

## 6 URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES



This chapter establishes Urban Design Guidelines intended to enhance the character, livability, and nature of the public and private realms of the station area and discusses the area's existing character and the direction for the design of future improvements and development. The Urban Design Guidelines respond to the vision for this neighborhood, that the area be transit-supportive but at the same time capture and maintain the unique scale and quality of life that distinguishes Larkspur.

The guidelines provided in this chapter add context to the Land Use and Transportation sections of this report and will aid property owners, residents, tenants, the broader community, and decision-makers in considering proposals for change in the station area. The guidelines address five topics:

- Guiding Principles
- Urban Design Zones
- Building and Site Design
- Public Environment

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Station Area Plan envisions reinforcing and enhancing the nature of the station area as a vibrant mixed-use neighborhood. Downtown Larkspur has historically been and is still characterized by a mix of retail, office, and residential uses in a comfortable pedestrian environment. The station area is the only other significant mixed use area in Larkspur. Like the downtown, the station area supports restaurants, stores, coffee and hosts special events and has the added benefit of easy connections to a variety of transit modes..

Discussions with the CAC, community and stakeholders have resulted in the following key principles to guide future development in the station area to reinforce this special character:

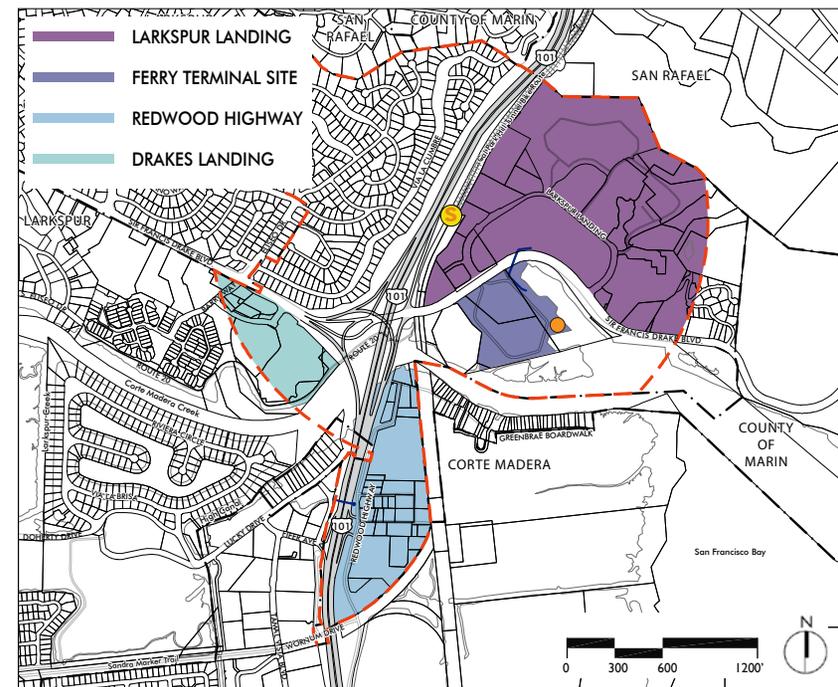
- Reinforce and enhance the station area's character as a vibrant mixed-use neighborhood, complementing Larkspur's unique built and natural environment.
- Create a safe, convenient, and enjoyable pedestrian environment.
- Ensure that building scale is appropriate to context and building massing, alignment, and heights are varied.
- Preserve or enhance views to the surrounding water and hillside features and take advantage of the station area's topography to site development so as to not block or degrade views.
- Leverage the opportunity for the station area to serve as a gateway to Larkspur along the Sir Francis Drake Boulevard corridor and a gateway to Marin and Sonoma as the initial station on the SMART route.

## URBAN DESIGN ZONES

There are four geographic zones within the station area which have a particular character that should result in somewhat different approaches to site planning, and building and site design. These design zones, illustrated in Figure 6.1, are:

- Larkspur Landing
- The Larkspur Ferry Terminal Site
- Redwood Highway
- Drake's Landing.

**Figure 6.1:** Design Zones



## LARKSPUR LANDING

Larkspur Landing consists of the mix of properties and uses north of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, east of U.S. 101, within the station area. Today, the area includes residential, office, retail, transit (Marin Airporter), and entertainment (cinema) uses, as well as a limited amount of publicly accessible park space. At the same time, there is a preponderance of surface parking lots in the area, and many buildings are surrounding by these lots, which detracts from and discourages pedestrian access and walkability. Buildings in the area range from one to five floors in height, with most in the two to three floor range.

This area immediately adjoins the planned SMART station, which lies at the edge of U.S. 101 and which will adjoin the rail tracks, about 15 feet above the nearest use or parking.

As discussed in the Land Use section of this Plan, there are a number of potential development sites within this area, generally corresponding to existing surface lots. In some cases it may someday be financially feasible to replace existing structures with entirely new development.

From a design point of view, an important characteristic of the area is its geographic/topographic form: on the north the site backs up to a large embankment and hillside which protects it from view from most directions. The site slopes down to the edge along Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, which is approximately 15 feet above the street at its highest point near the pedestrian bridge that links the area to the ferry terminal site. This site topography provides opportunities to sensitively site taller buildings adjacent to the taller landforms.



*The Marin Country Mart (top), a collection of 1- and 2-story buildings, is a lively regional retail destination with boutique shops, a Bed, Bath & Beyond, and offices. The Courtyard Marriot (bottom) is a successful hotel located just north of Larkspur Landing Circle.*



The Larkspur Landing design zone has a mix of uses, including (clockwise from upper left): the Larkspur Landing Offices, Serenity at Larkspur Landing rental apartments, and the Marin AirPorter transit service. A large amount of space is dedicated to surface parking.

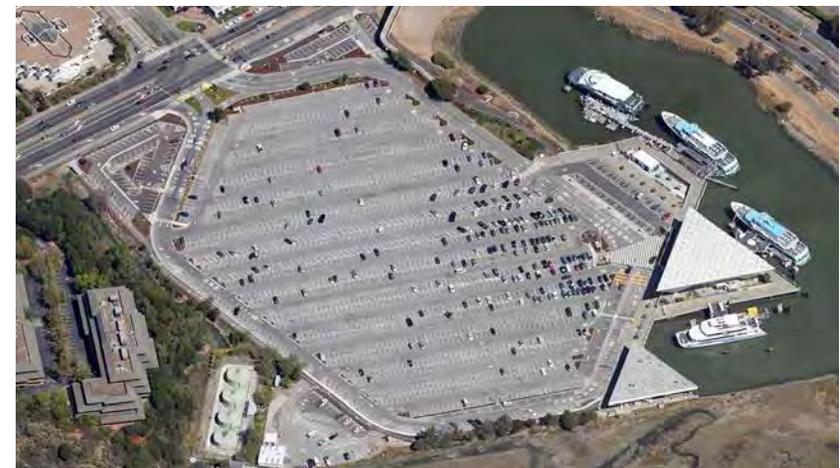
## LARKSPUR FERRY TERMINAL

Owned and operated by the Golden Gate Bridge and Highway District, the ferry terminal site is a flat, approximately 17-acre site which accommodates an 1,800 car surface parking lot, the ferry terminal itself (ticketing, waiting, office and support spaces), and general maintenance and support areas. The parking lot is filled to capacity by 10:00 am and throughout the day, although on weekend days the lot is lightly used. The site lies just south of and is accessed via Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, as well as by a pedestrian bridge across the arterial.

Immediately adjoining the site to the west is Wood Island, an original landform, on which is located a four-story office building. The hillside of the “island” is heavily covered with trees and shrubs. In total the height of the island and office building is approximately 35 feet above the ferry terminal.

While the ferry terminal site is visible from many nearby locations, the dominance of the cars in the parking lots currently detracts from views over the area. Development in this subarea would require addressing replacement of the ferry parking while simultaneously protecting and enhancing views.

A multi-use path encircles the ferry terminal site, and continues east along the shoreline to Remillard Park. This stretch of path forms a section of the larger San Francisco Bay Trail. The portion along the shoreline is in need of an upgrade, lacking adequate lighting and amenities such as landscaping, furniture and wayfinding.



*The Larkspur Ferry Terminal site with Mount Tamalpais in the distance, as viewed from the Drake's Way residential community (top). The vast parking lot (bottom) presents an opportunity for future development. (Photo source: Google maps)*

### REDWOOD HIGHWAY

The Redwood Highway area has not been identified as a viable opportunity area for land use changes in this Plan. The significant infrastructure improvements that would be required present an impediment to an intensification of uses in this area. In addition, the area currently provides a range of supporting light industrial uses to residents and businesses in the City. The area is also not currently well-connected to the planned SMART station or to the ferry terminal; however, improved connections may occur through the planned Central Marin Ferry Connector project and Greenbrae Corridor Improvement Project. Such improvements are encouraged.

Although the area is not proposed for major change and development, there are access improvements that are needed today to enhance the area as an employment, retail and residential area. These are shown in the Public Environment section of this chapter.



*The Redwood Highway design zone consists of a combination of mobile home parks (top), 1- and 2-story light industrial uses (bottom), and the Cost Plus Plaza (left).*

**DRAKE'S LANDING**

The Drake's Landing area lies west of U.S. 101 and south of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. While there are limited development opportunities in this area it has good connectivity to the two stations via a multi-use trail which follows the shoreline and passes under the freeway overpasses. Any new development in this area must be mindful of the waterfront location, of protecting views, and ensuring good pedestrian access to the trail and waterfront.



*The Drake's Landing design zone consists of a number of 1- and 2-story office uses (top and bottom right), and the Drake's View residential development (bottom left). (Photo source top right: Google Street View)*

## BUILDING AND SITE DESIGN

Building and site design establish the pattern of the environments in which we live, work and play. These patterns are important in defining the character of a place and are critical to creating a livable, enjoyable setting. In the Larkspur SMART station area, the existing development provides a context which should be respected but also presents opportunities to improve the area's livability.

The components of building and site design are:

- Development Pattern
- Building Heights, Massing and Articulation
- Parking Location and Design
- Sustainable Building and Site Design

### DEVELOPMENT PATTERN

Development sites within the station area will continue to be accessed from the existing roadway infrastructure, consisting primarily of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, Larkspur Landing Circle and Redwood Highway. New local-serving streets will be constructed with new development on private parcels. These are envisioned to be narrow lanes that accommodate pedestrians and bicyclists as well as locally-destined vehicular traffic.

The proximity of parcels in the station area to transit and to a wide range of uses and activities makes this area particularly suitable to walking and bicycling. Within each parcel in the station area attention will need to be paid to establishing a small-scale pattern of development that supports pedestrian movement and bicycle access. Today this is made difficult by the prevalence of surface parking lots that lack pedestrian walkways. In the future, interior, small-scaled streets and walkways should be incorporated into development. These can serve as the locations for storefronts, building lobbies, and for access to residential units.

The diagrams in Figure 6.2 illustrate how this more pedestrian-oriented pattern might be provided on site in the station area as improvements to existing conditions or new development occur.

### Guidelines

- Maintain and open, walkable environment throughout the station area.
- No major new streets are envisioned in the station area. Additional rights-of-way will be needed to provide access to residential units and parking, but these new "streets" should be narrow, multi-use lanes that prioritize pedestrians and bicycles and ensure slow vehicular speeds.
- New development should build upon the existing pattern of vehicular circulation while focusing on improving pedestrian and bicycle circulation throughout the station area.
- New development should maximize public access via pedestrian-scaled streets and pathways; this finer scale of development pattern will provide multiple routes for walking to services or to train or ferry sites.
- Where possible, surface parking should be consolidated in structures at the edges of the site, readily accessible from adjacent streets, or incorporated into the ground floor of buildings (with pedestrian podiums above).
- Retail uses should be focused on the ground floor of mixed use buildings along primary pedestrian streets and pathways and in proximity to other retail.
- Ground-floor parking in structures should be set off the street façade so that retail or other active uses will line the pedestrian way.
- Site buildings to reinforce the street or lane edge by maximizing frontage along the street.
- Entry courts, plazas, and building articulation at the ground floor are encouraged; up to 15 percent of the building facade may be stepped back in this manner.

**Figure 6.2:** Existing and Proposed Development Pattern**Existing Development Pattern.**

This diagram shows the pattern of streets (solid lines) and pedestrian pathways (dashed lines) that exist in the station area. Streets are widely spaced and prioritize autos. Sidewalks are often missing and parking lots, which dominate much of the area, do not include sidewalks or pedestrian pathways.

**Proposed Development Pattern.**

In the future as new development occurs on parking lots or underutilized sites, there is an important opportunity to add a more fine-grained pattern of walkways, paths, sidewalks and parcel configurations to facilitate pedestrian and bicycle access to and from destinations. While notional in nature, the dotted lines indicate the appropriate scale of pedestrian access throughout the area.

## **BUILDING HEIGHTS, MASSING AND ARTICULATION**

Building heights, massing and articulation are the key determinants of building form and are important elements contributing to the image and character of a place. The relationship between building form and the scale of the adjoining public spaces (streets, sidewalks, walkways, plazas) affects the pedestrian experience of place.

The following guidelines for building height, massing and articulation are key elements that establish a comfortable, walkable, enjoyable environment.

### **Building Heights**

Appropriate building heights depend on the building and geographical context in which new development may occur. As shown in Figure 6.3, topography has particular relevance in the area east of U.S. 101. Hillsides on the northern edge of the station area reach heights of 260 feet.

#### *Larkspur Landing Circle*

The Larkspur Landing area has a wide diversity of existing building heights, including one story (the Marin Airporter facility), two floors (some of the Marin Country Mart), and up to four floors over a parking level (Larkspur Courts). The topography of the area – bowl-shaped with the higher sides formed by the hillsides to the north and the U.S. 101 corridor berm to the north and west – has influenced the siting of existing buildings, with taller structures nestled into the northern sites adjacent to the hillsides. Near the south end of the site, buildings are typically two-to-three floors in height, but many of the Marin Country Mart buildings are one story (although with peaked roofs they appear somewhat taller). Future development in this area should continue to follow this pattern with taller buildings adjacent to the higher sites and lower buildings encouraged closer to Sir Francis Drake Boulevard.

#### *Ferry Terminal Site*

Although on the waterfront, the ferry terminal is adjoined by Wood Island, which is approximately 35 feet above the terminal site and has a four-story

building on it, resulting in an overall height of about 85 feet (see Figure 6.5). Although building heights in this area should be particularly sensitive to maintaining views to the water, taller buildings may be massed adjoining the Wood Island hillside. Buildings located along the waterfront edges (see Figure 6.6) should not exceed two floors in height at their waterfront edge. Additional stepped back floors may be incorporated.

#### *Redwood Highway*

Buildings in this area are predominantly one story in height, with limited numbers of two-story buildings. Current zoning allows buildings up to one story in height or 14 feet in the case of residential uses and 25 feet for industrial uses. No changes to existing building height standards are proposed in this Plan.

#### *Drake's Landing*

This area includes one- and two-story buildings but could accommodate somewhat taller buildings, provided that visual and physical connections to the water remain possible. The residences in the Greenbrae Hills neighborhood to the north and on Drake's View Circle sit at significantly higher elevations so that their views would not be impacted. Taller buildings may also be appropriate against the backdrop of the large-scaled interchange structure to the east.



Building heights east of U.S. 101 will be allowed to range from two to five stories. Buildings should step down in height from the higher elevations toward the bay, with portions of buildings immediately adjoining the bay-front not exceeding two floors in height. On sites with significant topography, taller buildings should be sited against hillsides to minimize impacts to views through the site.

*Guidelines*

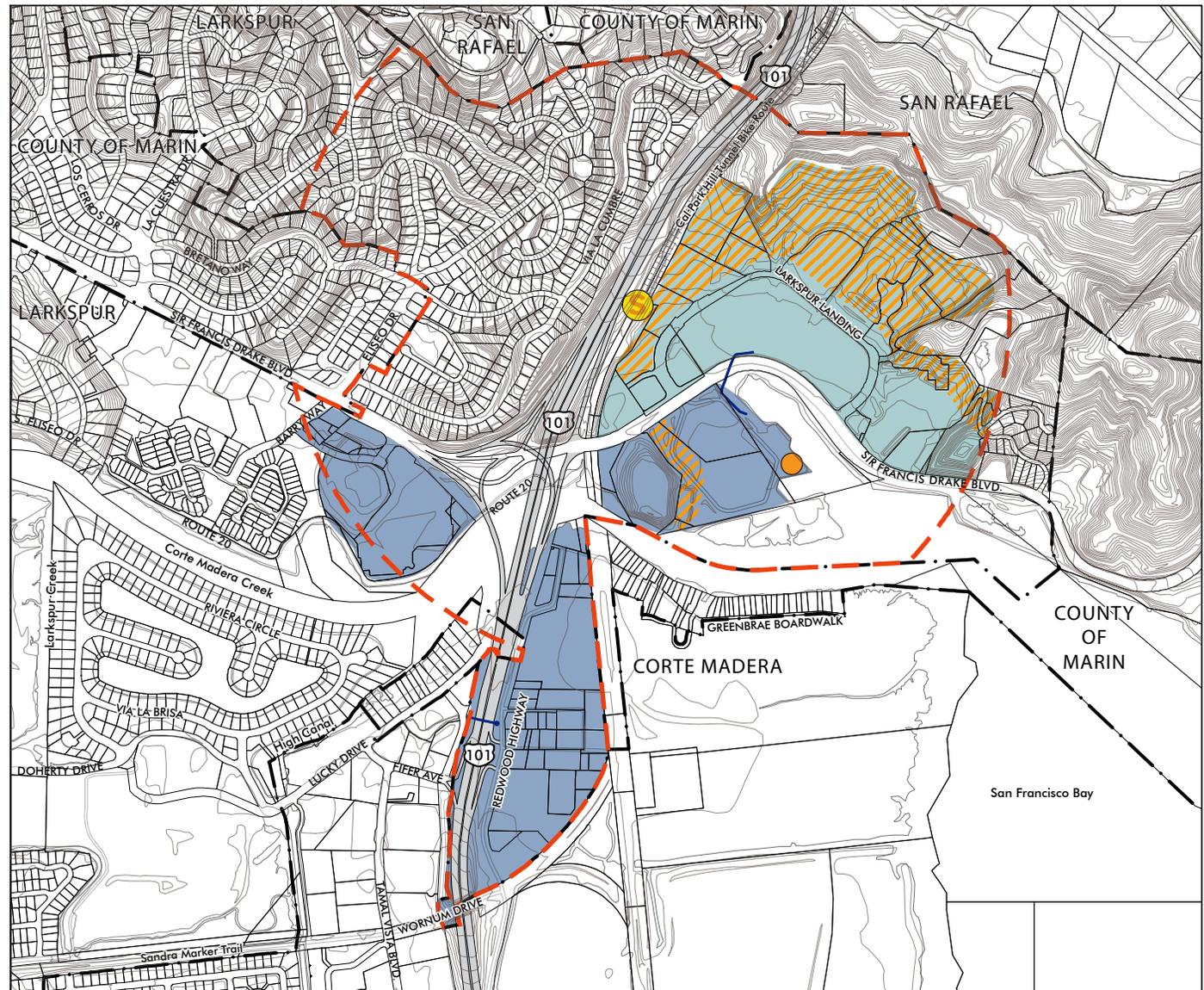
- Design buildings to conform to the height zones shown in Figure 6.4.
- Vary building heights within blocks and parcels in order to provide visual interest and variety and to avoid a blocky, uniform appearance.
- Modulate building heights along public walkways and sidewalks to provide a comfortable pedestrian scale.
- Scale buildings to assure maximum daylight into public open space areas.
- Incorporate taller building elements at gateways to properties or sub-areas to help establish identity.
- Consider the possible impacts of wind and shade on important open space and pedestrian space in the massing of buildings
- Reinforce street corners with changes in architectural massing and height.
- Screen mechanical and other equipment from sight.
- Design buildings to avoid blocking views to the bay, Mount Tamalpais, or other surrounding hillsides from public gathering places, parks, or event spaces.



*The existing Serenity units are lower in height along Larkspur Landing Circle than further up the hill (top). The existing Larkspur Courts residential buildings are tallest at the higher elevations where the hillside steepens.*

Figure 6.4: Allowable Building Heights

- LEGEND**
- · — STATION AREA BOUNDARY
  - CITY/COUNTY BOUNDARIES
  - SMART STATION LOCATION
  - LARKSPUR FERRY TERMINAL
- 
- 2-5 STORY  
55' MAX
  - 2-4 STORY  
45' MAX
  - TALLER BUILDINGS MORE  
APPROPRIATE ADJACENT TO  
HILLS



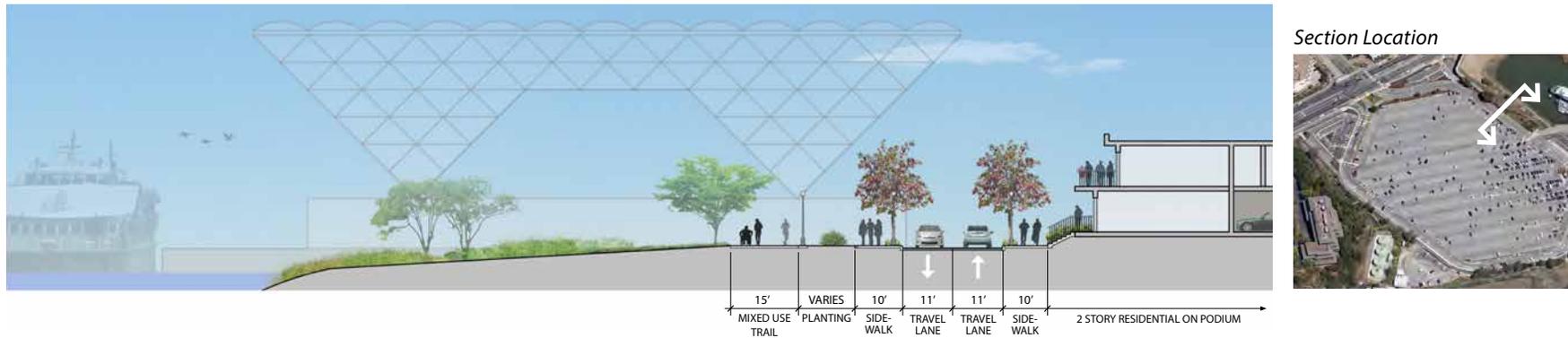
**Figure 6.5:** Illustrative Cross-sections through the Larkspur Ferry Terminal Site and Wood Island



*Section Location*



**Figure 6.6:** Illustrative Cross Section through the Larkspur Ferry Terminal Site with a Two-story Residential Structure



The four-story Wood Island office buildings rise considerably above the ferry terminal parking lot



At the east edge of the ferry terminal, any development would step down to no higher than two or three stories with a generous setback from the water edge

### Building Massing and Articulation

Throughout Larkspur and in the station area there are a wide variety of building styles and forms. No one architectural style dominates; many relate to historic periods, as in the downtown, and newer office and residential developments have taken their cues from a variety of periods and styles. Downtown Larkspur’s buildings are typically sited close to the street with parking to the rear or side. Buildings throughout Larkspur are generally set within a rich landscape environment of trees and large shrubs that moderate the apparent scale of structures. They also share a wide variety of roof and façade forms and articulation. Given the differences in topography in the station area, and the already diverse existing building stock, buildings in any new station area development should continue to be varied in form and style.

#### Guidelines

- Locate buildings along street edges and pedestrian walkways with minimal setback, especially in the Country Mart and ferry terminal area. These areas are intended to be intensely used by pedestrians. North of Larkspur Landing Circle, additional planted setbacks may be provided, consistent with the more park-like setting.
- Where possible locate residential uses across the street from one another to establish a connected neighborhood character.
- Reduce the apparent scale of buildings through articulation of building massing, height and roof form.
- Include features that add depth and architectural interest to façades. These may include step-backs, balconies, recesses, shade elements, and bay windows.
- Orient building entries to pedestrian walkways and streets.
- Locate retail uses along pedestrian walkways and streets, in proximity to other retail at the ground floor of mixed use buildings. Where retail uses are provided they should occupy a significant portion of a building facade to be easily identifiable.



*The architecture in Larkspur varies in design and style. This variety is part of what gives Larkspur its interesting and village-like character.*

- Ground floors, especially where retail may be included, should be taller than higher floors to allow for generous visibility.
- At the ground level, use building materials, colors and textures that will provide visual interest for pedestrians. In retail buildings and residential lobbies, provide transparency at the ground floor and limit blank walls.
- Where retail, café or restaurant uses occur, provide additional setbacks to accommodate outdoor dining or displays.
- Emphasize building entries through architectural elements such as porticos or awnings; distinguish between primary and secondary entries.
- Use durable architectural materials and finishes to convey a sense of quality and permanence.
- Materials should express true qualities; faux reproductions of stone, for example, are discouraged.
- Preference should be given to sustainable materials, building systems, and technologies.
- Glazing should be clear and non-reflective; avoid highly reflective surfaces that can produce uncomfortable glare.
- Break up building massing to ensure views from public spaces to the bay and to Mount Tamalpais.
- Design ground level residential units to have a direct relationship to the street and pedestrian walkways. Provide a raised ground-floor height (3-5 feet) or setback (10 feet) to ensure privacy for ground-floor residential units.
- Where there is new development in the Redwood Highway area, buildings should be brought up to the street edge with minimal setback; parking should be provided at the side or behind buildings in order to create more visual interest along pedestrian walkways.
- Consider views of rooftops from nearby locations; screen mechanical equipment; photovoltaics are encouraged and should be oriented to avoid glare or unnecessary visibility to adjoining uses.



*Variations in building massing, roof heights, balconies, and color help to break down the scale and add visual interest.*

### PARKING LOCATION AND DESIGN

Surface parking currently predominates in all parts of the station area whereas in many parts of Larkspur this is not the case. With intensification of development, parking is likely to be structured, either within the building envelope or in separate structures. In all cases, parking should be unobtrusive and, to the extent possible, oriented away from public streets and pedestrian walkways.

#### Guidelines

- Minimize curb cuts for access to parking and service areas. Share access drives or easements to consolidate curb cuts wherever possible.
- Locate parking under adjoining development, in parking structures, or away from the sidewalk and pedestrian walkways.
- Where surface parking is necessary, provide clearly marked and separated pedestrian routes through these parking areas with direct and clear linkages to retail, transit and services.
- Incorporate an abundance of trees and other plantings into surface parking lots and screen edges from walkways with plantings and other screening devices.
- Provide abundant and secure bicycle parking in all developments, located conveniently for access to amenities and services.
- Design free-standing parking structures to be unobtrusive; incorporate ground level retail and/or provide landscape screening.
- Design parking structures to provide architectural interest, blend in with their surroundings and adjoining development, and screen parked cars.
- Create visual interest and reduce the mass of parking structures by use of decorative screens, railings or trellis elements.
- Relate architectural design of parking structures to nearby commercial or residential development so that they fit comfortably into the surrounding context.



*Safe pedestrian walkways should be provided in surface parking lots (top). Parking structures should screen parked cars and be architecturally compatible with adjacent development (bottom); shown here with retail on the ground floor.*



*Green roofs can both insulate the roof for energy conservation and also collect and treat stormwater (top). Daylighting can conserve energy by minimizing the need for artificial lighting (bottom left). Buildings can supply their own power by installing photovoltaic panels upon the roof (bottom right).*

## SUSTAINABLE BUILDING AND SITE DESIGN

This Larkspur SMART Station Area Plan encourages sustainable design by identifying opportunities for development of additional residential, office, and retail uses that will contribute to an environment that is supportive of transit ridership and other alternate modes. Site development, building design, and operations and maintenance of on-site uses are all also important contributors to a sustainable community.

Future development of the station area should consider the recommendations of the Larkspur Climate Action Plan. The Climate Action Plan consists of strategies to address climate change such as increasing building energy efficiency, encouraging less dependence on the automobile, and using clean, renewable energy sources. Below are key guidelines on these topics.

### Building Design

- Incorporate water conserving features in all building systems, appliances and fixtures.
- Assure energy conservation and thermal efficiency throughout buildings. Where applicable, utilize Energy-Star qualified appliances and building systems. Where provided, air conditioning should use non-HCFC refrigerants.
- Incorporate green roofs or photovoltaic panels on roofs.
- Utilize east-west building orientation and daylighting techniques to reduce energy needs.

### Site Design

- Minimize impervious and heat conserving materials in site design; use pervious paving wherever feasible to allow rainwater infiltration and to minimize runoff.
- Utilize climate appropriate plants that require limited resource input and integrate stormwater management into site landscape design.
- Include convenient bicycle parking and comfortable pedestrian and bicycle paths throughout new development to encourage walking and bicycling.
- Utilize pervious paving materials, where feasible, to allow rainwater infiltration and minimize runoff

## PUBLIC ENVIRONMENT

Streets and open space are the key elements of the public environment. This public environment, along with building design and placement, defines the character and functionality of a community or neighborhood.

These guidelines for streets and open space are intended to capitalize on the station area's unique setting, to guide future private development, and to identify opportunities for the City of Larkspur and other public and private entities to improve other elements of the public realm and visual landscape.

### STREETS IN THE PUBLIC REALM

Streets provide the venue to most pedestrian, bicycle, transit and vehicular traffic and are the largest part of the civic realm. In the station area, primary public and private circulation routes occur on the following streets:

- Sir Francis Drake Boulevard
- Larkspur Landing Circle
- Private Streets and Pedestrian Lanes

Larkspur has an attractive and functional public environment in its downtown and neighborhoods that can be a model for the station area. In most locations, streets in Larkspur are moderate in width, fostering reasonable traffic speeds. Most but not all streets include sidewalks; some have on-street parking, some do not. Sidewalks are generally not particularly wide, including in the downtown, but they are adequate to allow pedestrians comfortable access. Bicycles often share travel lanes with cars; the provision of additional multi-use, separated trails (Class 1 bicycle facilities) or bike lanes (Class 2) is desirable whenever possible (see Circulation chapter of this report).

The station area consists of moderately sized parcels located within an existing arterial and connector road system. The current pattern of major streets is adequate to serve the sites within the area. However, nearly all sites would require additional local access, vehicular, emergency, and service streets or lanes when new development occurs. (See Access, Circulation and Parking chapter for guidance on street configurations.)

The elements that support the street environment – plantings, furnishings, lighting and signage – also contribute to the character and attractiveness of neighborhoods and districts.

Larkspur occupies a dramatic site in Marin County, spreading from the base of Mount Tamalpais to the lowlands and shore of San Francisco Bay. This part of Marin County is characterized by a range of landscape imagery: redwoods, oak woodlands, and bayfront grasslands and marshes. Larkspur, like other Marin communities, feels like a village set into this landscape-dominated setting. Today, the station area has large areas of surface parking lots, major roadways, and cars, while at the same time, the residential areas above Larkspur Landing Circle have lushly planted grounds. Streetscape improvements along public and semi-public rights-of-way should take their cue from the City's and the station area's distinct landscape character while also ensuring a more safe and convenient multi-modal public environment.

### Sir Francis Drake Boulevard

As a gateway to Marin County and Larkspur from the East Bay, Sir Francis Drake Boulevard would benefit from some streetscape improvements, particularly in terms of its landscape treatment. Currently, there are some scattered trees and shrubs in the median, but there is not a consistent streetscape treatment and the roadway does not contribute to creating a distinct identity for the station area.

#### Guidelines

- Provide a gateway element at the eastern end of the road, near Larkspur Landing Circle, to announce arrival to Larkspur.
- Work with the County and Caltrans to identify opportunities to improve median landscaping along the roadway within the station area. Use drought-tolerant species that will withstand the salt air of the bayfront. Consider inclusion of some seasonal color to provide year-round visual interest.
- Limit the expanse and size of trees along the waterfront to maintain views and waterfront connection.



*Medians along Sir Francis Drake Boulevard should consist of low plantings (above top) to protect views to the waterfront. Public seating in Larkspur varies by location (above left and right), with wood a common material. Lighting fixtures should be consistent within the station area, though they need not necessarily match existing fixtures (right). Bicycle racks should be provided at all major destinations. U-shaped bicycle racks are preferred (far right).*

- Coordinate with the Marin Country Mart ownership to ensure maintenance of the new plantings along that frontage.
- Improve the multi-use trail located along the southern edge of the boulevard which connects to Remillard Park with lighting, attractive landscaping, wayfinding and furniture.

### Larkspur Landing Circle

Larkspur Landing Circle has an informal character and a relatively narrow cross-section. Mature trees planted on either side include eucalyptus and sycamore; edges vary between grass and shrubs. The roadway does not have a consistent planted median nor is one particularly feasible. Recently, the south side bordering the Marin Country Mart has been improved with mulch and a white rail fence.

#### Guidelines

- Prepare a street tree analysis for the circle and adjoining property edges. The existing eucalyptus are not native and have significant litter and limb drop.
- Consider a long term tree replacement program for the circle. Any new trees should be native, and of a scale and height to not block views.
- Provide seating periodically along the circle, especially near intersections. Benches and other furniture should reflect the street's character, incorporating natural materials and respecting the style of adjacent buildings.
- Maintain the relatively informal nature of planting along the circle; prioritize the use of native and drought-tolerant species over turf and other ornamental species.
- With any modifications to the configuration of the circle, such as adding sidewalks along the south edge, utilize the same planting palette and avoid impacts to any existing trees.
- Consider implementing special lighting around the circle to identify this central corridor and give a unique character to the surrounding parcels as a coherent neighborhood. A fixture that is classic, not historic but not too modern, would be appropriate.

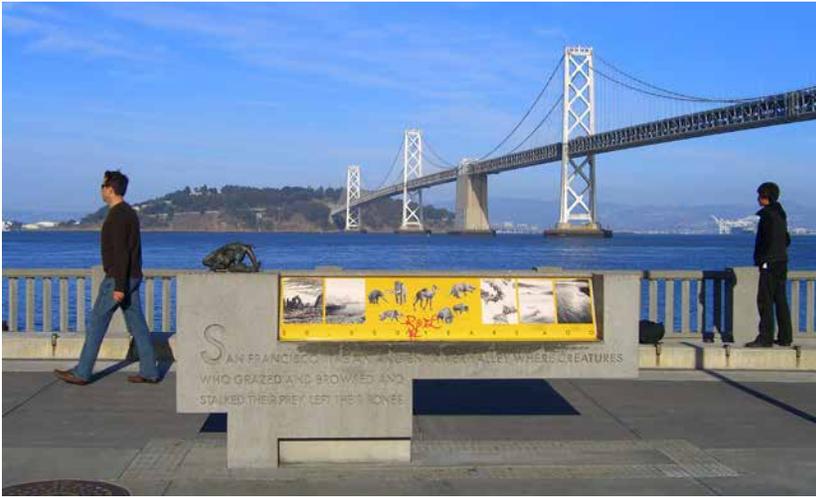
### Private Streets and Pedestrian Lanes

As new development or redevelopment occurs on private parcels, new private streets and lanes will be needed.

#### Guidelines

- Provide ample sidewalks for pedestrians along all new streets and incorporate accommodations for bicyclists.
- Provide adequate lighting to ensure a safe pedestrian environment.
- Utilize a range of plantings to ensure visual interest to pedestrians and to provide a landscaped buffer between the streets and lanes and residences.
- Provide safe and convenient bike parking at destinations along each route.





*Interpretive signage (top) can be attractive, informative and educational. Public art, such as the Sir Francis Drake sculpture (bottom), can add visual interest and highlight the history of an area.*

### Signage and Public Art

Throughout the station area, there is intermittent signage directing vehicles and pedestrians to destinations. Incorporating both wayfinding and interpretive signage would enhance station area connectivity and contribute significantly to its identity within the City of Larkspur.

#### Guidelines

- Implement a family of signage designed for both vehicles and pedestrians.
- Coordinate signage design with existing signs in the larger Larkspur public realm.
- Consider a diverse demographic (residents, visitors, tourists, seniors) when designing the signs.
- Use signage to brand the station area and build on the unique qualities of Larkspur Landing and the waterfront.
- Incorporate public art to enhance visual interest and educational opportunities.

### SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC ENVIRONMENT

The City of Larkspur is committed to incorporating sustainability into its operations and practices. Streetscape treatments throughout the station area should include a variety of sustainable elements.

#### Guidelines

- Provide trees and landscaped areas along pedestrian walkways, in parking lots, and in public spaces.
- Specify low maintenance, non-invasive plantings.
- Integrate stormwater management into landscape design and install pervious paving where appropriate.
- Utilize recycled and recyclable materials.
- Utilize lighting fixtures that conform to dark sky and energy efficient standards.
- Prioritize pedestrians and cyclists in streetscape treatment.



*Encouraged sustainable practices include drought-tolerant planting (bottom left), stormwater management strategies (top right), and parking lot plantings (bottom right).*

**Figure 6.7:** Marin Country Mart Promenade Location



## OPEN SPACE

Open space is critical to quality of life within a transit-supportive environment. With future development at the Marin Country Mart and at the ferry terminal parking lot, there are two opportunities to provide new publicly-accessible plazas and parks. In addition, there is a need to improve some of the existing parks in the station area to provide better access and public accommodation.

Currently, although there are public trails that provide access along the waterfront, there are no significant public spaces on the bay that offer venues for quiet contemplation or public events. In addition, in the station area there are no public plazas or parks north of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard that provide views to the bay, Mount Tamalpais, and to the surrounding hillsides.

### Marin Country Mart Promenade

The southern edge of the Marin Country Mart property has recently been improved, with removal of aging trees and new plantings that have opened up views both to the Country Mart buildings but also from the Country Mart to parts of surrounding Larkspur and Marin County. The edge includes service docks and some retail storefronts, and is also the location for the Saturday Farmers Market and for the Sunday food truck event. The success of public use of this space suggests that a more formalized public plaza and event space at this location, as shown in Figure 6.7, would be highly desirable.

#### Guidelines

- Explore partnerships with property owner to create an enhanced public plaza along the southern edge of the Marin Country Mart.
- Provide a continuous wide public sidewalk/promenade along the site edge.
- Design the promenade and adjoining access lanes so that the area would be accessible at all times and would continue to host special events such as the farmers market and food truck event.

## 6 | URBAN DESIGN GUIDELINES

- Provide enhanced paving, lighting and seating in this new plaza area.
- Reconfigure loading and service access as needed to minimize pedestrian-vehicular conflicts.
- Design the plaza to provide views across Sir Francis Drake Boulevard to the waterfront as well as long views to the surrounding hillsides and larger bay.



*Pedestrian amenities such as planting, trash receptacles, and seating could make the Marin Country Mart Promenade inviting and allow visitors to enjoy the views (above).*



*View from Marin Country Mart Promenade location (top). View from the pedestrian bridge back to the Marin Country Mart Promenade (bottom).*

**Figure 6.8:** Ferry Terminal Plaza Location



Features such as public art or fountains (bottom) can enhance and enliven the site.

### Ferry Terminal Plaza

The Larkspur Ferry Terminal occupies a rare waterfront location, adjoining Corte Madera Creek and looking out over nearby wetlands and protected open space areas. From this site it is possible to have 360 degree views of Larkspur, the Bay and Mount Tamalpais.

Although there are currently some publicly accessible areas on the ferry terminal site and a multi-use trail along the site's perimeter, there are few amenities and little to attract the public to visit this area. A public plaza or park at this waterfront edge (see Figure 6.8) would provide Larkspur with shoreline access. Over time, with development of the parking lot into structured parking and residential uses, the waterfront edge could become a more active park space.

### Guidelines

- Coordinate with the Golden Gate Transportation District as improvement plans for the parking lot and any redevelopment of the site are discussed, to set aside a waterfront site for public use.
- Provide lighting, seating and other amenities with creation of an improved and expanded plaza space.
- Utilize special paving and plantings, suitable to the waterfront edge, to establish a unique image for this public amenity.
- Include public art and interpretive elements to add visual interest, highlight Larkspur's waterfront identity, and provide educational opportunities.
- Highlight views to the water and be careful not to block views with tall trees or other site elements.

### Miwok Park

Miwok Park is an existing public park situated east of Larkspur Landing Circle (see Figure 6.). It includes natural areas of informal vegetation, including grasses, shrubs, and trees, as well as Tubb Lake and a dam. There is currently limited public access to the park and minimal accommodations for visitors.

#### <sup>1</sup>Guidelines

- Provide vehicular and pedestrian access to the park from adjoining parcels and proximate streets.
- Provide pathways throughout the park and to Tubb Lake, including emergency access routes.
- Install picnic areas, seating, and restrooms to better accommodate visitor activities.
- Incorporate wayfinding and interpretive signage.
- Enhance the landscape with native plant material and manage invasive plants.
- Complete needed improvements to the dam.

<sup>1</sup> Proposed improvements for Miwok Park are excerpted from the Larkspur Mini Parks Master Plan (2000).



*Miwok Park is an undeveloped open space, and features Tubb Lake.*

### Remillard Park

Remillard Park is located on the water's edge, south of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard on the eastern edge of the station area boundary (see Figure 6.9). The community has expressed interest in improving this park to make it a more attractive destination.

#### Guidelines

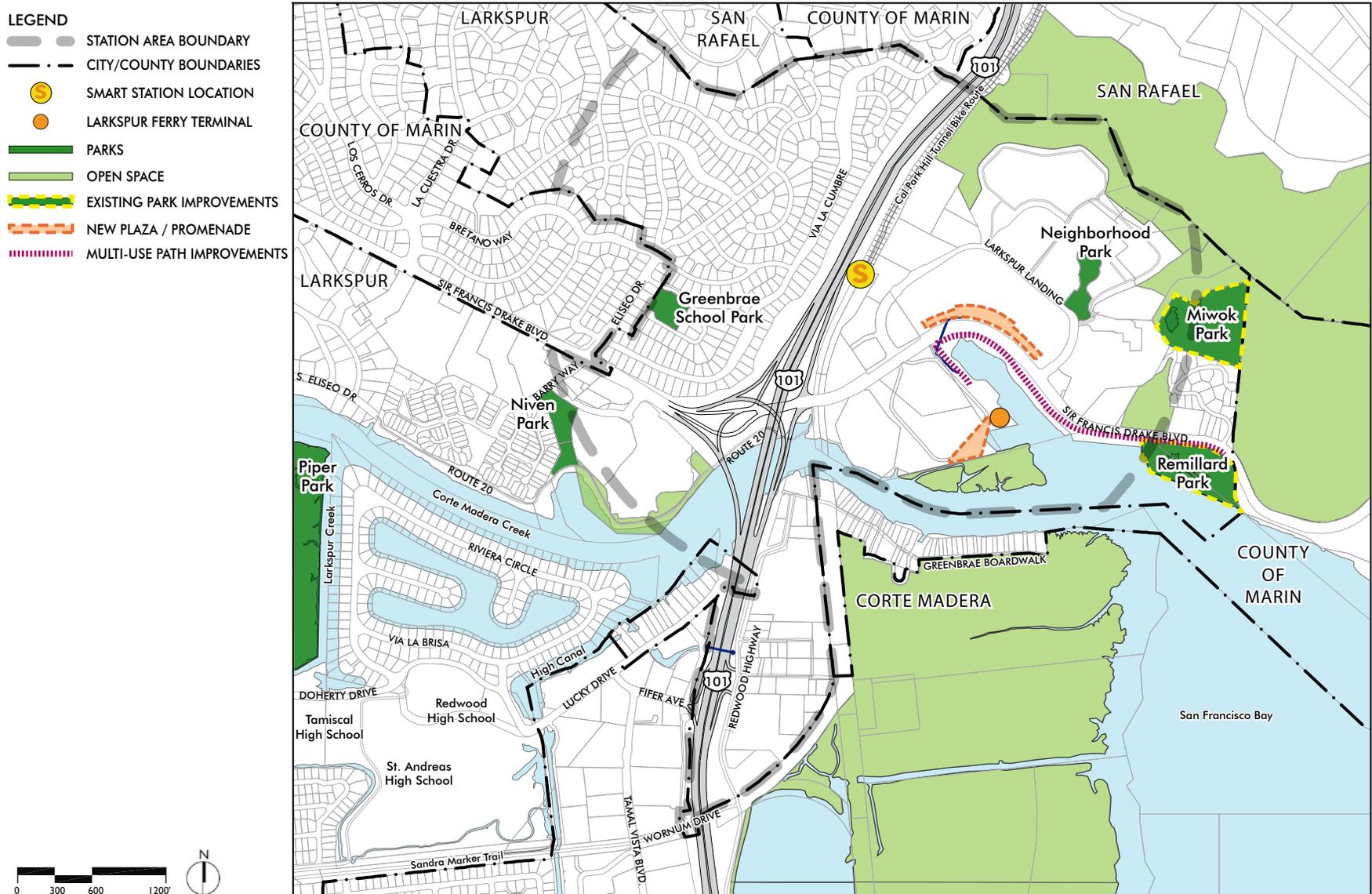
- Restore the tree canopy and enhance landscape throughout the park to manage invasive plants, promote native species, and provide seasonal color.
- Provide additional pathways and replace existing path materials to improve stability and accessibility.
- Provide additional seating and a restroom.
- Address drainage issues.
- Repair or rebuild the viewing platform.
- Enhance turtle habitat.

The community has also expressed a need for better access to the park via an improved trail between the ferry terminal and the park along the south side of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. New landscaping, lighting, and seating would enhance the existing trail.



*Remillard Park provides direct waterfront access, and visitors enjoy spectacular views.*

Figure 6.9: Public Park and Open Space Improvements



### URBAN DESIGN POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

This Plan recommends the following actions be considered:

- UDG-1: Amend the General Plan to reference the Urban Design Guidelines of the Station Area Plan and incorporate the guidelines into appropriate City documents.
- UDG-2: Promote a development pattern in the SMART station area that accommodates convenient pedestrian and bicycle circulation.
- UDG-3: Ensure that the design of any new buildings in the station area is consistent with the intent and guidelines of the Plan and, in so doing, respects the unique character of the Larkspur community.
- UDG-4: Require incorporation of sustainable design strategies in new construction and renovations consistent with the Plan guidelines and with other City of Larkspur policies and plans.
- UDG-5: Implement design improvements in the station area, in cooperation with local property owners, that will continue to reinforce the special identity of the Larkspur Landing area, including elements such as signage and public art.
- UDG-6: Pursue implementation of enhanced public open space in two locations – at the southern edge of the Country Mart and at the southeastern edge of the ferry terminal parking lot – to provide special Larkspur open space with views to the Bay and surrounding hillsides and Mount Tamalpais.
- UDG-7: Pursue improvements to Miwok and Remillard Parks to ensure their utility and enjoyment by a wide cross-section of the Larkspur community.