers. The intent of this designation is to show what properties the City expects to be developed in the future, but they each have reasons why they haven't been designated with specific land uses.

At the northerly end of Redwood Peninsula, the "Urban Reserve" designation was placed on the area between the electric transmission lines and the Bay for several reasons including: the unknown effect the electric transmission lines would have on people living near them; the effect of the radio waves from the radio antenna, and the impact from the sewage treatment plant. It is expected that future studies will take these issues into account, and a suitable land use plan and a general plan amendment will follow. Road and utility systems have been built elsewhere on the peninsula to adequately serve the anticipated development of this urban area.

The single largest area shown as "Urban Reserve" is South Shores. This 1,100 acre parcel is under a single ownership, but at this point in time there are no services proposed for this area and there is no allocation for either sewer treatment plant capacity or water. The General Plan does not suggest any land use for this property but there are two policies which may have an impact. The first is from the Circulation Element where it is proposed that all parts of the City be interconnected. This policy suggests that a roadway be constructed through South Shores to connect the eastern and western portions of Redwood City. The second policy is from the Safety Element which suggests that future development be compatible with the San Carlos Airport. This area will also be the subject of a major study to determine future land uses and subsequent general plan amendment.

The third area shown as "Urban Reserve" is the Leslie Salt Crystallizers. Again, no services are provided to this area and there is no allocation for either sewer treatment plant capacity or water. Of particular concern is whether this area is considered "wetlands" by the Federal or State agencies, which would severely limit any future development.

### COMMERCIAL RETAIL:

Downtown Redwood City, particularly Broadway and Main Street, historically has been considered the main shopping area of Redwood City. The construction of shopping centers, regional and neighborhood, has drawn the shopper away from the downtown which now serves primarily as a service center for the office uses. The downtown will never again be the main shopping area for Redwood City, but it does have the opportunity to become a special place to go to find something you may not find at a shopping center. The attractive tree lined streets with sidewalk cafes and numerous antique dealers have brought renewed interest into the historic center of Redwood City. The Strategic General Plan proposes the preservation of historic structures as well as constructing residential dwelling units which will bring a different clientele into the downtown.

Because Redwood City is nearly built out, it is not expected that there will be a lot of retail space added, but it is important that the local shopping centers are improved to keep quality tenants and provide the goods for Redwood City's citizens. The improvement of these centers may require minor expansion or significant modifications and are supported in the Strategic General Plan.

### TRANSPORTATION:

Traffic is a regional issue but it certainly has impacts on Redwood City. As the amount of traffic increases, Redwood City needs to find a way to keep these increases from negatively affecting its neighborhoods. The Circulation Element proposes that the existing State highways (Bayshore Freeway, El Camino Real, and Woodside Road) be improved to provide for greater capacity, relieving the pressure on local streets that are finding more

and more people using them to get through Redwood City. The collector system which serves the residential neighborhoods will not be designed to carry more traffic but designed to carry the existing traffic in a safer manner. Diversion of traffic from one local street to another is to be avoided.

To improve the traffic situation, local jurisdictions, including Redwood City, will have to be prepared to entice people out of single occupant vehicles and into carpools, vanpools, buses, and rail systems. The Redwood City General Plan supports these Transportation System Management (TSM) programs as an inexpensive way to provide for future traffic increases minimizing the need for massive improvements in the road network that could deteriorate the quality of life in residential neighborhoods.

### HOUSING:

Housing has become a critical issue in the Bay Area and Redwood City will be the largest producer of housing in San Mateo County over the next five years (through the expected buildout of Redwood Peninsula). Most of the anticipated new housing will not be "affordable" under the State definition, but during the next five years Redwood City is proposing to provide for 500 affordable units. This is a formidable task but could be reached if all of the policies in the General Plan are carried out to their fullest. Resources available to the City include density bonuses, redevelopment set-aside money for housing, and high density mixed use projects.

Redwood City has set positive examples by constructing the 104-unit Heron Court project, supporting the emergency shelter for homeless families, and approving the shared home facility, showing that Redwood City can succeed in providing affordable housing.

### GENERAL PLAN REVISIONS

The Strategic General Plan is intended to be a living document that can be amended as major forces upon and within Redwood City change. These amendments should not be treated lightly or the value of the plan will be diminished. As each

project is reviewed against the goals and policies of the Strategic General Plan, Redwood City will be able to determine if the plan is being carried out or in some instances should the plan have a new direction. Major changes to the Strategic General Plan should not be made every 10 or 15 years, but instead periodically to keep it fresh and sensitive to the needs of Redwood City.

**GOALS:**

**LAND USE:** *Integrate a range of land uses to ensure that Redwood City is a desirable place to live.*

**CIRCULATION:** *Manage and improve the transportation system for optimal use by public transit, automobiles, bicycles, and pedestrians.*

**HOUSING:** *Provide safe and sanitary housing opportunities in suitable locations for all segments of the population.*

**OPEN SPACE:** *Reserve open space areas within the urban complex to enhance the value of other lands and the quality of life in the community.*

**CONSERVATION:** *Orchestrate lead roles in environmental preservation, air and water quality, wildlife protection, resource recovery, and cultural enrichment in concert with economic development.*

**SAFETY:** *Verify the safety of all buildings and other facilities in the city against seismic and other hazards.*

**NOISE:** *Establish maximum tolerable limits for point noise sources and ambient noise levels.*

