

Public Workshop Summary Report

Larkspur SMART Station Area Plan - Public Workshop #1



*Monday, July 23, 2012
Community Room at Drakes Landing Office Park
300 Drakes Landing Rd.
Greenbrae, CA 94904*



Acknowledgements

This workshop would not have been possible without the efforts of the following organizations and individuals:

CONSULTANT TEAM

- BMS Design Group
 - ❖ Barbara Maloney, Principal
 - ❖ Elizabeth Foster, Senior Planner + Urban Designer
 - ❖ Joy Glasier, Landscape Architect

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Introduction

The City of Larkspur applied for and received a \$480,000 Station Area Planning Grant from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) in May 2011 to prepare the Larkspur SMART Station Area Plan. The grant was augmented by \$120,000 in matching funds from the Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM), the Golden Gate Bridge Highway and Transportation District (GGBHTD), the Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit District (SMART), the County of Marin, and the City of Larkspur. The Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) has partnered with MTC to manage the planning grant program.

The Larkspur SMART Station Area Plan (SAP) will be prepared in the form of a Local Area Plan and incorporated into the update of the City's General Plan, a planning process which the City will be conducting simultaneously with the SAP process. Due to the complexity of the environmental issues in the Plan Area, an environmental impact report will be also be prepared for the SAP. The Plan Area encompasses the Redwood Highway area, the eastern portion of Greenbrae, and the Larkspur Landing area.

Public participation is a key component of the SAP planning process. The community workshop summarized in this report (Community Workshop #1) marks the first of four community workshops that will be held during the approximately 18 month planning process (beginning in April of 2012). There will also be five meetings of the General Plan Update/SMART Station Area Plan Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC), which are noticed and open to the public.

Community Workshop #1 was held on July 23, 2012 at the community room at the Drakes Landing Office Park in Greenbrae. The workshop was attended by approximately 50 community members and kicked off with a brief presentation by project consultants BMS Design Group to give background on the SAP and review existing conditions in the Plan Area. The remainder of the workshop was dedicated to small group exercises that allowed attendees to collaborate and share their perspectives on the Plan Area's assets and issues, as well as potential land use and circulation changes or improvements.

Outreach Efforts

The City of Larkspur employed a variety of outreach methods to advertise Community Workshop #1, including the following:

- A direct postcard mailing to all households in the City a month prior to the workshop;
- A letter from the Planning and Building Director to all non-residential property owners in the Station Area;
- City Staff canvassing of the Station Area to speak with business owners and residents and distribute and post event fliers;
- Write-ups and calendar listings in the Marin Independent Journal and the Larkspur-Corte Madera Patch;
- Calendar listing on the City's online calendar, with a subscriber count of 100 community members;
- Newsflashes published on the City's home page and Planning Department webpage;
- Announcement on the Hall Middle School announcement board prominently displayed the week prior to the meeting on Doherty Drive, a high-traffic roadway in the community.

A broad range of approximately 50 community members, including property owners, residents, interest groups, and business owners attended the workshop.



Workshop Summary

1) Welcome and Introductions

The workshop began with introductions and an overview of the Larkspur SMART Station Area Plan (SAP) purpose and background by Neal Toft, Director of Planning and Building. He introduced contract planner Julia Capasso, who will be assisting with the SAP process, and Barbara Maloney (principal) and Elizabeth Foster (senior planner and urban designer) of BMS Design Group, the SAP's primary consultant firm. Director Toft noted that the SAP will inform the currently ongoing update of the City's General Plan, and introduced members present from the General Plan Update/SMART Station Area Plan Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) in the audience. The CAC has helped guide the General Plan update process and will serve the same role throughout the SAP process.

2) Station Area Background and Progress

Ms. Maloney reviewed the goals of the Station Area Planning grant program:

- Seek to boost transit ridership; reduce vehicle miles traveled
- Increase walking, bicycling, carpooling, carsharing, local transit and other transportation options
- Assess opportunities to increase housing supply, especially affordable housing, near transit
- Assess opportunities to increase jobs and improve access to jobs near stations
- Identify key services and retail opportunities near station areas.

Specifically, the City's goals through the project are to:

- Establish a land use plan and policy framework to guide future development within the area toward land uses that will support transit ridership
- Develop urban design guidelines that promote walkable, livable, and accessible environments within the Station Area with a primary objective of providing safe and comfortable connections for pedestrians, bicyclists, and the disabled within the three sub-areas and between the major transit nodes (SMART station, Marin Airporter, Golden Gate Larkspur Ferry Terminal, and commuter bus stops).
- Take into account infrastructure challenges including flooding and sea level rise.

She reviewed the project timeline, estimated to conclude with SAP adoption in January 2014. After entering into contract in April 2012, BMS and their subconsultants began preparing an existing conditions report, which is now completed. The next phase of the process will be to prepare two to three land use and circulation scenario alternatives for the Station Area based on the feedback from Community Workshop #1 and the work of the CAC. The alternatives would be prepared and presented for public comment at Community Workshop #2, to be held in October 2012 at a date to be determined.

Ms. Maloney then explained the concept of Transit Oriented Development (TOD), a development strategy that places housing and jobs near transit nodes in order to support successful transit systems, reduce automobile usage, and increase pedestrian and bicycle amenities in neighborhoods.

She then reviewed existing land uses, development patterns, character, building design and scale, and planned projects in the Station Area. Land use issues identified include:

- Density – Existing uses are somewhat low density for TOD
- Parking lots – SMART Station area dominated by parking lots
- Lack of connectivity – US-101, Sir Francis Drake Boulevard and Corte Madera Creek are major barriers
- Few vacant sites
- Existing development is viable

Ms. Maloney moved on to present existing transportation and circulation conditions in the Station Area. She reviewed the existing roadway network, transit network, bicycle circulation, pedestrian circulation, parking conditions, and planned projects. Transportation and circulation issues identified include:

Pedestrian and Bicycle Circulation

- Lack of connectivity
- Limited sidewalks
- Topography

Transit

- Accessibility to bus stops
- Lack of express service
- Limited multi-modal connections

Vehicles

- Congestion along US-101 and Sir Francis Drake

Ms. Maloney then reviewed existing utilities and infrastructure in the Station Area. She also reviewed existing flood vulnerability and potential for future inundation from sea level rise in the San Francisco Bay, using projections from the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC).

3) Small Group Discussions

The small group discussions began with each group member to provide individual comments on the Station Area's assets/opportunities, and its issues/constraints. Following this exercise, the small groups began a collaborative exercise to plan out future land uses, public amenities, and circulation facilities in the Station Area. The results of each groups work are as follows:

GROUP 1

LARKSPUR SMART STATION AREA PLAN VISIONING SESSION

1.

SYMBOLS

	IMPROVED PEDESTRIAN CROSSING		RETAIL
	SIDEWALKS		OFFICE
	BIKE LANES		RESIDENTIAL
	PARKING		MIXED-USE
	PUBLIC OPEN SPACE		

LEGEND

	STUDY AREA BOUNDARY
	CITY BOUNDARY
	SMART STATION LOCATION
	LARKSPUR FERRY TERMINAL
	WATER
	PARKS
	OPEN SPACE
	SCHOOLS

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP ONE | July 23, 2011



Assets	Issues
Automotive park to stay	Move train station to ferry terminal
Ferry building is an asset	Path of travel between station and public transit
	Parking congestion
	Future pedestrian walkway is on our property where we operate our business



GROUP 2

LARKSPUR SMART STATION AREA PLAN VISIONING SESSION

2.

SYMBOLS

- | | | | |
|---|------------------------------|---|-------------|
|  | IMPROVED PEDESTRIAN CROSSING |  | RETAIL |
|  | SIDEWALKS |  | OFFICE |
|  | BIKE LANES |  | RESIDENTIAL |
|  | PARKING |  | MIXED-USE |
|  | PUBLIC OPEN SPACE | | |

LEGEND

-  STUDY AREA BOUNDARY
-  CITY BOUNDARY
-  SMART STATION LOCATION
-  LARKSPUR FERRY TERMINAL
-  WATER
-  PARKS
-  OPEN SPACE
-  SCHOOLS

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP ONE | July 23, 2011



Assets	Issues
Creeks & streams coming into the Bay	Want more high density housing
Clean air	Not good enough proximity of train to ferry
To Protect: Views, wetlands, ferry terminal	Location of SMART station to ferry terminal
Ferry terminal	Sidewalk improvements
Access to public transportation	East Bay driver's accessing SF via Marin
Open Space & Parks	Traffic congestion
<u>Variety</u> of uses – kayak rental, food, movies, offices, recreation (wind surfing), etc. (Not cookie cutter chain shop)	Difficulty of accessing Ferry Terminal
Views of water & Mt. Tam	More walking & bike paths
Waterways; stores & restaurants; vegetation	Transportation connectivity
Pedestrian & bike movement & Safety	Mixed Use – protect and IMPROVE
Views, open space, vegetation	Easier way to cross 101 by car west → east
Bike paths/pedestrian paths; circulation w/out cars!	Access to waterways – Corte Madera Crk.; Bay
	Traffic congestion on S.F.D.B.
	Bike & ped paths
	Funky commercial area near Greenbrae Boardwalk
	All that white space (Larkspur Landing Area)
	No covered areas for pedestrians in inclement weather
	Lack of connectivity of walk & bike paths

Assets	Issues
Question: What speed will trains travel (time between Santa Rosa & Larkspur)?	Build bike/ped bridge <u>over</u> Corte Madera Creek, along historic railroad ROW
Protect, enhance bicycle connections to Ferry and future SMART station	Major lack of connectivity of Redwood Hwy North, West and South for safe & inviting ped/bike to get people out of their cars!
Tunnel and bike connection to Ferry	Issues to resolve: People access over water areas and freeways
Like – gorgeous marsh area. Central [potential] for true connections for ped/bike across CM Creek to Redwood Hwy North	<u>Please solve this problem:</u> The little bridge from the ferry to Marin Country Mart has a dog-leg in the wrong direction, pointing ferry passengers heading for the train in the opposite way from where they want to go
<u>Best Assets:</u> #1 mixed-use food & other; #2 Ferry Terminal; #3 Connections in all directions.	<u>Another problem:</u> The little bridge – ferry to Marin Country Mart – will be too narrow for ferry passengers (walkers) and cyclists. Accidents will happen when the bridge is crowded. We need a new bridge!
<u>Protect:</u> Keep planning focused on people-friendly areas	Let’s get BART to Marin
Opportunities to make Marin a model for safe and enjoyable cycling for everyday transportation	Encourage SMART station to be elevated in the Ferry Parking Lot.
Terminal Civic Architecture	Build bridge for bike/ped over creek on RR ROW to connect to Wornum Class 1 and to Bay Trail
	Bus service needs an automatic vehicle location system like Muni has – called NextBus
	Getting from SMART station to the Ferry
	Stop funneling traffic with different destinations into the same route. The creation of Wornum was a disaster.

GROUP 4

LARKSPUR SMART STATION AREA PLAN VISIONING SESSION

4.

SYMBOLS

	IMPROVED PEDESTRIAN CROSSING		RETAIL
	SIDEWALKS		OFFICE
	BIKE LANES		RESIDENTIAL
	PARKING		MIXED-USE
	PUBLIC OPEN SPACE		

LEGEND

	STUDY AREA BOUNDARY
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COMMUNITY WORKSHOP ONE | July 23, 2011



Assets	Issues
Water views & access	1) Traffic; 2) Pedestrian & bike safety & flow; 3) eyesores like ferry parking
Assets: 1) protect the views; 2) the water quality; 3) improve ease of alternative movement safely	<u>Issues:</u> Traffic 101 and Sir Francis Drake; Density in new development in Area 1A
What like – 1.A. LL good distribution of density; 1BGB good single family housing & density; 1CE/01 good place for industrial use	Bike & pedestrian paths; traffic flow; beautification; path from station to ferry
Industrial area: 1) Useful business; 2) Affordable housing; 3) Easy to surrender	1ALL Access to station parking for station; 1B no change in R1; [B on ai] potential for housing over commercial; 1C no change
<u>Lkspr Landing</u> – spaces between blgs	More affordable housing in Area; less land for parking; better pedestrian access & ease of walking within project
Larkspur Landing – good master planned layout	Issues (I/you) want to resolve (fix): Paying attention to real/potential flooding (sitting in of Cor Creek which hasn't been dredged in over 10 yrs) (future sea level rise)
<u>Area 1A:</u> Existing development mix; Ferry transit hub	Water – proximity to it & views from within & without; Mountain – views from within
Village atmosphere/low-rise bldgs	

GROUP 5

LARKSPUR SMART STATION AREA PLAN VISIONING SESSION

5.

SYMBOLS

- | | | | |
|--|------------------------------|--|-------------|
| | IMPROVED PEDESTRIAN CROSSING | | RETAIL |
| | SIDEWALKS | | OFFICE |
| | BIKE LANES | | RESIDENTIAL |
| | PARKING | | MIXED-USE |
| | PUBLIC OPEN SPACE | | |

LEGEND

- STUDY AREA BOUNDARY
- CITY BOUNDARY
- SMART STATION LOCATION
- LARKSPUR FERRY TERMINAL
- WATER
- PARKS
- OPEN SPACE
- SCHOOLS

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP ONE | July 23, 2011



Assets	Issues
Water access; diverse comm. use; env. preserve	<u>Important issues:</u> Direct connection between SMART train & ferry; More urban development in area w/residential & commercial
<u>Best Aspects: Protect:</u> Country Mart; parking; theater; existing improvements, etc.	Issues – money; time; adequate input; great execution
Assets: views; open space; access to the bay; Cal Park Tunnel; Marin Airpporter; Trader Joe’s; Creekside multi-use path; Ferry Terminal	S.F.D. as de facto freeway; Bike/ped access over creek
Waterfront	Issues – Ped unfriendly, no sidewalks or streetlights, all bike lanes, it’s a step-child; doesn’t share schools; more ferry service
Views of Tam	Traffic control at Sir Francis Drake & 101 interchange
Diverse use types	Less surface parking
Listen to the obvious!	Too hard to walk around
Best assets = <u>water orientation</u> – Protect it at all costs!	More shops, restaurants, entertainment
Best assets = walkability – Improve it	Issues – bike/ped access on Redwood Highway; better bus service to Ferry Terminal; Connectivity W. Larkspur to E. Larkspur
<u>Protect</u> – No (diversity) displacement; Save the theater; Protect transit (Ferry service)	
Ferry access; relatively quiet & “civilized” (don’t want more high density housing); Views/ambiance	

GROUP 6*

LARKSPUR SMART STATION AREA PLAN VISIONING SESSION

5.

SYMBOLS

- | | | | |
|--|------------------------------|--|-------------|
| | IMPROVED PEDESTRIAN CROSSING | | RETAIL |
| | SIDEWALKS | | OFFICE |
| | BIKE LANES | | RESIDENTIAL |
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LEGEND

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- SCHOOLS

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP ONE | July 23, 2011



*Map mislabeled as Group 5.

Assets	Issues
Larkspur landing apartments	Connectivity (for people) between the SMART station and the Ferry. What is the best way to do it
Protect coast-line; protect against sea level rise; improve sidewalks but protect environment	Improved pedestrian & bicycle access between study areas
Ferry	Mitigate rising sea levels
Protect: 1) Creek; 2) circulation opportunities	Increase parking for ferry
Preserve low density in residential zones; preserve sight lines	Improve circulation on Sir Francis Drake
	Problems to be fixed: sidewalks; bike to school; pedestrian safety; lack of ferry parking (it is <u>not</u> ample)
	Under 101 from ferry to Greenbrae underlit, not pedestrian friendly; Traffic to/from Ferry building merge off ramp from 101
	What needs to be fixed: 1) location of station (eg. loop around wood island to located at a reasonable elevation near the ferry & SFD; 2) Link to future rail up Russ Valley, s. toward Corte Madera
	Traffic on SFD connecting 580 to 101 – too much congestion
	Lucky Drive flooding

4) Small Group Reports

Following the group exercises, each group elected a spokesperson to share all ideas discussed by the group, including majority and minority opinions.

Group 1

- Until we understand the true extent of the impact of sea level rise, any new development should be considered carefully or it will just be a waste of money if it gets inundated. All new development should be above the floodplain.
- The station location is wrong; need better connection to the ferry.
- Need more parking at the station for northbound commuters as well as at the ferry.
- Pedestrian and bicycle linkages between subareas need to be improved.
- Mixed-use with predominantly residential could be tucked in between existing development in Larkspur Landing, e.g. the office parks.
- Train should be extended south into San Francisco using existing right-of-ways.

Group 2

- The location of the station is wrong; it needs to be closer to the ferry.
- Parking at the ferry terminal should be two layers, and the train could enter on the upper layer.
- A parking fee could encourage fewer cars.
- There are opportunities for mixed use if parking is structured but they have heard that BCDC [San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission] will not allow that.
- There is an opportunity for a pedestrian and bike overcrossing from Sir Francis Drake Boulevard East to Redwood Highway.
- There could be a park or open space at the end of Redwood Highway near the Boardwalk.
- The existing railroad grade in the Redwood Highway area could be a bike path.
- There is desire for mixed use in the Station Area, especially on the property owned by the Ross Valley Sanitary District.
- There are opportunities for more street parking along Sir Francis Drake Boulevard East on both sides.
- There are some opportunities for mixed use in the Drakes Landing Office Park.
- Residents of Drakes View have reported dangerous walking conditions, need more crosswalks and sidewalks. It is hard to get to the ferry terminal from Drakes View.
- The off-ramp from 101 [north] to Larkspur Landing is very dangerous and difficult to navigate.

Group 3

- There was not much consensus in the group.

- A bike and pedestrian path across Corte Madera Creek and connecting to the bike path on Wornum could work (above the flood plain)
- Need improvements for bikes and pedestrians along Redwood Highway.
- The SMART Station should be moved
 - o It could be moved directly to the ferry terminal with mixed use development and a bike parking garage
 - o Or it could be moved to be adjacent to Sir Francis Drake Boulevard across from the ferry, and a six story parking garage could be built on the Ross Valley Sanitary District property with a bridge over Sir Francis Drake Boulevard East to the ferry terminal.
 - o Adding more residential development at the Ross Valley Sanitary District property could support a grocery store
- Approximately 100,000 workers from into Marin from outside the county and they need great linkages to their jobs in Marin from the SMART train- buses, bike shares, etc.
- Need to study who will be using the train to better understand linkages necessary
- Residential development could be built over Bon Air Shopping Center, Drakes Landing Office Park, the movie theater, and the Ross Valley Sanitary District property.
- There could be a bike garage, vehicle parking, bike rentals and bike shares at the Marin Airporter property.
- Bike tourism is growing in San Francisco- would be great to attract those tourists to Larkspur Landing to take the train into Sonoma.

Group 4

- The group got stuck in the Larkspur Landing area
- Sidewalks are needed in the Redwood Highway area and the Larkspur Landing area (continuity)
- Circulation between SMART Station and ferry terminal is very awkward
- Need to improve existing and add additional pedestrian/bicycle crossings over Sir Francis Drake Boulevard East.
- Group consensus to explore increased density where the existing apartments are
- Parking is a very big issue
- There is no handicap access at the SMART Station.
- The Airporter lot should be parking
- Parking at the ferry should be increased with mixed use development above
- No changes for the Greenbrae area.
- Dissenting opinion of the group was that more additions to this master planned community were not necessary. Increased density would require better circulation, which may not be possible. Suburban density should be encouraged.

Group 5

- Station should not be at proposed location. Have the train line end in San Rafael. Unless it's adjacent to the ferry terminal, don't even build it.

- There is no direct connection to the ferry
- General consensus was that mixed use could be added with parking at multiple levels between existing buildings in the Larkspur Landing area.
- Sidewalks and bikeways needed to be added.
- The Country Mart needs a magnet tenant to draw people to the smaller shops.
- Rather than build a new pedestrian/bicycle bridge over the creek, the existing overcrossing could be expanded.
- Extend bikeway south on the old railroad berm in the Redwood Highway area to the Village in Corte Madera, curving onto Wornum.
- Maintain the two pedestrian overcrossings over 101 and Sir Francis Drake Boulevard East.
- Add sidewalks and bikeways on Redwood Highway.
- Dissenting opinion found that mixed used and a more urban feel at Larkspur Landing would be undesirable.
- Issues to keep in mind: water orientation and views should be retained in any new development, very valuable.
- Madera Bay Park could provide some access to the Bay/Creek.

Group 6

- The group was deeply divided
- One area of agreement was that parking at the ferry terminal should be increased, not reduced, and there was potential for retail or housing above surface or structured parking at the site. The focus should be on providing amenities for ferry commuters.
- The majority of the group felt that there was already too much vehicular congestion in the Station Area and adding more residential density in the area would only contribute to the congestion.
- The minority opinion of the group found that there was potential for increased residential density and commercial intensity, especially offices, in the Station Area.
- The existing modes of transportation in the Station Area don't work now.
- Why is the train located [in its proposed location] and not at the ferry?
- The majority of the group felt that the push for high density housing is coming from regional agencies, seemingly at random.
- Planners like high density housing and think that people won't be driving cars.

5) Summary and Next Steps

Ms. Maloney stated there would be a Citizen Advisory Committee meeting on Monday, July 30, 2012. The next community workshop would be in October on a date to be determined. In the meantime BMS and their subconsultants would begin work on land use and circulation alternatives, parking analysis, market analysis, and utilities assessment. She thanked everyone for attending and the meeting concluded.

Workshop Themes and Take-Aways

The following themes in the community's concerns and values relating to the Station Area emerged from the workshop:

- The proposed SMART station location is too far away from the ferry, making circulation between the two transit nodes awkward and inconvenient.
- There is no consensus in the community regarding the capacity for or the appropriateness (as pertains to community character) of additional housing in the Station Area, with a seemingly equal portion of workshop participants advocating for or against the matter.
- Environmental constraints, especially sea level rise and traffic congestion on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, should be carefully considered when analyzing the Station Area's potential for future development.
- Additional parking is needed in the Station Area to accommodate both future demand from SMART station patrons and existing demand from ferry patrons.

These themes will directly shape the next phase in the planning process, as project consultants begin to create three land use and circulation alternative scenarios for the Station Area. The alternatives will be presented to the public at the second community workshop (scheduled in November 2012) for review and ultimately selection of a preferred land use and circulation scenario.