MEETING THE HOUSING CHALLENGE
City Supports Housing at all Income Levels through Policies, Programs, Partnerships, and Projects

In 2019, the City Council identified three top policy priorities: housing, transportation, and children and youth. Housing has emerged as especially challenging, as rising housing costs, low vacancy rates, and income disparity throughout the region threaten to displace some residents, and negatively impact the quality of life of many more.

Redwood City’s vision is to build a community where people of all backgrounds and income levels can thrive. Affordable housing is an important part of that vision.

To underscore its commitment to addressing the City’s housing challenges, the City recently moved its Housing Division into the City Manager’s office, where it will function as a priority initiative. Previously, the division was part of the Community Development and Transportation Department. The Housing Division is charged with creating a range of housing options through policies, programs, partnership, and projects. The City’s housing leadership manager will lead the City’s housing division and be responsible for supporting housing stability for residents and the creation of market rate and affordable housing.

City staff continue to deliver housing programs and services, including administration of $1.3 million in

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MEETING THE HOUSING CHALLENGE
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City will add 453 new affordable housing units. Federal and local grant programs to support affordable housing. In FY 2018-2019, more than 770 Redwood City residents received assistance through these programs, and 60 units of affordable housing were preserved. Funding for homeless services and homeless prevention assisted more than 250 people, including families, adults, youth, and persons with special needs. Nearly 400 residents received assistance through a home sharing program, an ombudsman service, and programs designed for victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse. An economic development program provided opportunities for 33 low-income residents to start a new business or maintain or expand an existing one.

Four hundred and fifty-three affordable housing units are expected to open their doors in the next two years. These include:

- Arroyo Green, 707 Bradford Street, 117 units of senior housing
- Broadway Plaza, 1401 Broadway, 119-unit apartment building
- Habitat for Humanity, 612 Jefferson Avenue, 20-unit for-sale townhomes
- Hallmark Apartments, 531 Woodside Road, 72-unit apartment building
- ROEM Development, 353 Main Street, 125-unit apartment building

Other market-rate housing developments that are required to provide affordable housing are in the planning review process.

Almost half of the City’s residents rent their homes. To support housing security for renters, in January of 2019 the City Council approved minimum rental lease terms and required relocation assistance under certain circumstances. This program will be evaluated for effectiveness in the first quarter of 2020. Additional protections were approved in October (see below).

Additionally, last summer landlords and property managers met with City staff to share their ideas on affordable housing, address the challenges they face, and learn about local programs, resources, and incentives available to landlords who offer below market rents.

To create more housing options in our neighborhoods, the City supports the addition of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and created new guidelines for their construction. Additionally, new state housing legislation related to ADUs, tenant protections, and other topics has been approved. The City will review these new laws and revisit City regulations in the next year.

For an update on the City’s housing initiatives, go to www.redwoodcity.org/housing.

Urgency Ordinance Provides Immediate Protection to Renters

In early October, Governor Gavin Newsom signed California Assembly Bill (AB) 1482, which provides protection to tenants statewide starting on January 1, 2020. After its passage, the City Council and City staff experienced an increase in tenant complaints about rent hikes and evictions. In response, at its October 28 meeting the City Council passed an urgency ordinance providing tenants with rent stabilization and just cause eviction protections similar to those contained in AB 1482. The City’s ordinance became effective on October 29, 2019 and will remain in effect until December 31, 2019. The statewide measure takes effect on January 1. The goal of the urgency ordinance is to keep tenants in their homes, and to reduce the impacts of displacement in our community. The ordinance limits rent increases to 9%. It also prohibits owners from terminating a tenancy without just cause if the tenant has lived in a unit for 12 months or more. Learn more about the measures and legal resources for tenants at www.redwoodcity.org/urgencyordinance.

Community Input Sought for New Land Use Vision Downtown and Beyond

Communities are always evolving to meet changing community needs and Redwood City has experienced many changes in the last several years. Beginning next spring, the City will launch a Community Visioning Process to establish a new land use vision for Downtown and the Central Redwood City area. This process would be informed by numerous factors, including:

- Reviews of future land use to meet current and projected community needs,
- Climate adaptation planning,
- Consideration of commercial and residential densities,
- City Council-adopted policies such as our Climate Action Plan and Citywide Transportation Plan rwcMoves,
- Economic drivers and impacts associated with development,
- Place making, and
- Utility and infrastructure needs.

The Community Visioning Process will be followed by environmental studies to create a new document to guide future development in these areas.

Given the significant number of transportation-related initiatives already underway, led both by the City and by transit entities, the first phase of the process will focus on rail planning.

There will be many ways for residents to provide input on the new vision in the months ahead, and we hope you will participate. It is important to hear from as many people as possible as we plan for our community’s future.

For more information, go to www.redwoodcity.org/planning.
Several efforts are underway to make it easier to get around Redwood City and the region. As the City launches a community visioning effort in the spring, we will seek input from residents on how these efforts can best address community needs. Here is a snapshot of major initiatives:

**Caltrain Business Plan and Caltrain Electrification Project**
Caltrain wants to increase the number of trains serving Redwood City from 76 to 268 trains per weekday. This would require four train tracks in Redwood City, two more than it has now, to accommodate bypass trains. This scenario is now being studied, and the City will be asking for community input in coordination with visioning meetings.

Caltrain’s electrification project is also underway. This will modernize their train control systems and allow them to use new electric trains, improving capacity and reducing cost, engine noise, and greenhouse gas emissions. Construction south of Woodside Road will continue until the end of the year. Electrified train service will begin in early 2022.

**California High-Speed Rail**
City staff are monitoring California’s high-speed rail project, the nation’s first system of this type. It would connect mega-regions of the state. The plan for the San Jose-to-San Francisco segment of the system calls for the high-speed rail trains to share tracks with Caltrain. Street-level crossings in Redwood City would need safety improvements to address trains passing through at 110 mph. An Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for this project is expected to be released in the spring of 2020.

**Dumbarton Transportation Project**
The Dumbarton Transportation Project is exploring ways to improve mobility and relieve traffic congestion on the Dumbarton and San Mateo County Bridges via a new transit service that would begin and end in Redwood City. This service could include a bicycle and pedestrian path on the Dumbarton Bridge between the East Bay and the Peninsula. Cross Bay Transit Partners, a partnership between Plenary and Facebook, is managing the project with the San Mateo County Transit District. They are now defining the project scope. Draft environmental documents will be released in the spring of 2020.

**Broadway Streetcar Study**
In 2016, the City initiated a study to explore the feasibility of creating a streetcar and/or urban circulator from the Caltrain station through the Broadway corridor, serving areas with high employment density that are beyond walking distance from the train station. These include the Stanford Redwood City and Stanford Health Care campuses. The study considered various routes, and identified three alignment alternatives that go through Broadway or Broadway and Marshall Street. The study also includes high-level estimates of cost, ridership, and travel time for each alternative.

**Downtown Transit Center**
The City is also in the process of re-imagining its Downtown Transit Center to improve circulation, mobility, walking, and biking access, and accommodate the future needs of Caltrain. A Draft Final Study completed last summer includes short- and long-term conceptual design alternatives such as bus bays and bus circulation at the transit center, redesign of the Caltrain platform, public parking, bicycle amenities, walking and biking access to the station, and green and open spaces.

**Sequoia Station Redevelopment**
In September, the City received a preliminary proposal for the existing Sequoia Station site that would redevelop it into an office, residential, and retail mixed-use, transit-oriented development. The City Council has not determined when this proposal might be considered, or whether it will be considered in its current form. As rail-related projects are studied during the Community Visioning Process, the City anticipates involving all of the property owners in the Sequoia Station discussion, including private property owners, Caltrain, and SamTrans.

For more information, go to www.redwoodcity.org/transportation.
City Addresses Sea Level Rise, Flood Protection

No other county in California faces greater risk from sea level rise than San Mateo County. Development along the Bay and the coast and the likelihood of rising sea level due to climate change have created a new sense of urgency to combat water-related public safety threats.

Redwood City has 19 square miles of land and 16 square miles of water. Without mitigation efforts, the rise in sea level will threaten businesses, property, and roads along the shore. The Downtown area and the north end of Veterans Boulevard between Whipple Avenue and Woodside Road have also been identified as future potential flood zone areas.

Creation of New Countywide Agency
Meeting this challenge requires a regional approach. Redwood City leaders have been working with representatives from other cities in San Mateo County and from county government to assess vulnerability and create a countywide agency to lead sea level rise resiliency efforts. The county and its cities supported expanding the capabilities of the existing San Mateo County Flood Protection District to enable it to respond to sea level rise, flooding, and coastal erosion threats, and to make large-scale storm water infrastructure improvements. Governor Gavin Newsom recently signed Assembly Bill 875, which allows the District to become the San Mateo County Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency Agency. It will be the first agency in the state to directly address sea level rise.

For more information, go to www.resilientsanmateo.org.

Levee Projects
The City is working with property owners in the Seaport area to raise the Seaport Plaza and Seaport Centre levees that protect our shoreline. This would involve elevating more than 9,700 feet of ring levees to 14 feet at the highest point to meet FEMA standards and for accreditation. The project is structured as a public/private partnership. Property owners would cover the design and construction costs, around $13.5 million, while the City would continue to be responsible for ongoing operation and maintenance.

Flood Protection
The City is also moving forward on flood protection for Redwood Shores and the watershed area that runs along the southern edge of the salt ponds. City staff are preparing a request for proposal for a study on flood protection for Redwood Shores, which will consider the impact of sea level rise. The Bayfront Canal Project design is complete and is awaiting permits from state and federal agencies. It will provide immediate relief from flooding in the low-lying communities along the Bayfront and Atherton Channels by diverting storm flows to the wetlands being restored in the San Francisco Bay at the Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge. The project is a collaboration between Redwood City, the County of San Mateo, Menlo Park, and Atherton. The City secured Proposition 84 grant funding of nearly $1.24 million from the California Department of Water Resources for the project.

For more information, go to www.redwoodcity.org/infrastructure.

New Officers Will Focus on Neighborhood Parking Enforcement

The Redwood City Police Department (RCPD) expects to hire two new parking enforcement officers (PEOs) by the end of 2019 to support Redwood City residential neighborhoods.

The growth in our City’s population and an increase in housing density have led to a higher demand for parking on residential streets and an increase in illegal parking.

Over the past several years, RCPD has seen a steep rise in complaints from residents over issues like blocked driveways, red zone violations, obstructed fire hydrants, and abandoned vehicles. These new hires are a direct result of resident feedback.

The new PEOs will work staggered hours, allowing for evening and weekend enforcement.

With these new hires, five officers will focus on parking enforcement: two conduct meter enforcement in the Downtown area, and three will handle parking enforcement in neighborhoods.

Learn more at www.redwoodcity.org/police.
New Community Voices at the Library

Last summer, Redwood City Public Library created Library Takeover, and invited members of the Redwood City and North Fair Oaks communities to submit ideas for new Library programs or events that would help us connect with people who don’t regularly use the Library.

The program provides small one-time grants of up to $1,000 to groups in the community to develop their Library Takeover event. Teams selected for grants also receive help from our Library staff to produce and publicize their Takeover. The goal of the program is to bring more people into the Library, and help them see the Library as a welcoming place and a valuable resource.

Applications displayed tremendous thought, effort, passion, and creativity. Here are the community members who have been chosen to receive a grant for the design and implementation of their Library Takeover program or event:

• January 10, 2020: Family Paint Night, Colectivo Cultural de NFO/Culture Collective of NFO
• February 7, 2020: Open Mic Night, Colectivo Cultural de NFO/Culture Collective of NFO
• February 8, 22, and 29, and March 14, 2020: A Hero’s Journey: Call Upon Your Inner Hero to Face Life Challenges, Casa Circulo Cultural
• March 20, 2020: Drumming Circle, Colectivo Cultural de NFO/Culture Collective of NFO
• March 25, 2020: Veterans Resource Fair, Keith Blackey
• April 2, 2020: Autism Goes to Work - Turning Disabilities Into Possibilities, Autism Career Pathways
• May 16, 2020: Celebrate Pasifika: A Pacific Islander Heritage Celebration, Kristina Perino
• May 27, 2020: Walking in your Shoes: Education and Wellness for Success, Maria Cuellar and Noemi Ojeda
• October 3, 2020: Chinese Moon Festival Celebration, Redwood Shores Chinese Community Club

Library Takeover is sponsored by the SAGA Foundation and the Friends of the Redwood City Public Library.

For more information, go to www.redwoodcity.org/librarytakeover.

GOING GREENER
2030 Climate Action Plan Update

On Earth Day of 2013, the Redwood City Council adopted a comprehensive Climate Action Plan. It served as a road map to achieving the City’s General Plan target of a 15% reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions below 2005 levels by 2020. Not only did the City meet that goal, it exceeded it.

To reduce the impact of City operations, the City has increased energy efficiency in City facilities and is replacing low-pressure sodium lamps to light emitting diodes (LEDs). The City also purchases hybrid vehicles whenever possible and is evaluating the need to provide increased electric vehicle charging stations on public property when considering new development.

To continue our success reducing GHG beyond 2020, and meet new state targets for 2030, the City is now developing its updated Climate Action Plan. It is based on community feedback, the results of the City’s GHG inventories, and analyses of current and potential GHG reduction measures. The 2030 plan will:

• Detail measures designed to reduce emissions in energy, transportation, water, and waste,
• Build on the successful launch of Peninsula Clean Energy, with 97.8% of Redwood City residents and businesses now receiving energy from 90% – 100% carbon-free sources,
• Focus on building and transportation electrification, and
• Include carbon sequestration and climate adaptation strategies, like improving the urban forest/canopy, and adapting to sea level rise and addressing higher risk of wildfire.

For more information on the Climate Action Plan, go to www.redwoodcity.org/environment.
City Programs Address Homelessness, City Cleanup

Ensuring housing for all in our community is a top priority for the City. It’s also a long-term challenge. In the near term, we’re working to provide services and emergency housing to people who need them and to limit use of outdoor spaces for living.

Several City departments, in collaboration with service providers and other local agencies, are working together to assist our homeless community while addressing concerns about sanitation and blight.

In addition, the City Council recently approved the Downtown Streets Team (DST) as a two-year pilot program. DST has programs in more than a dozen Northern California cities, including Hayward, Palo Alto, Santa Cruz, San Francisco, and Sunnyvale. Founded in 2005, they have secured more than 900 homes and 950 jobs for formerly homeless individuals.

The DST Program is unique. DST engages homeless members of the community to perform cleanup activities and, in return, DST provides job training and services to help homeless individuals move toward self-sufficiency. Initial cleanup work will focus primarily in the Downtown area, within walking distance of the Library where their materials will be stored. Over time, we hope to provide transportation and expand cleanup efforts to areas along Highway 101.

DST members will augment the efforts of staff from multiple City departments who regularly coordinate service outreach and debris removal associated with homeless encampments in all parts of the City. Over the past nine months, cleanup efforts at sites including Union Cemetery on Woodside Road, Douglas Court, Charter Street, Linden Street, Cedar Street, and more resulted in the removal of 583 cubic yards of trash using utility trucks, trailers, and backhoes.

The Redwood City Police Department trains its officers to play a constructive role in mitigating the challenges of homelessness and connecting homeless individuals with services whenever possible. Each patrol team includes at least one homeless liaison officer, who connects homeless individuals with resources and social services.

City staff also assist our homeless residents with referrals to organizations that can help with housing placement, health care, transportation services, and shower and laundry facilities, while addressing issues like safety, blight, and sanitation.

By taking a holistic approach to the challenges of homelessness, we can better meet the needs of all of our residents.

For more information, go to [www.redwoodcity.org/humanservices](http://www.redwoodcity.org/humanservices).

2020 U.S. Census Is Coming

Every 10 years, the federal government is required to conduct a national census to count every person living in the U.S., regardless of age, immigration status, or criminal history. Our next census will take place in March 2020. Every household will have the option of responding online, by mail, or by phone. An accurate count is important because it affects political representation, funding for critical programs, and decisions made by business, civic, community, and non-profit leaders. In May, Census workers will begin visiting households that have not completed the forms. We encourage you to help us achieve as accurate a count as possible. The Census Bureau protects the privacy of the information they collect and only reports data as statistics. They do not share personal information with any other government agency.

To learn more, visit [cmo.smcgov.org/census-2020-outreach-resources](http://cmo.smcgov.org/census-2020-outreach-resources).
Disaster Preparedness: What RCFD Is Doing and How You Can Help

Catastrophic events like wildfires, earthquakes, and floods don’t discriminate. Everyone is vulnerable. In recent years, natural disasters have been occurring more frequently, and with more devastating impact.

The Redwood City Fire Department (RCFD) is addressing disaster preparedness with a proactive approach to emergency response and public education.

The Department’s Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) program is part of a national effort to recruit community volunteers, educate them in preparing for post-disaster hazards, and train them in basic disaster response skills. That includes fire safety, basic search and rescue, team organization, and disaster medical operations. A new group of volunteers is being trained this fall, and another training academy will be scheduled for spring of 2020.

For information, go to www.redwoodcity.org/cert.

You should also take steps to prepare for a major emergency. Put together a Go Bag for each member of your household with basic necessities such as medication, clothing, food, water, and important documents.

Prepare one or more Go Bags to leave near your door, in your car, and at work. Don’t forget a leash and food for your pet.

Develop a family communications plan that includes an exit route from your home, in case of fire, and a designated meeting spot if you can’t get to your home after a disaster. Identify someone outside of the Bay Area to act as the family’s central point of contact, and include their phone number in your Go Bag. You’ll also need a battery-operated radio to access updates during the event.

Include a file with hard copies of important phone numbers, including family, medical providers, and friends, as well as hard copies of important documents, like insurance policies and cards, social security numbers, medical information, and financial information. You can also scan and download documents onto a flash drive, and keep it in a bank safe deposit box.

A small amount of effort to prepare for the unexpected can make a big difference in how we react to and recover from a catastrophic event.

For more information, go to www.redwoodcity.org/disasterpreparedness.

Local Minimum Wage Increases

As part of the City’s 2018 ordinance to assist low wage earners with the high cost of living in Redwood City, the City is raising the minimum wage to $15.38 per hour ($15 plus the Consumer Price Index), effective January 1, 2020.

The City’s goal was to reach the State of California’s minimum wage requirement of $15 per hour ahead of the state’s deadline of 2023. After engaging with local businesses throughout the process, the City moved closer to that goal at the beginning of 2019, when it raised the local minimum wage to $13.50 per hour.

The new $15.38 minimum wage — which is also used by the cities of Belmont and San Mateo — applies to all businesses within the geographic boundaries of Redwood City and to any employee working at least two or more hours per week.

Learn more at www.redwoodcity.org/minimum-wage.

Back-To-School Plan Gets An A+

The city routinely works with all of the school districts serving Redwood City, focusing specifically on after-school programs, student enrollment, and school safety.

Last summer, the city and the Redwood City School District (RCSD) collaborated on the launch of the Neighborhood School Traffic Ambassador Program. The goal was to support safe travel and reduce negative community impacts due to RCS&D’s school consolidation. It was a big success.

More than 30 members of the community signed up to volunteer. They received training from the Redwood City Police Department (RCPD) and were ready on the first day of school. During the morning and afternoon school rush hours, Traffic Ambassadors helped drivers, pedestrians, and bicyclists locate drop-off and pick-up locations; guided cars, pedestrians, and bikes on the streets and at crosswalks; and answered traffic questions. In addition, RCPD provided extra traffic support and contract crossing guard services.

Despite more than 1,700 students attending new schools, and many drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians traveling unfamiliar routes and creating new traffic patterns, traffic flowed smoothly.

To address the needs of students and their families as they transitioned into new schools and programs, the City recently added slots for 90 children in its after-school programs and is providing financial assistance to families who would otherwise lose child care. The City Council approved $310,000 in one-time funds to support these initiatives.