



CITY OF ROHNERT PARK PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF REPORT

Meeting Date: November 2, 2021
Item No: 6.3
Prepared By: Jeffrey Beiswenger, Planning Manager
Agenda Title: Study Session on General Plan Update – Racial, Social and Environmental Justice Element

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Receive a presentation and provide direction on the Racial Social and Environmental Justice Element goals and policies in the draft General Plan.

BACKGROUND: As part of the General Plan update process, staff is receiving input on the draft elements from the City Council. To date, the City Council has reviewed and commented on:

- Introduction
- Economic Development
- Community Development
- Circulation
- Climate Change

Staff is in the process of compiling a complete public review draft over the next few months. The draft will include an environmental justice component to comply with Senate Bill 1000 (SB 1000). Approved in 2016, in response to increasing concerns about vulnerable communities in California experiencing environmental injustice, SB 1000 requires general plans adopted after January 1, 2018 to incorporate environmental justice goals, policies, and objectives to address health risks in disadvantaged communities. SB 1000 requires that local agencies adopt policies to address environmental justice by reducing unique or compounded health risks in disadvantaged communities. SB 1000 directs local agencies to consider policies that reduce exposure to pollutants or other hazards, promote healthy habits, prioritize infrastructure improvements and programs that address the needs of disadvantaged communities, and promote civic engagement in the public decision-making process.

While the City initially elected not to include a stand-alone Environmental Justice Element, but rather to satisfy the legal requirements of SB 1000 within the Community Development Element, at the April 27, 2021 meeting, the City Council directed the preparation of a stand-alone element that addresses racial, social and environmental justice issues. The Racial, Social and Environmental Justice (RSEJ) Element, included as Attachment 1, will meet and exceed the requirements of SB 1000.

The RSEJ Element consolidates goals and policies directly related to environmental justice that were previously located in other elements such as Community Development and Public

Facilities. In the final draft of the General Plan, additional goals and policies that support Racial, Social and Environmental Justice Element, but not located in this element, will be identified with a symbol or graphic.

ANALYSIS: The Racial, Social and Environmental Justice Element is divided into three subsections: Racial and Social Justice with three goals and sixteen policies, Environmental Justice with two goals and ten policies, and Civic Engagement in the Public Decision-Making Process with one goal and six policies. The implementation programs (Section 4.4) will guide City actions. Each implementation program listed relates to one or more policies.

The following is a summary of each subsection and the related implementation programs:

Section 4.1 Racial and Social Justice

This section identifies goals and policies which seek to advance City efforts toward diversity and inclusivity. Implementation programs allow the City to monitor its progress in achieving racial, social, and environmental justice, including an annual survey. This section outlines City efforts to establish a more racially and socially just community. This section includes the following goals:

1. *To support equity, inclusion, and access to opportunities for all community members, employees, businesses, visitors, and local organizations.* Policies grouped under this goal focus on creating a more welcoming city to all. This includes working with the Sonoma County of Office and Equity, expanding access to affordable housing, and exploring ways to celebrate city diversity.
2. *To respect, protect, and promote the civil and human rights of all members of the community.* Policies under this goal focus on services for socially disadvantaged communities and ensuring that City boards, committees, and commission have a diverse representation. The City also commits to anti-bias hiring procedures, public safety collaboration with underrepresented groups and City staff diversity training. Also included under this goal is the implementation of an alternative response model to assist those experiencing homelessness.
3. *To broaden income and employment opportunities for all Rohnert Park residents.* The policies under this goal focus on employment training, workforce development and helping to improve wage levels. Many of the implementation programs to implement this goal are found in the Economic Development Element (related to employment growth). This element includes an implementation program to expand recruitment of diverse candidates for City positions.

Section 4.2 Environmental Justice

The section implements Senate Bill 1000 (SB 1000). Effective environmental justice policies are those that reduce the unique or compounded health risks in disadvantaged communities by reducing disproportionate exposure to pollutants or other hazards, promote healthy habits, prioritize necessary infrastructure improvements and programs, and promoting civic engagement in the public decision-making process. This section includes the following goals:

4. *To ensure that all land use decisions benefit Rohnert Park residents, and do not create a disproportionate burden to any resident based on location, income, race, color, educational status, or national origin.* Policies grouped under this goal include the

equitable distribution of public services such as parks, community gardens and public safety facilities and a focus on avoiding environmental justice impacts of incompatible land uses (e.g. industrial adjacent to residential land uses). This goal also has a relationship to the Housing Element with a policy that calls for safe and sanitary housing.

5. *To ensure all residents have access to healthy foods, education, green spaces, and medical services.* Healthy food options can be provide through farmers' markets, which the City has hosted in the library parking lot for several years. Policies related to the equitable access to community assets (e.g. natural areas, park, health care facilities) and the equitable distribution of capital improvements (e.g. roadways, bikeways) are included under this goal.

Section 4.3 Civic Engagement in the Public Decision-Making Process

This section recognizes that racial, social, and environmental justice efforts must include strong civic engagement efforts. This section provide a framework for the City to build social capital through engagement and empowerment of the public, while emphasizing public participation, transparency, and inclusion. The following goals and policies relate to civic engagement in the public decision-making process. Many of the implementation programs (Section 4.4) feature various forms for civic engagement approaches. This section includes one goal:

6. *To fully engage the public in City decision-making and facilitate public involvement in civic life.*

This section includes policies and implementation programs to facilitate transparency and communication between the City government and the citizenry. To facilitate participation, policies directs the City to schedule events a different days, times and formats to maximize public participation and to use innovative communication techniques.

NEXT STEPS: The City Council is scheduled to discuss the RSEJ Element on November 9, 2021. Staff is in the process of compiling a complete Public Review Draft of the 2040 General Plan, which will be available for public review in early 2022.

Planning Manager Approval Date: 10/28/21

Attachments (*list in packet assembly order*):

1. Draft Racial, Social, and Environmental Justice Element



4 Racial, Social, and Environmental Justice Element

The City recognizes that it needs to increase its efforts to ensure that all the members of the Rohnert Park community (i.e., residents, workers, business owners, local organizations, and visitors) regardless of race, ethnicity, age, gender, religion, sexual orientation, disability, and socio-economic status feel valued, safe, respected, included, and secure. Increasing diversity and inclusion involves enhancing meaningful community engagement, considering the implications of City decisions for all members of the community, and exploring new approaches to meet the changing needs of Rohnert Park.

Generally, areas of Rohnert Park score between the 40th and 60th percentile on State-wide environmental quality and health assessment tools CalEnviroScreen 3.0 and the California Healthy Places Index. In other words, the environmental quality in Rohnert Park is average for the state. This Element includes goals, policies, and implementation programs that promote environmental justice and support local efforts to increase public involvement in local governance processes. The themes addressed in this Element lay the foundation for creating a more equitable and inclusive environment for all residents, businesses, visitors, and organizations of Rohnert Park.

2019 City Demographics

As of 2019, the median household income in Rohnert Park was \$71,585 and the per capita income was \$34,880. Educational attainment in the city is relatively high, with 90.9 percent of residents over the age of 25 having at least a high school diploma, and of those, 29.3 percent have a bachelor's degree or higher. In Rohnert Park 61.0 percent of residents identifying as white (alone, not Hispanic or Latino), 26.9 percent as Hispanic or Latino, 6.7 percent Asian, 3.0 percent as two or more races, 3.8 percent as Black or African American, and 1.3 percent as American Indian and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian, and other Pacific Islander.

Section	Title.....	Page
4.1	Racial and Social Justice.....	3
4.2	Environmental Justice.....	5
4.3	Civic Engagement in the Public Decision-Making Process.....	7
4.4	Implementation Programs.....	8

4.1 Racial and Social Justice

This section identifies goals and policies which seek to advance City efforts toward diversity and inclusivity. Implementation of the programs will allow the City to monitor its progress in achieving racial, social, and environmental justice. It is the City's intent to take actionable efforts to establish a more racially and socially just community. The following goals and policies are intended to promote equality in Rohnert Park.

RSEJ-1 *To support equity, inclusion, and access to opportunities for all community members, employees, businesses, visitors, and local organizations. (Source: New Goal)*

RSEJ-1.1 Community-Wide Implementation

The City shall work with the Sonoma County Office of Equity to implement shared goals and policies as appropriate for Rohnert Park. (Source: New Policy)

RSEJ-1.2 Welcoming City

The City shall promote Rohnert Park as a welcoming, safe, and inclusive community for all people. (Source: New Policy)

RSEJ-1.3 Housing Affordability and Access

The City shall encourage access to affordable housing opportunities for all residents. (Source: New Policy)

RSEJ-1.4 Celebrate City Diversity

The City shall develop and invest in arts, education, and other community programming that celebrates diversity. (Source: New Policy)

RSEJ-2 *To respect, protect, and promote the civil and human rights of all members of the community. (Source: New Goal)*

RSEJ-2.1 Culturally Proficient Services

The City shall develop and implement citywide strategies, practices, and services that are culturally proficient and that acknowledge and reflect diversity. (Source: New Policy)

RSEJ-2.2 Socially Disadvantaged Populations

The City shall develop and implement policies, services, and programs designed to address the needs of socially disadvantaged and vulnerable community members. (Source: New Policy)

RSEJ-2.3 Diverse Representation

The City shall ensure diverse representation on all City boards, committees, and commissions. (Source: New Policy)

RSEJ-2.4 Advancing Racial and Social Equity Work

The City shall encourage appointed City boards, committees, and commissions to advance the City's racial and social equity goals, policies, and programs. (Source: New Policy)

RSEJ-2.5 Diverse City Staff

The City shall use equitable and anti-bias hiring procedures that focus on recruiting, hiring, and retaining a diverse City staff. *(Source: New Policy)*

RSEJ-2.6 City Staff Training

The City shall expand training regarding explicit and implicit bias, sensitivity, de-escalation, LGBTQ+, and racial profiling for all City staff, using the most contemporary and effective methods available. *(Source: New Policy)*

RSEJ-2.7 Enhance Public Safety Collaboration

The City shall strengthen its longstanding commitment to public safety by engaging community stakeholders and underrepresented minority groups to address enhanced public safety accountability and community relations. *(Source: New Policy)*

RSEJ-2.8 Crisis and Homelessness Response Model

Further the City's commitment to develop and implement an alternative response model to enhance crisis intervention and assistance to those experiencing homelessness. *(Source: New Policy)*

RSEJ-3 *To broaden income and employment opportunities for all Rohnert Park residents. (Source: New Goal)*

RSEJ-3.1 Financial and Employment Assistance

The City shall work with the County of Sonoma Human Services Department to improve resident access to and awareness of available financial and employment assistance. *(Source: New Policy)*

RSEJ-3.2 Quality Living Wage

The City shall promote access to a quality living wage for all community members. *(Source: New Policy)*

RSEJ-3.3 Employment Training

The City shall work with organizations and local non-profits to improve resident access to and awareness of available employment training resources. *(Source: New Policy)*

RSEJ-3.4 Workforce Development

The City shall collaborate with public and private universities, colleges, and technical schools to support the development, training, and retention of a skilled and diverse workforce. *(Source: New Policy)*

4.2 Environmental Justice

The State enacted Senate Bill 1000 (SB 1000) in 2016 in response to increasing concerns about vulnerable communities in California that experience disproportionate environmental impacts. SB 1000 requires general plans adopted after January 1, 2018 to incorporate goals, policies, and objectives related to environmental justice. Effective environmental justice policies are those that reduce the unique or compounded health risks in disadvantaged communities by reducing disproportionate exposure to pollutants or other hazards, promote healthy habits, prioritize necessary infrastructure improvements and programs, and promote civic engagement in the public decision-making process. The City of Rohnert Park is committed to fostering a healthy environment for all city residents. The following goals and policies are intended to guide the advancement of environmental justice in Rohnert Park.

RSEJ-4 *To ensure that all land use decisions benefit Rohnert Park residents, and do not create a disproportionate burden to any resident based on location, income, race, color, educational status, or national origin. (Source: New Goal)*

RSEJ-4.1 Equitable Public Services

The City shall equitably provide public services and infrastructure, including parks, recreational facilities, community gardens, and public safety facilities, to all Rohnert Park residents. (Source: New Policy)

RSEJ-4.2 Environmental Protection

The City shall carefully consider environmental protection measures to ensure the equitable treatment of all neighborhoods. (Source: New Policy)

RSEJ-4.3 Environmental Justice Considerations

The City shall consider potential adverse health and safety impacts associated with land use decisions and reduce negative impacts on residents from hazardous materials, industrial activities, facility locations, and design features. (Source: New Policy)

RSEJ-4.4 New Incompatible Land Uses

The City shall avoid the introduction of new incompatible land uses and consider the potential impacts of adding uses with environmental hazards into existing residential areas. (Source: New Policy)

RSEJ-4.5 Placement of New Residential Uses

The City shall consider the potential impacts from neighboring land uses and their impacts, prior to approving new residential land uses.

RSEJ-4.6 Safe and Sanitary Housing

Through implementation of the Housing Element, the City shall provide standards for development that promote safe and sanitary housing. (Source: New Policy)

RSEJ-5 *To ensure all residents have access to healthy foods, education, green spaces, and medical services. (Source: New Goal)*

RSEJ-5.1 Healthy Food Providers

The City shall encourage farmers' markets and healthier food options, particularly near child-oriented uses. (e.g., schools, day care, parks). *(Source: New Policy)*

RSEJ-5.2 Acceptance of Government-Issued Vouchers

The City shall coordinate with Farmer's Market vendors and local food retailers to continue to accept payment through Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT), which allows residents in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) to purchase food with their program benefits. *(Source: New Policy)*

RSEJ-5.3 Access to Community Assets

The City shall identify and address gaps in access to residential, commercial, recreation facilities, natural open spaces areas, and physical and mental health resources, to help ensure that these resources are equitably available to all residents. *(Source: New Policy)*

RSEJ-5.4 Equity in Capital Projects

The City shall promote equitable investment in capital improvements citywide. *(Source: New Policy)*

4.3 Civic Engagement in the Public Decision-Making Process

Racial, social, and environmental justice efforts must be rooted in a strong culture of civic engagement in the City's decision-making processes. Studies have shown that well-rounded public engagement processes increase social capital in projects and promote equitable community development. The City is committed to goals and policies that build social capital through engagement and empowerment of the public, while emphasizing public participation, transparency, and inclusion. The purpose of this section is to ensure residents are informed and empowered related to City decisions that may impact their health and well-being. The following goals and policies relate to civic engagement in the public decision-making process.

RSEJ-6 *To fully engage the public in City decision-making and facilitate public involvement in civic life. (Source: New Goal)*

RSEJ-6.1 Accessibility to City Events

The City shall schedule City events using different days, times, and formats (i.e., virtual and digital accessibility) to encourage and facilitate participation among community members with work, school, and other obligations that conflict with more traditional scheduling. *(Source: New Policy)*

RSEJ-6.2 Innovative Communication

The City shall promote and implement new and innovative approaches to facilitate communication between members of the community and City elected officials and staff members. *(Source: New Policy)*

RSEJ-6.3 Facilitate a Culture of Inclusion

The City shall work with non-profit, faith, education, and other community-based partners to facilitate a culture of inclusion, empathy, compassion, acceptance, and unity. *(Source: New Policy)*

RSEJ-6.4 Transparent Public Decision-Making

The City shall ensure transparent public decision-making processes through effective public outreach, engagement, and participation that is inclusive of socially disadvantaged individuals and groups. *(Source: New Policy)*

RSEJ-6.5 Supportive Collaboration

The City shall continue to collaborate with other organizations and groups to provide services and programs for all Rohnert Park residents. *(Source: New Policy)*

4.4 Implementation Programs

Programs	Implements Which Policy(ies)	Responsible Supporting Department(s)	2020 – 2025	2026 – 2030	2031 – 2040	Annual	Ongoing
<p>A Expand Recruitment for City Employment Opportunities to Attract Diverse Candidates The City shall determine effective recruitment strategies to attract diverse candidates to City employment opportunities. The City shall work with educational institutions and other entities to promote city job opportunities with technical schools and college students.</p>	RSEJ-2.3 RSEJ-2.4 RSEJ-2.5	City Manager					
<p>B Social and Racial Justice Equity Survey The City shall conduct an annual survey which measures the successfulness of advancing social equity and diversity City-wide and report the results of the survey to the City Council and community.</p>	RSEJ-2.2 RSEJ-2.3 RSEJ-2.4 RSEJ-2.5 RSEJ-2.6	City Manager					
<p>C Racial, Social, and Environmental Justice Outreach The City shall prepare and use clear and inclusive outreach materials, expand media campaigns, and implement other strategies (i.e., translation services) to increase and advance racial, social, and environmental justice initiatives.</p>	RSEJ-1.1 RSEJ-2.2 RSEJ-6.1 RSEJ-6.2 RSEJ-6.3 RSEJ-6.4 RSEJ-6.5 RSEJ-6.6	City Manager					

4. Racial, Social, and Environmental Justice Element

Programs	Implements Which Policy(ies)	Responsible Supporting Department(s)	2020 – 2025	2026 – 2030	2031 – 2040	Annual	Ongoing
<p>D Career and Job Training The City shall coordinate with local organizations and non-profits to organize an annual career and job fair with local employers to highlight local job openings and employment training opportunities for Rohnert Park residents.</p>	RSEJ-3.1 RSEJ-3.3 RSEJ-3.4	City Manager				■	
<p>E Public Safety Training The City shall increase funding to support non-POST mandated training for Public Safety staff, such as in explicit and implicit bias, sensitivity, de-escalation, LGBTQ+, and racial profiling.</p>	RSEJ-2.6 RSEJ-3.4	City Manager Public Safety					■
<p>F Staff Resiliency and Stewardship The City shall implement and expand new and innovative programs to improve resiliency and mental and physical health, such as technologies providing 24/7 access to counseling services and support of staff stewardship and mentoring.</p>	RSEJ-3.4	City Manager Public Safety					■
<p>G Civilian Police Academy The City shall continue to facilitate and expand participation in the Rohnert Park Civilian Academy to educate community members on law enforcement policies, practices, and problem-solving, as well as promote the opportunity for one-on-one interaction with Department members in a relaxed environment.</p>	RSEJ-2.7	City Manager Public Safety				■	

Programs	Implements Which Policy(ies)	Responsible Supporting Department(s)	2020 – 2025	2026 – 2030	2031 – 2040	Annual	Ongoing
<p>H Community Engagement The City shall prepare and implement programs that include new and innovative mechanisms to communicate and engage members of the community who are not typically active in civic issues to foster stronger relationships with the City and the Police Department, such as mobile device surveys, community meetings, and community roundtables.</p>	RSEJ-2.7 RSEJ-6.2	City Manager Public Safety					
<p>I Healthy Food Access Regulations Audit and Update The City shall conduct an internal audit of City regulations, including but not limited to the Zoning Ordinance, to identify and remove any administrative barriers to increased access to healthy foods.</p>	RSEJ-5.1 RSEJ-5.2 RSEJ-5.3	Development Services					
<p>J Capital Improvement Prioritization The City shall establish a defined set of criteria that measure and prioritize equitable distribution of Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) citywide and utilize the criteria in all future CIP Program decisions.</p>	RSEJ-4.4 RSEJ-5.4	Development Services Public Works City Manager					