

## A. LAND USE AND PLANNING POLICY

This section describes existing land uses in the Plan area, land trends within the Plan area, and relevant planning documents and policies. Much of the information within this section is adapted from the Larkspur SMART Station Area Plan Existing Conditions Report<sup>1</sup> and the Draft Larkspur SMART Station Area Plan.<sup>2</sup> Potential land use and planning policy impacts that would result from the adoption and implementation of the Station Area Plan are also examined.

### 1. Setting

This section describes the Plan area context, development history, existing land uses, and applicable land use policy documents and regulations.

**a. Plan Area Context.** The City of Larkspur is located in Marin County, bordered to the north by San Rafael, to the southeast by Corte Madera, to the south by Mill Valley, and to the west and north by the County of Marin. U.S. 101 runs north-south through the eastern portion of Larkspur, connecting south to San Francisco, and north through Marin to Sonoma County.

The Plan area consists of 405 acres located in eastern Larkspur, approximately 1.5 miles northeast of the City's downtown core, at the edge of San Francisco Bay. It is defined by a combination of the Larkspur jurisdictional boundary and a ½-mile radius around the planned SMART station location. The SMART station, representing the end of the SMART rail line as it comes south from San Rafael, is located in the SMART right-of-way that parallels U.S. 101, near the terminus of the Cal Park Hill Tunnel bike path, and behind and above the Century Larkspur Landing Cinema.

The Plan area is located where several jurisdictions converge, including Larkspur, San Rafael, Corte Madera and the County of Marin. It is intersected by U.S. 101 running north-south, and Sir Francis Drake Boulevard running roughly east-west. The Corte Madera Creek flows east-west as well through the Plan area. As shown in Figure III-2, the Plan area has been divided into two geographic Sub-areas (1 and 2), with Sub-area 1 further divided into areas 1A and 1B.

**b. Development History.** This part of Larkspur was originally inhabited by the Miwok Indians. The Spanish came to the area in the early 1800s. In 1824 the area became part of the Mexican Republic, and it was then relinquished to the United States in the 1840s.

The first significant settlement occurred just outside the Plan area in the 1850s, with California's first prison, San Quentin State Prison, and the adjacent San Quentin Village. In the early 1890s, the Green Brae Brick Yard, owned by the Remillard Brick Company, began making bricks. The brick yard supported a small community of laborers who lived nearby. The community included 16 cabins for workmen, a cookhouse, stable, blacksmith shop, vegetable gardens, and an orchard.

Just outside the Plan area and under the jurisdiction of Marin County is Greenbrae Boardwalk, a small community of waterfront houses along Corte Madera Creek. The first ark (floating house) landed at

<sup>1</sup> BMS Design Group, 2012. *Larkspur SMART Station Area Plan Existing Conditions Report*. July 31.

<sup>2</sup> Larkspur, City of, 2014. *Larkspur SMART Station Area Plan, Public Review Draft*. February.

Greenbrae Boardwalk in 1903. The Greenbrae Boardwalk community developed in the 1920s and 30s. Over the years, the arks have transitioned from houses on barges to houses on foundations above the mean high tide line. Today there are 49 homes.

The Hutchinson Quarry began full-scale operations in 1924 in the area below the ridge in Larkspur Landing, using barges to supply quarried crushed rock to various locations around the Bay Area.

In the 1940s, residential development in the Greenbrae Hills neighborhood began. At that time, the Northwestern Railroad was extended south from San Rafael to provide a direct commute line to Point Tiburon. The GreenBrae Station stood near the future SMART station location. Rail freight traffic continued along this line until the 1980s.

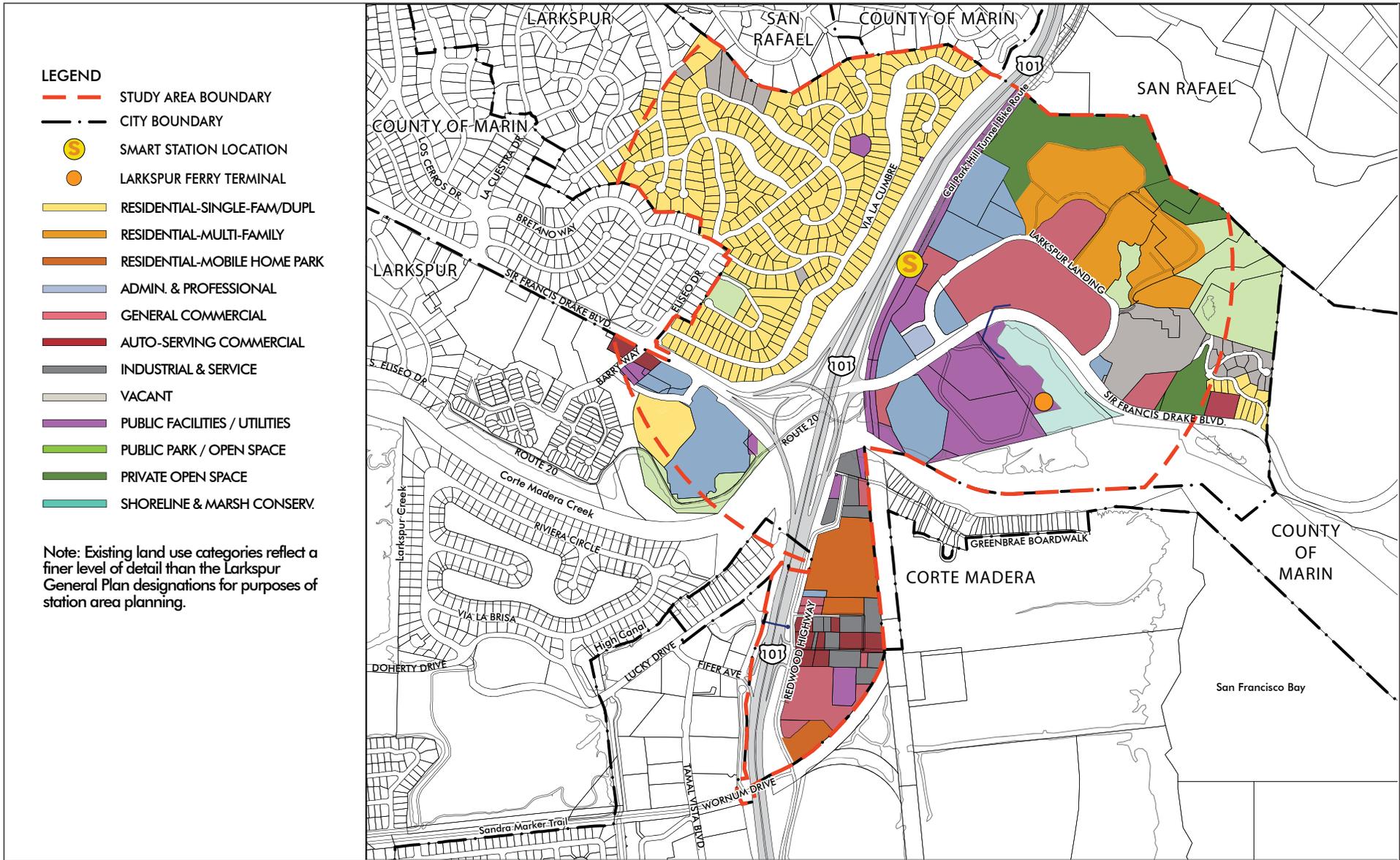
The Larkspur Ferry Terminal began its operations in 1976. Development of the Larkspur Landing Area, with offices and the shopping center, was begun in 1978 and was designed to resemble a New England seaport town. Under new ownership and renamed, the Marin Country Mart has recently been renovated. The Courtyard by Marriott Hotel opened in 1987, and 248 condominiums (currently leased as apartments) at Larkspur Courts were added in 1991. Since then, the completion of Serenity and Drake’s Way have created a large community of multi-family housing upon the hillside.

**c. Existing Land Uses.** A wide range of land uses exist within the Plan area. The area east of U.S. 101 includes the following uses: the Larkspur Ferry Terminal; shopping center; office uses; the theater; a hotel; and high density residential uses. West of the freeway, the Plan area is dominated by single-family residential, with a small amount of office and retail uses. Table IV.A-1 illustrates the overall breakdown of land uses within the Plan area. Figure IV.A-1 illustrates the existing land use pattern. Land uses within each Sub-area are described below.

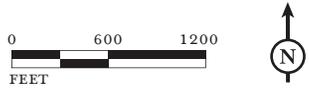
**Table IV.A-1: Existing Land Uses, Acres & Dwelling Units within the Plan Area**

Existing Land Use	Acres	Dwelling Units	Square Feet
Residential – Low Density	93	453	–
Residential – High Density	11	614	–
Residential – Mobile Homes	11	279	–
Administrative & Professional	31	–	645,000
General Commercial	33	–	509,000
Auto-Serving Commercial	6	–	68,000
Industrial & Service	7	–	184,000
Vacant	17	–	–
Public Facilities/Utilities	26	–	28,000
Public Park/Open Space	8	–	–
Private Open Space	19	–	–
Shoreline & Marsh Conservation	12	–	–

Source: *Larkspur SMART Station Area Plan, Public Review Draft*. February, 2014.



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**(1) Sub-Area 1A – Larkspur Landing.** Sub-area 1A (Larkspur Landing) consists of a mix of uses. The SMART railroad tracks parallel U.S. 101, and the proposed future SMART station site would be located behind the Century Larkspur Landing Cinema. North of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, three-story offices line the western edge along the SMART railroad tracks in addition to the Marin Airporter terminal and parking lot, and the cinema. In the center of the Larkspur Landing Area, the Marin Country Mart is a one- and two-story shopping center consisting of over 35 shops, restaurants, services and professional offices in 12 buildings. The Marin Country Mart also includes outdoor uses, such as the farmers’ market on Saturday and the Off the Grid Food Truck Extravaganza on Sunday.

Northeast of Marin Country Mart is the three-story Courtyard Hotel, a public park called Neighborhood Park, and three multi-family housing developments ranging from two to four stories in height: Larkspur Courts Apartments (248 units), Serenity at Larkspur (342 units) and Drake’s Way (24 units). All three developments are comprised of rental properties. Drake’s Way is an affordable housing development managed by EAH and provides housing to extremely-low and very-low income households.

Further east along Sir Francis Drake Boulevard are several office and commercial uses, ranging from two to four stories, the partially built-out single-family residential development of Drake’s Cove, which ranges in height from one to three stories, and the parcel owned by Sanitary District No. 1. Above these parcels is a large expanse of hillside open space.

South of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, the largest use is the Larkspur Ferry Terminal and its associated parking lot. Just west of the Larkspur Ferry Terminal site are four stories of office uses atop a tree-covered knoll (referred to as Wood Island), and two one- and two-story retail establishments adjacent to U.S. 101. East of the Ferry Terminal is an area of shoreline conservation. Remillard Park is located at the eastern edge of the Plan area along the waterfront.

**(2) Sub-Area 1B – Greenbrae Area.** The Greenbrae Area (Sub-area 1B) consists predominantly of the residential Greenbrae Hills neighborhood north of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, and a mix of commercial, office, residential and open space uses south of the boulevard at Drake’s Landing. The Greenbrae Hills neighborhood is a community of one- and two-story single-family homes built in the 1940s and 50s on small lots winding up the hillside. Within the Plan area are approximately 500 single-family homes. The Greenbrae School Park serves the neighborhood. There are a few vacant lots near the northern edge of the Plan area.

South of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, at the western edge of the Plan area, are multi-family residential uses and the Bon Air Shopping Center, comprising a grocery store and over 50 shops and restaurants. East of Bon Air are two gas stations, Larkspur Fire Station No. 16, two office buildings, the Drake’s Landing Office Park and the Drake’s View Townhomes (42 units).

The Drake’s Landing Office Park and Drake’s View Townhomes are both two stories in height, and are set back from the waterfront to allow for the public waterfront multi-use path and open space. Niven Park, at the western edge of the Plan area, connects to the shoreline and a popular multi-use path that links this neighborhood east under the highway to Sir Francis Drake Boulevard and the Ferry Terminal.

(3) **Sub-Area 2 – Redwood Highway Area.** The Redwood Highway Area (Sub-area 2) consists of a mix of industrial, commercial and residential uses. The industrial uses, located at the northernmost point and in the center of the area, include storage facilities, light industrial manufacturing facilities, including a concrete manufacturing operation, and several auto-serving shops. The Cost Plus Plaza includes several large retailers, including a Cost Plus, BevMo and Trader Joe's. The residential communities in this area consist of three mobile home and RV parks. The buildings in this area are generally low in scale and height, predominantly one and two stories. The auto-serving and industrial uses provide necessary services not found elsewhere in the City, and the mobile home parks provide affordable housing.

**d. Regulatory Setting.** This subsection describes the federal, State, regional and local plans and regulations that address land use and development within and adjacent to the Plan area. A brief description of these regulatory documents is provided below.

(1) **State Law.** While not directly related to the Plan area, two statewide legislative efforts are shaping land use and transportation policy at the regional level. These legislative bills are described below.

**Assembly Bill 32: Global Warming Solutions Act.** The 2006 Global Warming Solutions Act (AB 32) requires specific actions for California to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2020, a reduction of approximately 25 percent statewide. A key focus of the measures is the reduction of total vehicle miles travelled (VMT) and a potential corresponding shift to alternative travel modes, including transit and bicycling. The SMART Station Area Plan supports AB 32 by planning for future growth to support ridership of the SMART train and Larkspur Ferry, thereby reducing VMT in single-occupancy vehicles.

**Senate Bill 375: Sustainable Communities Act.** SB 375 further implements the goals of AB 32 by directly linking land use planning with greenhouse gas emission reduction targets. The California Air Resources Board is required to set specific emissions reduction goals for metropolitan planning organizations, which in the Bay Area is the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC). The GHG reduction targets for the Bay Area include a 7 percent reduction in per capita emissions by 2020 and a 15 percent reduction by 2035. SB 375 also requires regional planning agencies to create a Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) that includes a land use and transportation plan to meet the GHG targets. AB 32 and SB 375 have a direct influence on the future of public and multi-modal transportation and land use planning in Larkspur through State and regional mandates and funding programs.

(2) **Regional and Local Initiatives.** Regional and local initiatives that relate to the development of the Station Area Plan are described below.

**Regional Housing Needs Allocation.** The Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) is a State-mandated process for determining how many housing units, including affordable units, each community must plan to accommodate. The California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) determines the total housing need for a region. ABAG, working with local governments, develops an allocation methodology for assigning units, by income category, to each city and county in the nine-county Bay Area. Allocations for each jurisdiction are published in an

annual housing report. The SCS is required to incorporate the RHNA housing allocation statistics. In 2012, ABAG began developing a methodology for the next RHNA cycle (period 2014-2021).

**Sustainable Communities Strategy/Plan Bay Area.** Pursuant to SB 375, ABAG and MTC, in partnership with the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) and the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC), have prepared the Bay Area's SCS. The SCS titled "Plan Bay Area," adopted in July 2013,<sup>3</sup> will serve as the regional blueprint for transportation, housing and land use focused on reducing driving and associated GHG emissions.

Plan Bay Area has three principal objectives:

1. Identify areas to accommodate all the region's population associated with Bay Area economic growth for the next twenty-five years.
2. Develop a Regional Transportation Plan that meets the needs of the region.
3. Reduce greenhouse-gas emissions from automobiles and light trucks.

A key focus of this effort is the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions through transportation and land use policies and funding incentives that would be implemented at the local level.

**Moving Forward: A 25-Year Vision for Marin County.** Moving Forward: A 25-Year Transportation Vision for Marin County (Moving Forward)<sup>4</sup> was produced by the Marin County Congestion Management Agency (commonly known as the Transportation Authority of Marin [TAM]), the Marin County Board of Supervisors, and the Marin County Transit District (Marin Transit). In response to growing congestion in Marin County, Moving Forward creates a framework for future decisions regarding transportation investments and improvements in the County. This vision for Marin includes the following key goals:

- Increasing travel choices is the only way to manage congestion and improve mobility.
- All modes will be linked together in a seamless, comprehensive transportation network.
- Local trips will be served by a variety of new and expanded options, improving mobility for all Marin County residents.
- Regional and inter-regional trips will be served by completion of the HOV system on U.S. 101, the implementation of a new commuter rail line, increased express bus service and increased ferry service.

Many of these goals build on current and planned projects and programs, such as the SMART system and Safe Routes to Schools. However, existing transportation funds only cover a fraction of the \$1.6 billion in projects described in Moving Forward. In order to fill this funding gap, the report recom-

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<sup>3</sup> Association of Bay Area Governments, Metropolitan Transportation Commission, 2013. *Draft Plan Bay Area, Strategy for a Sustainable Region*. March. Adopted with revisions July 18, 2013.

<sup>4</sup> Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates, 2003. *Moving Forward: A 25-Year Transportation Vision for Marin County*, prepared for the Marin County Congestion Management Agency.

mends developing an implementation plan that will prioritize projects, specify funding amounts, provide a phased implementation strategy, and establish performance measures.

**San Quentin Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Access Study.** Completed in February 2011, the San Quentin Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Access Study<sup>5</sup> looks at potential ways to improve bike and pedestrian access in the area surrounding San Quentin State Prison. As a key gap identified in the San Francisco Bay Trail Gap Analysis Study,<sup>6</sup> this area is also one of the top priority projects in the County as described in the 2008 Marin County Unincorporated Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.<sup>7</sup> The 1.5-mile long study corridor runs along East Sir Francis Drake Boulevard and I-580, connecting the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge to the east and the existing bicycle path at Remillard Park to the west.

The western edge of the corridor abuts the eastern edge of the Plan area. The San Quentin Study presents three alternatives for bicycle and pedestrian facilities along East Sir Francis Drake, ranging from a Class I or II bike route along the south side and Class II or III bike route on the north side of East Sir Francis Drake Boulevard.

**(3) City of Larkspur Plans, Policies and Programs.** The following describes City of Larkspur policies and programs.

**City of Larkspur 1990 General Plan.** The 1990 General Plan<sup>8</sup> is the City's official policy document describing the City's vision and goals for the future. This policy document identifies the general location of future housing, office, commercial, industry, transportation facilities, parks and other land uses throughout the City. The General Plan includes the following elements: Land Use; Community Character; Circulation; Community Facilities and Services; Environmental Resources; Health and Safety; and Bicycle and Pedestrian Trails and Paths. The City is currently undertaking a General Plan update (as described below); however, until an updated General Plan is adopted, the 1990 General Plan serves as the existing guiding policy document for the City.

The 1990 General Plan includes a variety of goals, policies and actions related to land uses within the City, which are listed below:

*Land Use Element*

**Goal 1: Maintain the overall residential character of Larkspur.**

**Goal 2: Preserve the integrity, cohesiveness, historic character, and residential environment of existing neighborhoods.**

<sup>5</sup> Alta Planning + Design, 2011. *San Quentin Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Access Study*. February.

<sup>6</sup> Association of Bay Area Governments, 2005. *The San Francisco Bay Trail Project Gap Analysis Study*. August.

<sup>7</sup> Marin County Board of Supervisors, 2008. *Marin County Unincorporated Area Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan*. March.

<sup>8</sup> Larkspur, City of, 1990. *General Plan*.

- **Policy a:** Residential density standards shall consider neighborhood characteristics, existing uses, surrounding uses, impact on the traffic capacity of the street system, access to services, geotechnical conditions, and natural resources.
- **Policy b:** Residential development should not be at such a high density that it has an unacceptable impact on the street system serving the area.
  - **Action Program [1]:** Apply open residential standards (up to 0.2 unit per gross acre) to areas having special open space value. This designation is also suitable for areas with limited development potential because of their unusual configuration (e.g., railroad right-of-way) or difficult access.
  - **Action Program [2]:** Apply very low density residential standards (up to 1 unit per gross acre) to hillside areas with landsliding, seismic, or other geotechnical problems. This designation is also suitable for areas with special open space value.
  - **Action Program [3]:** Apply low density residential standards (up to 5 dwellings per gross acre) to hillsides and other environmentally sensitive areas, as well as within established low-density neighborhoods.
  - **Action Program [4]:** Apply medium density residential standards (up to 12 dwellings per gross acre) to areas near commercial districts, such as Old Downtown, if consistent with adjacent land uses.
  - **Action Program [5]:** Apply high density residential standards (up to 21 dwellings per gross acre) only in areas within easy reach of arterials, public transit, and commercial centers that provide a range of goods and personal services.
- **Policy c:** Allow maximum densities in the medium and high density residential categories as described in this Plan only in those developments that promote social and economic diversity and environmental benefits, and only where care is taken to preserve neighborhood scale and ambiance.

**Goal 4: Maintain the existing neighborhood scale.**

- **Policy d:** Limit the visual bulk of houses so that they fit in with neighboring homes and the physical setting.

**Goal 5: Enhance the attractiveness and viability of existing commercial areas.**

**Goal 6: Encourage existing commercial districts (1) to provide an adequate mix of neighborhood-serving businesses, as well as second-story residential uses, and (2) to be accessible by means other than the auto.**

- **Policy e:** Maintain existing retail commercial areas in attractive physical condition, and work to retain their special character and amenities.
  - **Action Program [7]:** For each defined commercial district, allow and encourage only those uses that reinforce the district's role, function, and scale.
- **Policy f:** Discourage the creation of new commercial areas.
- **Policy g:** Allow expansion of existing commercial areas only under conditions that will not be detrimental to the surrounding residential community or existing retail uses in the city, that will improve the City's economic base, and that will reinforce the role or function of the areas as defined in Action Program 7.
  - **Action Program [8]:** Require applicants for development approval to demonstrate conformance to Policy "g" satisfactory to the planning commission and city council.
- **Policy h:** Protect the integrity and cohesiveness of existing commercial areas.

- Action Program [10]: Minimize through traffic.
- Action Program [11]: Require new development to incorporate design features (building orientation, building materials, parking location, landscaping) that encourage pedestrian use and emphasize positive relationships with neighboring buildings and uses.

**Goal 11: Maintain the present mix of retail, service, industrial, and residential uses in the Greenbrae East area.**

**Goal 12: Maintain and provide housing in Greenbrae East affordable to seniors and to young families.**

- Policy o: Encourage trailer parks to remain in the Greenbrae East area.
  - Action Program [19]: Require new or expanded uses in Greenbrae East to be compatible with existing residential uses or to be sufficiently buffered from them to mitigate any negative impacts.
- Policy p: Ensure that new development in Greenbrae East retains a sense of the area's physical setting by providing vistas of the ridgelines and access to the adjacent creek, marshlands, and the Bay beyond.
- Policy q: Ensure that existing uses and new development in Greenbrae East are sensitive to the fragile environment of the adjacent marsh.
  - Action Program [20]: Allow access to the marshlands by people and pets only in designated areas.

**Goal 13: On those lots where development or redevelopment is expected to occur, integrate natural features into new development, to the greatest extent reasonably feasible.**

**Goal 14: Maintain Larkspur's small-town character.**

- Policy r: Establish guidelines for the use and development of properties where change is expected to occur.

**Goal 15: Maintain the Northwestern Pacific Railroad right-of-way for public benefit.**

**Goal 18: Cooperate with other jurisdictions in solving regional problems, in protecting environmental resources, and in providing public services.**

### *Community Character Element*

**Goal 2: Maintain Larkspur's livable and attractive environment.**

- Policy b: Preserve the desirable features of the built environment as well as the remaining natural environment - trees, marshes, creeks, hillsides - as components of Larkspur's community character and identity.
- Policy k: Accommodate anticipated development and population growth in ways that will not damage Larkspur's historic, archaeological, and natural resources.
  - Action Program [14]: Establish design guidelines for property owners, developers, and public agencies to use with respect to land use and building construction in areas of identified historic, archaeological, or natural significance.
  - Action Program [15]: Review all public policies, and modify them as necessary, to support the policies of this chapter to protect and preserve historic, archaeological, and natural resources while protecting the general health, welfare, and safety of the public.

### *Open Space Element*

**Goal 1: Preserve and enhance a variety of open space features including ridgelines, the wetlands along the Bay and the creeks, wildlife habitats, view corridors, and other amenities which contribute to a sense of openness in Larkspur**

**Goal 4: Protect open space and shoreline/marsh conservation areas from degradation as a result of public facility needs such as roads, sewers or flood control.**

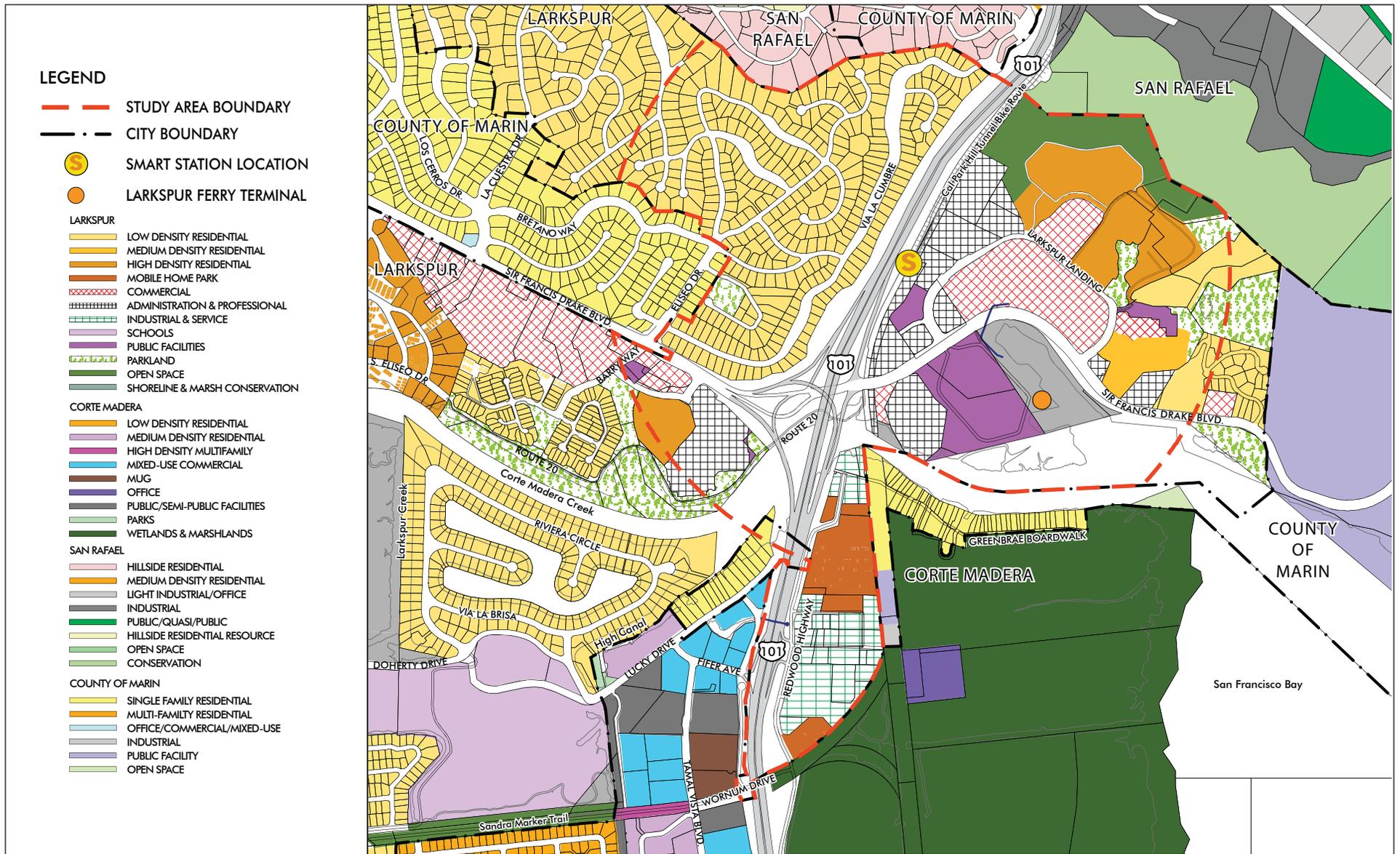
- **Policy i:** Seek to balance the needs for community safety with the goal of protection of the environment.
  - **Action Program [14]:** When dredging Corte Madera Creek, protect the wetlands along the creek.
  - **Action Program [15]:** Plan future development of the ferry terminal so as to minimize impact on nearby creek and marshland habitats.

The General Plan includes a description of land use designations within the City and identifies the location of these on a Land Use and Circulation map. Land use designations define the type and intensity of development within the City. The General Plan land use designations located within the Plan area are described below and shown in the General Plan Land Use Map, shown in Figure IV.A-2.

- **Low Density Residential.** This category allows up to 5 dwellings per gross acre, which translates into approximately 10 persons per acre. One house is allowed on each lot, unless a building permit is granted for a second unit. The addition of second units could increase density up to 10 dwellings (20 persons) per gross acre. The lowest minimum lot size is 7,500 square feet on parcels that are flat or on slopes up to 10 percent and may increase up to 43,560 square feet (1 acre) for slopes ranging from 10 to 25 percent. (Some lots predate zoning restrictions and do not meet these requirements, but they are legal building sites.) The City may require minimum lot sizes as large as 10 acres for areas with Residential Master Plan zoning. The City may allow smaller lot sizes, multiple units on a single lot, and larger FARs where permitted by a specific plan or planned development district.
- **Medium Density Residential.** This category allows up to 12 dwellings per gross acre, which translates into about 24 persons per acre. Maximum density decreases with slope to a minimum of two units per gross acre for slopes greater than 45 percent.
- **High Density Residential.** This category allows up to 21 units (about 42 persons) per acre on a flat site (less than 10 percent slope). Maximum density decreases with slope to a minimum of two units per gross acre for slopes greater than 45 percent.
- **Mobile Home Park.** This is a residential category that allows only mobile homes and accessory uses, up to 14 units (about 28 persons) per gross acre. Its primary purpose is to protect existing mobile home parks from being converted to other residential or non-residential use. (Recreational vehicle parks are allowed with a conditional use permit.)
- **Commercial.** This designation provides for neighborhood shopping needs and the broader goods and service needs of residents of Larkspur and adjoining communities. It is characterized by businesses that rely on customers making trips by car, and those uses which do not necessarily benefit from the high-volume pedestrian concentrations found in shopping centers and Downtown. These include auto accessory stores, carpet stores, catering establishments, department stores, and the like, as well as uses allowed in Restricted Commercial areas. Second-story residential units over first story commercial uses are encouraged and

exempt from floor area ration restrictions, except as may otherwise be stated in a specific plan or planned development plan. Senior housing is preferred. Second-story residential density shall be limited by parking and height restrictions and mixed-use (i.e., commercial/residential) housing shall not exceed 21 residential units per acre. Live/work units may be conditionally permitted. Buildings are comparable in scale to those in the Restricted Commercial category and have a maximum floor area ratio of 0.4. Hotels may be allowed to a maximum FAR of 1.0 where specific or master plans are required. The scale of such hotel structures would not be required to be comparable in scale to structures in the Restricted Commercial land use category, but shall be governed by an adopted specific or master plan.

- *Administrative and Professional.* This designation provides areas for office activities which serve local and regional needs. It allows administrative, executive, medical, dental, and business offices, some service establishments, medical supply sales, and laboratories. It is intended that Administrative and Professional Office areas will be characterized by buildings of low intensity and landscaped grounds. Floor area ratio should not exceed 0.35, and landscaped areas (including patios and walks) should cover at least 30 percent of the lot area.
- *Industrial and Service.* This designation provides for a wide variety of commercial, wholesale, service, and processing uses which are of value to the community at large. It allows warehousing, heavy commercial, auto sales and repair, food and drink processing, construction yards, print shops, and similar uses. Live/work units may be conditionally permitted. Floor area ratio should not exceed 0.4.
- *Schools.* This designation applies to public schools and their grounds. Floor area ratios should not exceed 0.25.
- *Public Facilities.* This designation applies to federal, State, County, special district, and publicly-owned City facilities, not including schools and colleges. Floor area ratio should not exceed 0.25.
- *Parkland.* This designation applies to active and passive parks, and linear parks (landscaped paths) in urban areas. The only structures allowed are shelters, restrooms, storage sheds, and other structures needed to accommodate public use or provide for maintenance of the land. Floor area ratio should not exceed 0.10.
- *Open Space.* This designation applies to any parcel of land or water which is essentially unimproved and is devoted to the preservation of natural resources, views, and wildlife habitats, the managed production of resources, outdoor recreation and education, or public health and safety. It may include publicly-owned lands as well as privately-owned lands set aside as open space through conditions of development approval. The only structures allowed are shelters, restrooms, storage sheds, and other structures needed to accommodate public use or provide for maintenance of the land. The floor area ratio should not exceed 0.10.



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FIGURE IV.A-2



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- *Shoreline & Marsh Conservation.* This designation applies to lands containing tidal marshes, seasonal marshes, beaches, rocky shorelines, mudflats, wetlands, low-lying grasslands overlying historic marshlands, streams, and riparian vegetation. It may include publicly-owned lands as well as privately-owned lands set aside as open space through conditions of development approval. Land uses which provide or protect wetland or wildlife habitat, and/or which do not require diking, filling, or dredging, are encouraged. Other uses which do not require diking, filling, or dredging but are less protective of habitat value may be permitted when it can be proven that the resulting public benefit exceeds environmental costs and liabilities. Public benefits shall include but not be limited to: public access, recreational, educational, or scientific opportunities, provision of essential water conveyance, transportation or utility services, and protection from flood or other natural hazards. The only structures allowed are shelters, restrooms, storage sheds, and other structures needed to accommodate public use or provide for maintenance of the land. Floor area ratio should not exceed 0.10.

**City of Larkspur 2010-2030 General Plan Update.** The City of Larkspur is currently in the process of updating its 1990 General Plan. A Citizen Advisory Committee completed review of the General Plan Elements on November 14, 2011, and an Administrative Draft was prepared on December 27, 2011. The Station Area Plan, in the form of a Local Area Plan, will be incorporated into the General Plan Update.

The 2010-2030 General Plan Update includes several themes that are particularly relevant to the Plan area. These include:

- Preserve and enhance Larkspur's unique built and natural environment, while accommodating suitable new development and redevelopment. Maintain the City's overall residential character and the scale of its neighborhoods. Encourage a diverse demographic mix (especially age, family and income).
- Enhance the attractiveness and viability of existing commercial areas. Ensure that they provide neighborhood-serving businesses and that they are accessible by means other than automobiles.
- Provide safe and efficient transportation facilities for all circulation system users. At the same time, give quality of life and protection of the environment a higher priority than vehicular traffic mobility, and ameliorate the negative impacts of local and regional vehicular traffic on Larkspur to the maximum extent feasible.
- Assure adequate public transit service in Larkspur (e.g., commuter rail, bus, ferry, Airporter) as alternatives to the automobile.
- Improve multi-modal connections (e.g., pedestrian, bicycle, and automobile) between the various parts of Larkspur and neighboring communities. Improve access from Larkspur to U.S. 101.
- Make it easier to move around Larkspur without using a car. Provide bicycle and pedestrian paths to schools, shopping areas, recreation facilities, open space preserves, and other common destination points. Improve traffic safety for bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Preserve, enhance, and strengthen Larkspur's livable and attractive environment, its community identity, and its special "sense of place."

- Provide park and recreation facilities and programs for Larkspur residents of all ages and abilities.
- Do what the City can, within reason, to protect the community from injury, loss of life, and property damage resulting from natural disasters and hazardous conditions. Increase public awareness of flooding, seismic, landslide, fire, and other natural hazards, and of methods to avoid or mitigate their effects. Deter development in areas prone to such hazards.

**City of Larkspur 2010 Housing Element.** The 2010 Larkspur Housing Element<sup>9</sup> reaffirms the City's General Plan goals. It acts as a guide for municipal decisions regarding the quantity and quality of housing, encourages housing growth within limits of available services, and encourages a balance of housing, quality of life, and environmental considerations for the 2007-2014 Regional Housing Need Allocation (RHNA).<sup>10</sup> The Housing Element was adopted by City Council in November 2010. The Housing Element recommends the following:

1. Strengthen the City's Residential Second Unit program as a viable way to provide smaller, affordable units by considering changing the requirement that to have a second unit, the parking must be brought up to current standards for the main unit and to allow for a higher building height limit for second units built over parking garages. Another action to be considered is lowering the parking requirement for the main unit.
2. Continue to support the creation of a Housing Assistance Team (HAT), coordinated by the Marin County Affordable Housing Strategist, that would be available to assist the staff in implementing Housing Element programs, maintaining Housing Element certification and providing technical assistance on housing matters.
3. Continue to seek opportunities for mixed use and transit oriented housing by investigating the feasibility of amending Planned District zoning districts, creating affordable housing overlay districts, and creating incentives to add residential uses to existing shopping centers, such as the Larkspur Landing and Bon Air Shopping Centers. Also, to increase the number of units likely to be added within the C-1 and C-2 Districts, consider allowing a height limit bonus and flexibility in applying development standards (FAR, lot coverage) for the construction of affordable housing units above commercial.
4. Continue to participate in countywide housing activities and coordination with other jurisdictions and special districts.

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<sup>9</sup> Larkspur, City of, 2010. *Housing Element*, November.

<sup>10</sup> The Regional Housing Need Allocation (RHNA) is the State-mandated process to identify the total number of housing units (by affordability level) that each jurisdiction must accommodate in its Housing Element. As part of this process, the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) identifies the total housing need for the San Francisco Bay Area for an eight-year period. ABAG and MTC must then develop a methodology to distribute this need to local governments in a manner that is consistent with the development pattern included in the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS). Once a local government has received its final RHNA, it must revise its Housing Element to show how it plans to accommodate its portion of the region's housing need.

**City of Larkspur Zoning Code.** Zoning codes designate specific land uses permitted and restricted within a zone or district, and the development standards associated with that district. Where General Plans tend to emphasize the vision for how a community will develop over time, zoning codes prescribe the details for how development projects are to be implemented. Figure IV.A-3 shows zoning designations within the Plan area.

The Larkspur Landing area north of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, as well as portions of Sub-area 1B, has a Planned Development (PD) zoning designation. The PD district is designed to allow a mixture of uses, building intensities or design characteristics which would not normally be permitted in any single use district. Requiring a precise development plan, PD land uses must comply with the General Plan and standards within the zoning code; however, exceptions may be allowed where the project would result in a more desirable development.

The Larkspur Ferry Terminal is in a Study District (S) zone. Zoning designations in Sub-area 1B include R-1 (First Residential), C-2 (Commercial), and PD. Zoning designations in Sub-area 2 include LI (Light Industrial), MHP (Mobile Home Park), and S.

**City of Larkspur Climate Action Plan.** The City of Larkspur City Council adopted a Climate Action Plan (CAP)<sup>11</sup> in 2010 with the understanding that climate change may significantly impact Larkspur's residents and businesses, as well as other communities around the world, and that local governments play a role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and mitigating the potential impacts of climate change.

The CAP consists of strategies that the City and the community can take to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; for example, increasing building energy efficiency, encouraging less dependence on the automobile, and using clean, renewable energy sources. In tandem with the City's 2005 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory, the CAP acts as the beginning of an ongoing planning process that includes assessing, planning, mitigating and adapting to climate change. Of specific relevance for the Station Area Plan, the CAP calls for the City to "Study the Larkspur Landing Circle area and enhance the opportunities presented by the location of the Larkspur Ferry, the Marin Airpotter, and eventually the SMART train station."

**City of Larkspur Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan.** The Larkspur Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan<sup>12</sup> examines existing bicycle and pedestrian facilities within the City of Larkspur and lays the framework for development of future facilities and policies that will make bicycling and walking an integral part of daily life in Larkspur. Recommendations include improving the visibility of pedestrians around Sir Francis Drake Boulevard and local schools, providing secure bicycle parking at key destinations within the City, and improving east-west connections across U.S. 101.

## 2. Impacts and Mitigation Measures

This section discusses potential impacts related to land use and planning policy that could result from implementation of the Station Area Plan. This section begins with the significance criteria, which

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<sup>11</sup> Larkspur, City of, 2010. *Climate Action Plan*. June.

<sup>12</sup> Larkspur, City of, 2004. *Larkspur Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan*, August.

establish the thresholds used to determine whether an impact is significant. The latter part of the section evaluates the potential impacts associated with implementation of the Station Area Plan, and identifies mitigation measures, if necessary.

**a. Criteria of Significance.** Implementation of the Station Area Plan would have a significant impact related to land use and planning if it would:

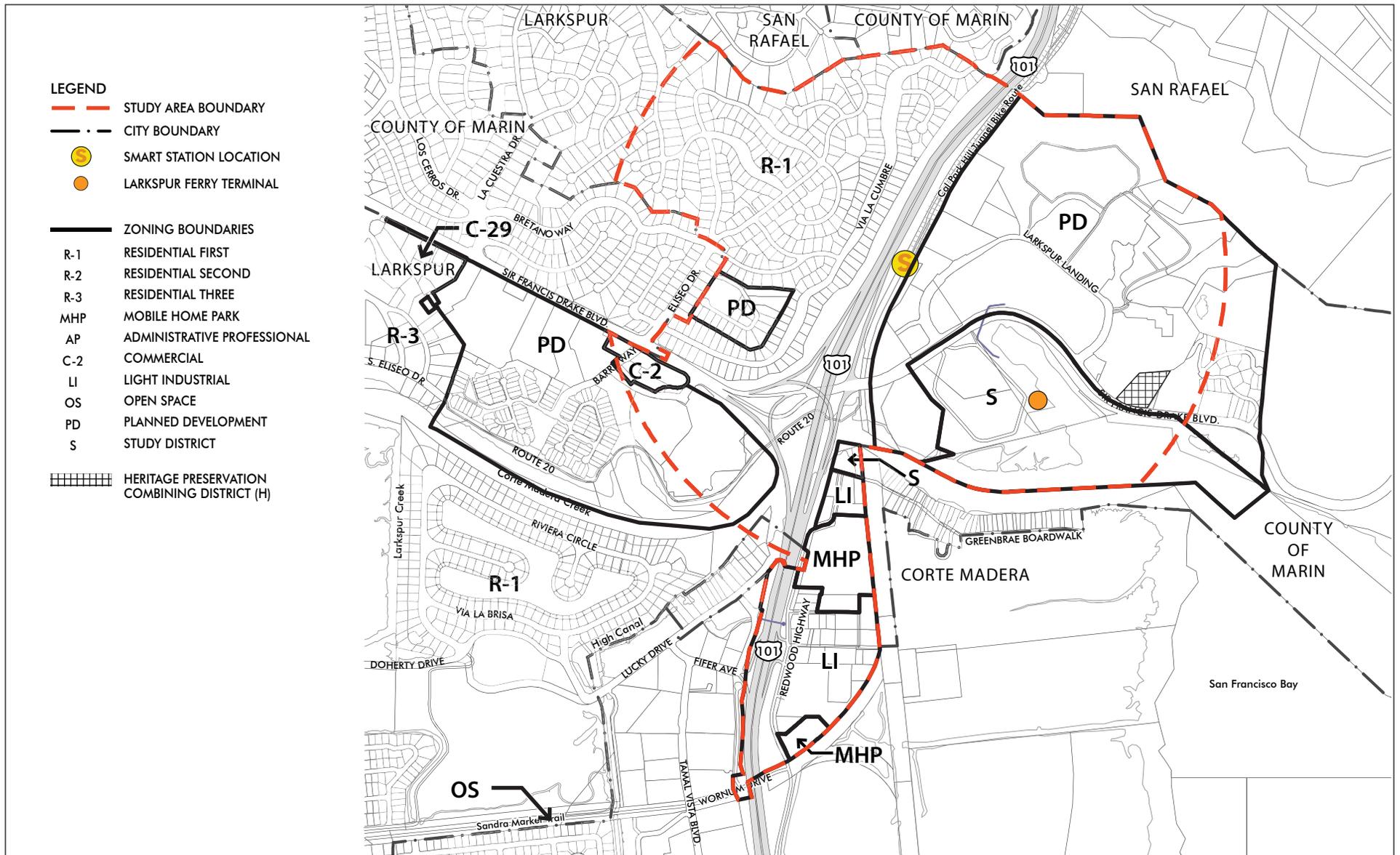
- Disrupt or physically divide an established community;
- Fundamentally conflict with the environmental goals, policies, or guidelines of a General Plan or Specific Plan;
- Fundamentally conflict with an ordinance or overlay zone adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect; or
- Result in an incompatibility of proposed land uses with existing surrounding land uses.

**b. Impact Analysis.** The following discussion describes impacts on land use and planning policy associated within implementation of the Station Area Plan.

**(1) Divide an Established Community.** The physical disruption or division of an established community typically refers to the construction of a physical feature (such as an interstate highway or railroad tracks) or removal of a means of access (such as a local road or bridge) that would impair mobility within an existing community, or between a community and outlying areas. For example, the construction of an interstate highway through an existing community could constrain travel from one side of the community to another. Such a feature could also impair travel to areas outside of the community.

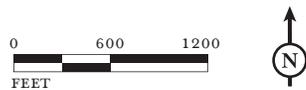
In the context of the policy document, such as the Station Area Plan, physical divisions within a community could also result from large-scale land use changes. For instance, the conversion of a large swath of a residential district into an industrial area could isolate residential uses from other nearby residential neighborhoods. Some large-scale comprehensive planning efforts during the post-World War II period, which resulted in the development of single-use neighborhoods bifurcated by high-volume freeways, created divisions within and between existing communities.

The Station Area Plan includes no large-scale infrastructure projects such as new freeways or high-volume roadways that would divide an established community. The Station Area Plan seeks to enhance mobility within the Plan area by expanding the existing multi-modal transportation system. This expansion would allow persons to travel around the Plan area more easily via non-automotive means of transportation. In general, this objective would be achieved by enhancing existing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure and encouraging development around the SMART station and ferry transit nodes, which would be achieved by adherence to Urban Design Guidelines within the Station Area Plan. The Urban Design Guidelines include: providing bicycle parking in all development; complete missing sidewalks; incorporate pedestrian lanes and amenities in new developments; and continue to coordinate with local and regional agencies to pursue possible enhancements to Sir Francis Drake Boulevard that will mitigate potential long-term traffic impacts and improve pedestrian and bicycle circulation.



L S A

FIGURE IV.A-3



City of Larkspur SMART Station Area Plan EIR  
Zoning Districts

SOURCE: CITY OF LARKSPUR, JULY 2012.

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In addition, the land uses associated with implementation of the Station Area Plan are land uses that currently exist within the Plan area. Given the size and location adjacent to major transportation corridors and near a transit node, the Plan area can accommodate increases in land use intensity and overall changes in land use character. Implementation of the Station Area Plan would include: increased commercial intensities near residential uses to encourage reduced dependence on private motor vehicles; increased office intensities to allow for business expansion; and focused growth in residential uses in close proximity to transit. Implementation of the Station Area Plan would not result in a significant impact related to division of a community.

**(2) Conflict with a General Plan or Specific Plan.** As noted previously, the General Plan was adopted in 1990, and the City is currently undertaking a General Plan update. The Station Area Plan, in the form of a Local Area Plan, would be incorporated into the General Plan Update. As noted previously, without adoption of the amendments proposed to the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance (as described in Chapter III, Project Description, of this EIR and the Draft Station Area Plan), the development envisioned by the Station Area Plan will not be realized. While the City is in the process of updating the General Plan, the 1990 General Plan is still in effect within the City of Larkspur and several land uses proposed on Opportunity Sites within the Station Area Plan are not permitted under current General Plan land use designations. These land use conflicts are described below:

- *Opportunity Site 1: Larkspur Ferry Terminal.* The General Plan identifies this site as Public Facility. This designation does not include residential or retail uses, as proposed under the Station Area Plan.
- *Opportunity Site 3: Larkspur Landing Office.* The General Plan identifies this as Administration and Professional land use designation. This designation does not include retail uses, which are proposed under the Station Area Plan.
- *Opportunity Site 6: Drakes Landing.* The General Plan identifies this site as Administration and Professional. This designation does not include residential uses as proposed under the Station Area Plan.
- *Opportunity Site 7: Offices.* The General Plan identifies this site as Commercial. This designation does not include office uses, as proposed under the Station Area Plan.

As noted in the Project Description, Chapter III, the General Plan Land Use Map will be amended to reflect the new Mixed-Use and Administrative and Professional Two land use designations.

Implementation of the Station Area Plan would generally adhere to the goals, policies and actions identified and described in the General Plan. However, it is possible that when site specific developments are proposed, there could be a conflict with selected goals, policies or actions included in the General Plan. The General Plan contains many policies, some of which may compete with each other. The Planning Commission and the City Council, in deciding whether to approve a proposed project, will decide whether, on balance, the project is consistent with the General Plan. Individual projects will be evaluated for potential environmental impacts, and further environmental review may be necessary if potential site-specific impacts have not been addressed in this EIR.

**(3) Conflict with an Ordinance or Overlay Zoning.** There is one overlay zone located within the Plan area (Historic Preservation Combining District); however, none of the Opportunity Sites include this overlay zoning. Implementation of the Station Area Plan would include zoning

amendments, as well as a rezoning for the Larkspur Ferry Terminal, as described in Chapter III, Project Description. All development that would be implemented as part of the Station Area Plan would be required to adhere to applicable development guidelines and standards. In addition, development proposed within the Plan area would undergo further environmental review by the City of Larkspur to identify and mitigate any potential site-specific environmental impacts. Implementation of the Station Area Plan would not conflict with an ordinance or overlay zone adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect; this potential impact would be considered less than significant.

**(4) Incompatible with Adjacent Land Uses.** As noted above, while new land uses are proposed for specific Opportunity Sites, the land uses proposed as part of implementation of the Station Area Plan are land uses that currently exist within the Plan area. Implementation of the Station Area Plan would result in an increase in density and development on opportunity sites, and may bring new uses to a specific site but not the Plan area.

To allow for an increase in density within the Plan area, 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 shoreline not exceeding two floors in height. On sites with significant topography, taller buildings could be sited against hillsides to minimize impacts to views throughout the site. Urban Design Guidelines included to help ensure land use compatibility include:

- New development should build upon the existing pattern of vehicular circulation while focusing on improving pedestrian and bicycle circulation throughout the Plan area.
- Design buildings to conform to the height zones shown in Figure 6.4 of the Station Area Plan.
- 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.
- Design buildings to avoid significantly blocking views to the bay, Mount Tamalpais, or other surrounding hillsides from public gathering places, parks, or event spaces.

Implementation of the Station Area Plan would not result in any new land uses that would be incompatible with existing land uses; this potential impact would be less than significant.

**c. Cumulative Impacts of the Station Area Plan.** CEQA defines cumulative impacts as “two or more individual effects, which, when considered together, are considerable, or which can compound or increase other environmental impacts.” Section 15130 of the CEQA Guidelines requires that an EIR evaluate potential environmental impacts that are individually limited but cumulatively significant. These impacts can result from the proposed project alone, or together with other projects. Section 15355 of the CEQA Guidelines states: “The cumulative impact from several projects is the change in the environment which results from the incremental impact of the project when added to other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects.” Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time.

Expected population and employment growth in the region would result in extensive land use changes at the regional level. ABAG expects that the population of the Bay Area region will grow from 7,341,700 residents in 2010 to 8,719,300 residents in 2030. During that period, the number of employed residents is expected to grow from 3,410,300 to 4,547,100.<sup>13</sup>

To address this regional growth, ABAG and MTC developed and adopted Plan Bay Area,<sup>14</sup> a long-range transportation and land-use/housing strategy for the San Francisco Bay Area. Plan Bay Area marks the nine-county region's first long-range plan to meet the requirements of California's landmark 2008 Senate Bill 375, which calls on each of the State's 18 metropolitan areas to develop a Sustainable Communities Strategy to accommodate future population growth and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from cars and light trucks. The Plan advances initiatives to expand housing and transportation choices, create healthier communities, and build a stronger regional economy.

Plan Bay Area provides a strategy for meeting 80 percent of the region's future housing needs in Priority Development Areas (PDAs), which are neighborhoods within walking distance of frequent transit service, offering a wide variety of housing options, and featuring amenities such as grocery stores, community centers, and restaurants. While the Plan area was not identified as a PDA, the implementation of the Station Area Plan result in the features associated with a PDA: a variety of housing options and amenities located within walking distance of transit service.

While implementation of the Station Area Plan would allow for more development within the Plan area, this development would be entirely consistent with the regional growth Plan Bay Area. City development standards and design guidelines, including the design guidelines included in the Station Area Plan, would be applicable to new development and would reduce potential conflicts between existing and future uses. Implementation of the Station Area Plan would not result in cumulative land use impacts.

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<sup>13</sup> Association of Bay Area Governments, Metropolitan Transportation Commission, 2013. *Draft Plan Bay Area, Strategy for a Sustainable Region*. March. Adopted with revisions July 18, 2013.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*