

# CHAPTER 2. LAND USE

This section, complementary with the Land Use and Circulation map, contains Larkspur's land use goals, policies, and programs. The overall aim is to preserve and enhance Larkspur's unique physical and natural setting, and its largely residential character, while accommodating suitable new development. This includes protecting Larkspur's hillsides and creeksides, and the vegetation, views, and general peacefulness associated with these natural characteristics. This section also seeks to enhance the attractiveness and viability of existing commercial areas, while encouraging neighborhood serving businesses and protecting the integrity of the existing commercial areas, particularly the historic Downtown. It also includes the protection of existing and future development from natural hazards, such as sea level rise and associated flooding. This chapter brings together all land use issues, limitations, and opportunities, and balances them with community needs and desires.

Commented [NT1]: Update to reflect "Land Use Diagram"

Commented [NT2]: Better tie together with Theme in Introduction Chapter

To develop a consistent, implementable set of goals, policies, and programs ~~for Larkspur~~, the following factors were considered:

- **Opportunities for residential development.** Existing residential development in the City is a balanced mixture of multi-family and single-family housing. The community values Larkspur's "small town" feeling inspired by residential neighborhoods' connection to the outdoors, their varied architectural and historic character, and their proximity to commercial centers. The community wants to retain the integrity of existing residential neighborhoods by maintaining their scale and historic quality, while accommodating new residential development that fits with existing neighborhoods.
- **Opportunities for commercial development.** The City's existing commercial areas provide valuable services on a local and regional level and should be retained. All commercial areas should be attractive and accessible to all users by multiple modes of transportation. Existing commercial centers also provide a valuable opportunity for mixed-use development.
- **Opportunities for vacant or underutilized sites.** The City is largely built out, with very few vacant parcels remaining without approved project plans. The City envisions vibrant mixed-use and mixed-density developments on the remaining vacant parcels, and promotes the redevelopment and revitalization of marginal or underutilized properties.

- **Relationships with other governmental and non-governmental agencies.** Larkspur has close and vital connections to surrounding communities, including an extensive network of open space areas and shared roadways and infrastructure. Land use decisions made by the City ~~will~~may impact surrounding communities and vice versa. It is important that the City maintain a dialogue with neighboring governmental and non-governmental agencies when planning local and regional development projects. The City's interests must also be represented and ~~respected~~ recognized in regional development projects.
- **The nexus between development and the natural environment.** One of the community's most valued features in Larkspur is its beautiful natural setting, which includes creek and marsh habitats, ~~and~~ protected open space areas, and vistas of Mount Tamalpais. Future development should not impact Larkspur's sensitive environmental resources. Conversely, the City recognizes the safety risks posed by environmental hazards, such as flooding, earthquakes, and sea level rise, which may affect existing and proposed residential and commercial development in the next twenty years. The City aims to avoid or minimize impacts of development on the environment, as well as impacts of the environment on development to the greatest extent possible.

The Land Use goals, policies, and programs seek to address these issues, as well as any unforeseen impacts on the physical development of the City over the next twenty years.

## LAND USE GOALS

Commented [NT3]: This list of goals may be amended per discussion on following goals, policies, and action programs

### Residential Neighborhoods

- LU-1: Maintain the integrity, cohesiveness, historic quality, and scale of Larkspur's residential neighborhoods.
- LU-2: Encourage a diverse demographic mix (especially age, family, and income) in Larkspur.

### Commercial and Industrial Areas

- LU-3: Protect the integrity and cohesiveness of existing commercial and industrial areas.
- LU-4: Increase the economic viability and vitality of existing commercial and industrial areas.
- LU-5: Encourage commercial areas to provide an adequate mix of neighborhood-serving businesses as well as residential uses that are accessible by means other than the automobile.

### Vacant or Underutilized Sites

- LU-6: Promote the development and revitalization of underutilized or marginal commercial, industrial, and residential sites.
- LU-7: Integrate natural features into new development to the greatest extent reasonably feasible on those lots where development or redevelopment is expected to occur.
- LU-8: Maintain the former railroad rights-of-way for public benefit.
- LU-9: Retain the existing availability of public transportation options in the San Quentin Peninsula.
- LU-10: Retain all or a portion of the San Quentin Prison site for park or other public use if prison use is discontinued.

### Regional Relationships

- LU-11: Cooperate with other jurisdictions in solving regional problems, in protecting environmental resources, and in providing public services.

## Environmental Responsibility

LU-12: Reduce the impacts of development on the environment.

LU-13: Ensure that residential and commercial development is adequately protected from environmental hazards such as wildland fires and flooding due to sea level rise.

## Residential Neighborhoods

### LU-1: Cohesive residential neighborhoods that retain their integrity, historic quality and scale. ~~Maintain the integrity, cohesiveness, historic quality, and scale of Larkspur's residential neighborhoods.~~

Policy LU-1.1: Residential ~~density standards~~ land use designations and density standards shall consider neighborhood characteristics, existing uses, surrounding uses, impact on the traffic capacity of the street system, access to services, geotechnical conditions, topography, and natural resources.

Action Program LU-1.1.a: ~~Apply~~ Open residential standards-land use designation (up to 0.2 unit per gross acre) applies to areas having special open space value ~~(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, lack of utilities, and/or location within High Fire Hazard Zones.

Action Program LU-1.1.b: Apply very low density residential standards (up to 1 unit per gross acre) to hillside areas with landsliding, seismic, or other geotechnical vulnerability. This designation is also suitable for areas with special open space value and limited development potential because of their unusual configuration, difficult access, lack of utilities, and/or location within High Fire Hazard Zones.

Action Program LU-1.1.c: ~~Apply~~ Low density residential standards-residential land use designation (up to 5 dwellings per gross acre) applies to hillsides and other environmentally sensitive areas, High Fire Hazard zones, as well as within established low-density neighborhoods.

Action Program LU-1.1.d: ~~Apply~~ Medium density residential standards-land use designation (up to 12 dwellings per gross acre) applies to areas near commercial areas-centers, such as Old-the Downtown, if consistent with adjacent land uses.

Action Program LU-1.1.e: ~~Apply~~ High density residential standards-land use designation (up to 21 dwellings per gross acre) applies only in areas within easy reach of arterials, public transit, and commercial centers that provide a range of goods and personal services.

Action Program LU-1.1e: Continue to implement and update, as appropriate, slope and hillside density standards established in the Larkspur Municipal Code to ensure that in hillside areas of greater than 10% slope, densities shall be proportionally reduced as properties approach 50% slope and more.

Action Program LU-1.1.f: Mobile home park residential land use designation (up

to 14 dwellings per gross acre) applies to the established mobile home parks in the Redwood Highway area.

Policy LU-1.2: Limit the ~~visual~~ bulk of dwellings so that they visually fit in with neighboring homes and the physical ~~setting~~characteristics of the site.

*Action Program LU-1.2.a: Continue to implement and update, as appropriate, design review standards established in the Larkspur Municipal Code to ensure development is compatible with the natural setting, preserves the character of the existing neighborhood, and considers neighbors' concerns with respect to privacy, solar access, streetscape, and scale and massing.*

*Action Program LU-1.2.b: Continue to implement and update, as appropriate, slope and hillside development standards established in the Larkspur Municipal Code to ensure that in hillside areas of greater than 10% slope, the intensity of development (e.g. floor area ratio) shall be proportionally reduced as properties approach 45% slope and more.*

Policy LU-1.3: ~~Encourage~~Promote residential infill development and/or redevelopment that accommodates additional housing, ~~provided that the project~~ fits in aesthetically and architecturally with the community and neighborhood character, as determined through the City's design review process and/or zoning standards.

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**LU-2: Residential neighborhoods that promote a diverse demographic mix of households.~~Encourage a diverse demographic mix (especially age, family, and income) in Larkspur.~~**

Policy LU-2.1: Allow flexibility in residential design and layout, with respect for the integrity of surrounding neighborhoods, to encourage a broad range of housing types.~~When practical, and with consideration for the integrity of existing low density neighborhoods, allow flexibility in residential density standards to encourage a broad range of housing types.~~

*Action Program LU-2.1.a: Encourage maximum densities and require minimum densities in the medium and high density residential categories ~~as described in this Plan only in those developments that where projects~~ promote social and economic diversity and environmental benefits, and ~~only when~~ impacts on existing neighborhood scale and ~~ambiance character~~ are mitigated.*

*Action Program LU-1.2.b: Continue to implement and update, as appropriate, standards to incentivize installation of accessory dwelling units and junior accessory dwelling units in a manner consistent with the scale and character of*

existing residential neighborhoods.

Action Program LU-2.1.b: Investigate impacts of allowing a mix of low- to moderate-density housing within single-family neighborhoods in existing structures (e.g., conversion of larger, older homes to multiple units), with design guidelines in place to ensure neighborhood character (e.g., scale and architectural style) is maintained and impacts on circulation, parking, and the environment are mitigated.

~~Action Program LU-2.1.c: Study the potential circulation, environmental, and other community impacts of establishing minimum densities in medium and high density areas.~~

Commented [NT4]: Suggest deleting in favor of expanded Action program LU-2.1a (above)

Action Program LU 2.1.c: Monitor and regulate short-term rentals to avoid loss of housing stock and main the residential character of existing neighborhoods.

Action Program Placeholder: Amend standards for nonconforming uses and structures to permit substantial renovation and/or replacement of existing medium- to high-density multifamily development that exceeds current density standards.

Action Program Placeholder: Consider “no net loss” standards for existing medium- to high-density multifamily development to discourage redevelopment that reduces the number of existing dwelling units, particularly rental units.

Policy LU-2.2: Maintain the ~~City’s existing supply of mobile homes~~mobile home neighborhoods in the Redwood Highway area, which provide a valuable supply of affordable housing, while recognizing their location in an area at risk to flooding and the potential need to relocate or replace them with housing of equivalent affordability elsewhere in the area.

Action Program LU-2.2.a: Assess the mobile home parks’ risk of flooding due to sea level rise ~~as part of the Sonoma Marin Area Rapid Transit (SMART) Station Area Planning Study. Apply and develop and implement~~ adaptation and mitigation development standards once established. (See Action Programs LU-13.2.a, LU-13.2.b and LU-13.2.c for direction on adopting and applying standards.)

Action Program LU-2.2.b: Require new or expanded uses adjacent to existing mobile home parks to be compatible with the residential uses, or to be sufficiently buffered from them to mitigate any negative impacts on residents.

Action Program LU-2.2.c: Encourage transitional uses along Rich Street that provide a buffer between the mobile homes and industrial uses, with displaced mobile homes relocated elsewhere within the area.

Action Program LU-2.2.d: ~~To protect the residential uses, i~~investigate

~~opportunities for rezoning the smaller **RV-mobile home** park on Rich Street to allow for transitional-buffer uses between the industrial and residential uses and relocating, with displaced mobile homes, relocated elsewhere within the area.~~

~~Action Program LU-2.2.e: Investigate opportunities for rezoning the mobile home park at the intersection of Wornum Drive and Redwood Highway to allow for a mix of commercial and residential uses, recognizing the constraints on the site's development by the proximity of the intersection of Redwood Highway and Wornum Drive. Displaced To the extent the existing mobile homes should be replaced sites can be replaced with housing at equivalent affordability levels at the site, investigate rezoning of the mobile home park at the intersection of Wornum Drive and Redwood Highway to allow for mixed use of commercial and residential, recognizing the proximity of the site to the future Wornum Drive interchange.~~

**Commented [NT5]:** This program is a suggests that mixed use development should be considered as a means of replacing these mobile home with "affordably equivalent" housing at this location. The proximity of the intersection presents a challenge to intensification at this location. While bike and pedestrian improvement are ongoing in this area, Hwy 101 - Greenbrae Corridor Interchange project is no longer active.

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## Commercial and Industrial Areas

### LU-3: Protect the integrity and cohesiveness of existing commercial and industrial areas.

#### General Policies

Policy LU-3.1: Maintain existing retail commercial and industrial areas in attractive physical condition, and work to retain their special character and amenities.

*Action Program LU-3.1.a: For each recognized commercial area, allow and encourage only those uses that reinforce the area's existing role, function, and scale.*

*Action Program LU-3.1.b: Adopt design review standards for commercial areas.*

*Action Program LU-3.1.c: Encourage destination trips to retail commercial areas and minimize through traffic.*

Policy LU-3.2: Discourage the creation of new commercial and industrial areas.

Policy LU-3.3: Allow expansion of existing commercial and industrial 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 each land use category.

*Action Program LU-3.3.a: Continue to implement floor area ratio (FAR) standards to limit the intensity of commercial, retail, industrial, and professional office development. Only revise FAR standards after sufficient study to determine*



whether the revised standards will benefit the community and are consistent with General Plan policies.

**Downtown Policies**

Policy LU-3.4: Preserve the current mix of commercial, public and institutional, residential, and professional office uses in the Downtown and the residential areas nearby.

Policy LU-3.5: Maintain the existing scale of commercial establishments (smaller services and retail business), and the walkability of the Downtown.

*Action Program LU-3.5.a: Continue to implement incentives to promote the retention and development of rental residential units on the upper floors of buildings in the Downtown. (Note: See the Housing Element for policies and programs addressing upper-story residential units above Downtown commercial properties.)*

*Action Program LU-3.5.b: Implement the Downtown Specific Plan.*

*Action Program LU-3.5.c: As necessary, update the Downtown Specific Plan to reflect current conditions, market trends, technical data, and community priorities. In addition to any new goals or policies, any updates to the Specific Plan should retain the intent of the goals and policies in the 1992 Specific Plan, specifically those pertaining to creating public spaces, enhancing non-motorized access, and supporting public events.*

Policy LU-3.6: Maintain the architectural and historic character of Downtown and the surrounding neighborhoods.

Policy LU-3.7: Reinforce the image of Downtown as the clearly identifiable town center of Larkspur.

**Redwood Highway Area Policies**

Policy LU-3.8: Recognize the importance of the Redwood Highway industrial area to the community in providing necessary services not found elsewhere within the vicinity of Larkspur.

Policy LU-3.9: Support the commercial uses that exist along Redwood Highway and allow expansion, as appropriate, to serve the community.



**LU-4: Increase the economic viability and vitality of existing commercial and industrial areas.**

### **General Policies**

Policy LU-4.1: Encourage existing commercial and industrial areas to provide attractive walkways and other pedestrian amenities (e.g., landscaping, benches, and down-lit lighting).

Policy LU-4.2: Ensure that the City's development standards support the economic success of businesses in Larkspur, to the extent feasible.

*Action Program LU-4.2.a: Expedite review of applications for permitted commercial uses that comply with the City's development regulations and design review criteria.*

*Action Program LU-4.2.b: Consider amending commercial and industrial development standards in the Zoning Ordinance to be more flexible (such as reduced on-site or shared parking, increased building heights and FAR, amended sign regulations, etc.). Amend standards only where it can be demonstrated that no adverse traffic, aesthetic or land-use compatibility impacts will result.*

*Action Program LU-4.2.c: Review and update parking standards for commercial uses, as appropriate, with consideration of potential impacts on surrounding residential communities.*

*Action Program LU-4.2.d: Consider adoption of an Economic Development Plan for the City.*

Policy LU-4.3: Maintain and enhance landscaping in commercial areas.

*Action Program LU-4.3.a: Encourage landscape screening of off-street parking.*

*Action Program LU-4.3.b: Continue to apply landscape design guidelines established in the Downtown Specific Plan, the Central Larkspur Specific Plan, and any forthcoming specific plans or community plans that address commercial areas.*

### **Downtown Policies**

Policy LU-4.4: Strengthen the aesthetic tie between the Magnolia Avenue Downtown shops and the shopping center near the corner of Magnolia Avenue and Doherty Drive.

*Action Program LU-4.4.a: Create a community-serving outdoor space at or near the Ward Magnolia intersection, in accordance with the design and development goals established in the Downtown Specific Plan and the Central Larkspur Specific Plan.*

Policy LU-4.5: Encourage commercial uses in the Downtown that enhance the area's vitality as a commercial and community center.

### **North Magnolia Commercial Corridor Policies**

Policy LU-4.6: Enhance the economic vitality of the North Magnolia commercial corridor and promote its development as a vibrant community center.

*Action Program LU-4.6.a: Develop a Community or Local Plan for the North Magnolia commercial area or amend the zoning ordinance, depending on funding availability, to achieve the following objectives:*

- 1) Improve public parking and pedestrian/bicyclist access to serve area businesses. A parking study should evaluate opportunities for shared parking, additional parking spaces that can be accommodated in the existing right-of-way, and the reconfiguration of existing parking to accommodate more spaces and improve bicycle and pedestrian safety, in addition to other strategies.*
- 2) Improve pedestrian and bicyclist safety by widening sidewalks and providing safe bicycle travel lanes through reconfiguring the right-of-way.*
- 3) Provide amenities for pedestrians and bicyclists to encourage non-motorized traffic through the area, including convenient bicycle racks and benches.*
- 4) Create or encourage the creation of community-serving outdoor spaces in the City-owned parcel adjacent to the Hillview neighborhood or within redeveloped commercial sites along the North Magnolia Avenue commercial strip, such as a community garden or gathering place.*
- 5) Second or third story residential development over existing commercial development on the west side of Magnolia Avenue, where it can be accommodated and without impacting the views and safe circulation in the existing residential neighborhoods.*
- 6) Create landscaping guidelines for the area, including private and public parcels.*
- 7) Encourage the area's economic vitality by reviewing and updating, if appropriate, applicable City regulations for businesses (e.g., sign regulations).*

*Action Program LU-4.6.b: Consult with the residents, business owners, and property owners in the North Magnolia commercial area to identify a unifying theme for the area. The theme shall guide the development standards in the Community or Local Plan or when amending the zoning ordinance to achieve the objectives established in Action Program LU-4.6.a.*

*Action Program LU-4.6.c: Apply consistent land use designations to commercial development in the North Magnolia area.*



**LU-5: Encourage commercial areas to provide an adequate mix of neighborhood-serving businesses as well as residential uses that are accessible by means other than the automobile.**

**General Policies**

Policy LU-5.1: Encourage the development of upper-story housing, where appropriate, in commercial areas.

*Action Program LU-5.1.a: Consider the reuse and redevelopment of large commercial parking lots with housing to accommodate infill development, provided that the project fits aesthetically with the surrounding community and minimizes impacts on views and circulation.*

*Action Program LU-5.1.b: Develop design criteria and multi-use shared parking standards for upper-story housing above commercial in existing and proposed commercial areas.*

Policy LU-5.2: Encourage pedestrian and bicycle linkages between commercial areas and surrounding neighborhoods.

*Action Program LU-5.2.a: Require new development or significant redevelopment of existing commercial areas to incorporate design features (building orientation, building materials, pedestrian connections, bicycle parking, parking location, landscaping) that encourage pedestrian and bicycle use and emphasize positive relationships with neighboring buildings and uses.*

*Action Program LU-5.2.b: Identify appropriate locations for pedestrian and bicycle linkages in commercial areas.*

*Action Program LU-5.2.c: Amend the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan as necessary to reflect the addition of planned bicycle and pedestrian linkages to commercial areas, their estimated costs, and their priority in implementation.*

**Downtown Policies**

Policy LU-5.3: Improve access to Downtown, but do not encourage or permit new thoroughfares parallel to Magnolia Avenue, or one-way streets.

*Action Program LU-5.3.a: Create additional non-vehicular (pedestrian and bicycle) access points to Downtown to supplement Magnolia Avenue.*

**Bon Air Center Policies**

Policy LU-5.4: Encourage the development of housing at the Bon Air Center, as allowed in the Bon Air Master Plan.

*Action Program LU-5.4.a: Consider amending the Bon Air Preliminary Development Plan to allow other mixed-use development types in order to expand the range of housing options feasible on the site.-*

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## Vacant and Underutilized Sites

**LU-6: Revitalization of underutilized or marginal commercial, industrial, and residential sites.~~Promote the development and revitalization of underutilized or marginal commercial and residential sites.~~**

### General Policies

Policy LU-6.1: Establish guidelines for the use and development of ~~properties~~ sites where change is expected to occur.

*Action Program LU.6.1.a: Encourage the implementation of ~~the a~~ Planned Development District for the 2000 Larkspur Landing Circle site, maintaining a mix of uses that encourages economic vitality, meets the city's housing goals, and provides connectivity to the Drake's Cove neighborhood.*

*Action Program LU-6.1.b: Study the potential for a mix of offices, small-scale, neighborhood-serving retail uses and medium density housing at 2 and 18 Bon Air Road. Higher residential densities will be considered for housing that is affordable to seniors and others.*

*Action Program LU-6.1.c: Develop conditions of project approval for other sites with development or redevelopment potential.*

*Action Program LU-6.1.d: Study the potential for re-designating the site at 1250 South Eliseo Drive for housing if re-use of the building for nursing home / assisted living facilities is no longer feasible.*

### CLASP Subarea Policies

Policy LU- 6.2: Develop tThe CLASP subareas ~~will be developed~~ into an integrated and cohesive mixed-use neighborhood in accordance with the guiding goals, policies, and programs established in the CLASP.

*Action Program LU-6.2.a: As necessary, update the CLASP to reflect up-to-date*

*data and trends, and to address changing relationships and interconnectivity between the subareas as a result of the development of one or more of the subareas.*

Policy LU-6.3: Development in the CLASP subareas will provide the maximum community benefit possible; e.g., provide a mix of housing types and minimize impacts on traffic and schools.

Policy LU-6.4: The CLASP subareas 1 and 2 will be a focal point and activity center for the Downtown.

~~Policy LU-6.5: Residential development in the CLASP Subarea 3 will have a low overall density to transition between the downtown and the surrounding residential neighborhoods.~~

Commented [NT6]: No longer applicable.



**LU-7: ~~Development that is integrated into the environment~~Integrate, preserving significant natural features into new development to the greatest extent reasonably feasible, on these lots where development or redevelopment is expected to occur.**

Policy LU-7.1: When required under project review, apply design review standards that require a balance between manmade features and the natural environment.

**Redwood Highway Area Policies**

Policy LU-7.2: Ensure that new development in the Redwood Highway area 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 LU-7.3: Ensure that existing uses and new development in the Redwood Highway area are sensitive to the fragile environment of the adjacent marsh.

*Action Program LU-7.3.a: ~~Utilizing signage and fencing, Restrict-limit~~ access to the marshlands by people and pets to designated areas.*



**LU-8: ~~Surplus rights-of-ways that are maintained for public benefit~~Maintain the former railroad rights-of-way for public benefit.**

Policy LU-8.1: Maintain the sylvan setting of the former Northwestern Pacific Railroad right-of-way west of Highway 101.

Policy LU-8.2: Require the preservation of the former rail station buildings near Ward

Street and their incorporation into future redevelopment of the property.

Policy LU-8.3: Maintain and preserve the former electric booster station on William Avenue for public use.

Policy LU-8.4: Support retention of the former right-of-way east of Highway 101 for public transit use.

Policy LU-8.5: Abandon and/or vacate rights to excess right-of-ways for private acquisition of adjacent homeowners, where such areas serve no public benefit, present a liability to the City, and are better maintained by adjacent property owners.

Action Program LU-8.5.a: Develop a process and policies for abandonment of excess rights-of-ways that serve no public benefit (e.g. housing, open space, circulation, utilities), consistent with California Streets & Highway Code Section 8300 et seq.

Action Program LU-8.5.b: Require private acquisition of excess rights-of-ways that serve no public benefit (e.g. housing, open space, circulation, utilities) in conjunction with development projects that include improvements within, or otherwise substantially rely upon private occupation of, such excess rights-of-ways.

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**LU-9: A wide variety of public transportation options in the San Quentin Peninsula.~~Retain the existing availability of public transportation options in the San Quentin Peninsula.~~**

~~Policy LU-9.1: Support retention of the present Airporter use on its 1.5 acre site on Larkspur Landing Circle.~~

~~Action Program LU-9.1.a: Designate the Airporter site as Public Facility to permit transit-oriented use, but also allow other uses that will enhance and not interfere with transit-related uses.~~

Policy LU-9.3: Support retention of the ferry terminal on the San Quentin Peninsula.

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**LU-10: Retain all or a portion of the San Quentin Prison site for park or other public use if prison use is discontinued.**

Policy LU-10.1: Work with the State, the County, and the City of San Rafael to oppose any further expansion of San Quentin Prison that may negatively impact Larkspur.

Policy LU-10.2: Continue to monitor prospects for future growth and change at the San

**Commented [NT7]:** The CAC was somewhat split whether to recommend relocation of the ferry terminal to the San Quentin site. The policy is unclear as currently worded, and the edit supports either option.

Quentin Prison site, and prepare for eventual reuse of the property.

*Action Program LU-10.2.a: Explore the possibility of annexation of the San Quentin Prison area into the City's limits.*

Policy LU-10.3: Preserve the Prison's Bay frontage adjacent to Larkspur for public parks and open space, and the ridgeline behind the Prison as open space.

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### Regional Relationships

**LU-11: Cooperation with other jurisdictions in addressing regional problems, protecting environmental resources, and providing public services.**  
~~Cooperate with other jurisdictions in solving regional problems, in protecting environmental resources, and in providing public services.~~

Policy LU-11.1: Continue to participate with other communities and neighboring jurisdictions in regional and countywide planning studies.

Policy LU-11.2: Continue to Work with other communities and agencies in the Ross Valley to develop common policies for protection and enhancement of natural resources such as Corte Madera Creek.

Policy LU-11.3: When ~~ideological-land use~~ conflicts arise between governmental agencies, base land use decisions in Larkspur on local community desires, where practical and legal.

Policy LU-11.4: ~~Encourage~~ Ensure that regional agencies ~~to~~ recognize Larkspur's unique characteristics and constraints in regional planning efforts.

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### Environmental Responsibility

**LU-12: Development and redevelopment that minimizes impacts on the environment.**  
~~Reduce the impacts of development on the environment.~~

Policy LU-12.1: Apply appropriate land use designations to environmentally sensitive areas to limit development in those areas.

*Action Program LU-12.1.a: Review the Land Use map and update Open Space parcel-land use designations as appropriate ~~under the Open Space land use designation. Zoning designations included in this land use category include Open Space Area, Shoreline/Marsh Conservation Area, Educational/Environmental~~*



~~Resources Area, Water Area, and Parkland.~~

Policy LU-12.2: Continue to review all project submittals to determine whether they are subject to the California Environmental Quality Act.

Policy LU-12.3: Continue to monitor all projects found to be subject to the California Environmental Quality Act for compliance with the Act.

Policy LU-12.4: Reduce GHG emissions from development in accordance with policies and programs established in the Larkspur Climate Action Plan.

*Action Program LU-12.4.a: Monitor progress toward meeting GHG emission reduction targets established in the Climate Action Plan.*

Policy LU-12.5: Promote energy efficient and green building practices for new, rehabilitated, or remodeled residential, commercial, and civic development.

*Action Program LU-12.5.a: Implement the recommended Green Building, Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy programs in the City's Climate Action Plan.*

*Action Program LU-12.5.b: Continue to ensure municipal code consistency with the California CALGreen code and apply CALGreen standards to building and planning application review.*

*Action Program LU-12.5.c: Continue to implement the CalGreen Building standards established in the City's municipal code, and other sustainability measures during building and planning application review for new residential and commercial development and qualifying remodel or rehabilitation projects.*

Policy LU-12.6: Allow low-intensity development on hillsides and near Corte Madera Creek only if the design preserves natural features, such as significant stands of trees, forested hillsides, riparian vegetation, marshes, wildlife habitats, ridgelines, and buffer zones.

**Commented [NT8]:** We will explore creek setbacks in conjunction with the review of the Open Space and Environmental Resources Element.

Policy LU-12.7: Encourage the use of cluster site plans for large parcels of land to retain valuable open space areas and ridgelines.

Policy LU-12.8: Require new development and redevelopment to preserve some natural area to support vegetation and reduce stormwater runoff.

*Action Program LU-12.8.a: Continue to implement slope and hillside development regulations requiring preservation of natural state.*

*Action Program LU-12.8.b: Continue to implement lot coverage and open space setback requirements for each zoning district.*



**LU-13: Protection of persons and property from environmental hazards such as wildland fires and flooding due to sea level rise.~~Ensure that development is adequately protected from environmental hazards.~~**

Policy LU-13.1: Limit the exposure of existing and proposed development to environmental hazards.

*Action Program LU-13.1.a: Maintain updated Seismic Hazards, Slope Stability, Fire Hazard, Noise Exposure, and Floodplain maps. Consult hazard maps to determine whether a proposed project is located in a high risk area.*

*Action Program LU-13.1.b: Provide environmental hazard information to property owners at City Hall and on the City's website ~~for property owners to reference.~~*

*Action Program LU-13.1.c: Provide information for property owners at City Hall and on the City's website regarding best practices for reducing risk of exposure to environmental hazards ~~for property owners to consult.~~*

*Action Program LU-13.1.d: During project review, require use of building materials that reduce exposure to environmental hazards (e.g., fire-resistant roofing material).*

*Action Program LU-13.1.e: Continue to review projects for compliance with seismic safety building standards established in the International Building Code, or any subsequent code adopted by the City.*

Policy LU-13.2: Require adaptation and mitigation strategies for existing and proposed development in areas identified as at risk of exposure to environmental hazards.

*Action Program LU-13.2.a: Cooperate with regional agencies to develop adaptation strategies to protect development from inundation due to sea level rise.*

*Action Program LU-13.2.b: Adopt development guidelines and standards (e.g., elevating structures, development setbacks, etc.) in order to adapt existing structures and guide future development relative to flooding due to sea level rise, based on current scientific data.*

*Action Program LU-13.2.c: Investigate the efficacy, cost, environmental impacts, and other impacts of adaptive shoreline engineering strategies to protect bayside development from ~~encroaching tides~~ flooding.*

## LAND USE BACKGROUND

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As with all elements of the General Plan, the Land Use Element describes the pattern of land development in Larkspur, identifies where change may occur, and presents goals, policies, and programs to guide such change. State law requires Land Use Elements to designate the distribution and general location of different land use categories (shown on the "Land Use and Circulation Plan" map) and to establish population density and building intensity standards for each land use category. It also identifies areas subject to flooding, as designated on floodplain maps produced by the Federal Emergency Management Agency of the State Department of Water Resources.

### The Larkspur Planning Area

According to State law, a General Plan may govern development of "any land outside its boundaries which in the planning agency's judgment bears relation to its planning."<sup>1</sup> -These adjacent unincorporated lands comprise the jurisdiction's Sphere of Influence (SOI). Included in Larkspur's SOI are portions of unincorporated Greenbrae west of Highway 101 and the unincorporated portion of the San Quentin Peninsula, including San Quentin State Prison. The Larkspur Planning Area is coterminous with its SOI.

The Marin County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) determines the SOI for each local agency in Marin County. LAFCO is charged by State law to ensure the orderly and logical development of local government agencies, discourage urban sprawl, preserve open space and agricultural lands, and ensure that local government services are provided as efficiently as possible.<sup>2</sup> LAFCO must reevaluate the SOI of every local agency in the County every five years.

Prior to 2007, Larkspur's SOI included the unincorporated communities of Kentfield and Kent Woodlands (bordering the City in the northwest), and portions of Greenbrae and the San Quentin Peninsula. In a 2007 review of Larkspur's SOI (requested by the City), LAFCO determined that Kentfield and Kent Woodlands were "separate and distinct from the City...with independent sources of service comparable to services provided by the City."<sup>3</sup> Based on these and other findings, LAFCO removed those communities from the City's SOI. ~~The unincorporated area of Greenbrae remaining within the City's SOI has not been interested in annexing to Larkspur.~~

Marin General Hospital, the largest hospital in Marin County, lies just outside Larkspur's ~~City limits~~SOI on Bon Air Road between South Eliseo Drive and Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. ~~The Hospital is located within the unincorporated portion of Greenbrae, formerly included in the City's SOI. The unincorporated community of Greenbrae has strong social, economic, and transportation ties to Larkspur and could be covered in the Larkspur General~~

<sup>1</sup> California Government Code §65300.

<sup>2</sup> California Government Code §56001.

<sup>3</sup> Marin LAFCO Resolution 07-05, "Resolution Amending the Sphere of Influence of the City of Larkspur."

Plan. However, the residents of the unincorporated area of Greenbrae remaining within the City's SOI have not expressed interest in annexing to Larkspur. Further, the County of Marin maintains a Community Plan for both Greenbrae and Kentfield prepared their own Community Plan in 1987 that covers most of the subject areas typical of general plans, including clear statements of the goals and policies needed to preserve the single-family character and natural amenities of those communities. Generally, the Community Plan and the Larkspur General Plan are in harmony. Accordingly, the Larkspur General Plan does not address development in the Greenbrae area included in its SOI but refers to the County's and defers to the adopted Community Plan for the area.

The General Plan acknowledges the State's intention to continue operating San Quentin Prison, located on the San Quentin Peninsula east of Larkspur Landing, in the long-term, as well as the County's regulatory jurisdiction over private land use changes at the site. As the site is located in the City's Sphere of Influence, the General Plan provides general policy direction for development on the San Quentin Peninsula if the prison is ever closed, reverted to private use, or annexed to the City. This policy direction should be revisited if the prison is ever designated for closure by the State.

PLACEHOLD for Regulatory Framework and Key Local, State, and Federal Regulatory Agencies (e.g. ABAG, BCDC, BAAQMD, Caltrans ...etc.)

### Land Use Patterns in Larkspur

Growth was gradual in Larkspur until the move to the suburbs that followed the completion of the Golden Gate Bridge in 1937. Figure 2-2 shows the rapid increase in growth after 1940. Larkspur's population more than tripled in population between 1950 and 1980. Ninety-one percent of its housing was built after 1940.<sup>4</sup> The rate of population growth slowed considerably in the 1970's and 1980's, and the population dipped briefly in 1990 before resuming an upward trend. By 2010 the population appeared to have stabilized at just under 12,000 individuals.

**Figure 2-2. Larkspur Population, 1910-2010**

	Population	% Increase
1910	594	-
1920	612	3%
1930	1,241	103%
1940	1,558	26%
1950	2,905	86%
1960	5,710	97%
1970	10,487	84%
1980	11,604	11%
1990	11,070	-5%
2000	12,014	9%
2010	11,926	-1%

Commented [NT9]: Will update Figure 2-2

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, (2000)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau.

Reflecting its past as a summer home retreat and its more recent role as a bedroom community, Larkspur is primarily residential, with 59 percent of developed land devoted to single-family and multi-family residential uses. Commercial and industrial land uses occupy approximately 6 percent of developed land.<sup>5</sup> Of the City's 6,376 residential units, 52-48 percent are multi-family, 44-47 percent are single-family, and 4-5 percent are mobile homes.<sup>6</sup>

Commented [NT10]: Will update

The remaining developed land is ~~in~~ designated as public or institutional uses, such as schools and fire stations (6 percent), City parks (3 percent), and utilities, roads, and right-of-ways (18 percent). As Figure 2-3 shows, the distribution of land uses has remained static since the City began keeping track in 1965, except that the share of land devoted to residential use has gradually increased (from 25 to 38 percent), while undeveloped land dropped from 49 percent in 1965 to 22 percent in 2010.

**Figure 2-3. Existing and Approved Land Use As a Percentage of Total City Acreage, 1965- 2011<sup>7</sup>**

Commented [NT11]: Will Update

Land Use Category	1965	1973	1983	1989	2010
Residential	25	26	34	38	38
Retail Commercial, Offices	3	3	5	6	5
Industrial, Service Commercial	1	3	1	1	2
Public, Institutional & Government	2	6	6	6	8
City-Parklands	1	3	2	2	2
Utilities, Roads, Right of Ways	13	17	13	13	18
Water Area	7	7	6	6	5
<i>Subtotal, % Total Land</i>	<i>51</i>	<i>65</i>	<i>67</i>	<i>72</i>	<i>78</i>
Public Open Space	-	-	15	15	18
Private Undeveloped	-	-	18	13	4
<i>Subtotal, % Total Land</i>	<i>49</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>33</i>	<i>28</i>	<i>22</i>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: City of Larkspur, Department of Public Works and Engineering, 2011.

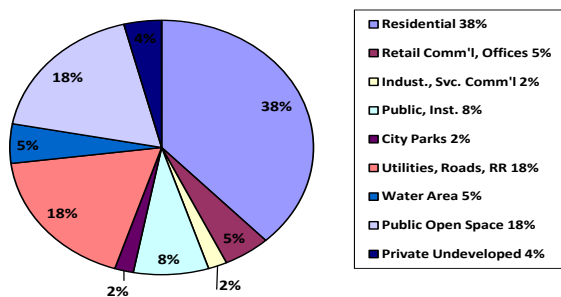
<sup>5</sup> City of Larkspur Planning Department and Department of Engineering staff survey, 2011.  
<sup>6</sup> U.S. Census Bureau (2010) and California Department of Finance (2010).  
<sup>7</sup> Larkspur in 2011 covered 2,043 acres of land and water, 86 acres more than in 1989. The total acreage figures for 1965 and 1973 are not considered reliable and are not presented here, but the percentage of land in each category is viewed as reliable. Note that the percentage of "Developed Land" in 2011 includes land area for which development was approved, but not yet built.

These percentages show that Larkspur is a mature city, with a limited amount of land available for development or redevelopment. In 2010, there were 42 acres of vacant land and 44 acres with redevelopment potential.<sup>8</sup>

Larkspur had 1,931,448 square feet of commercial and industrial floor area in 2006. There has been no significant commercial or industrial development in the City since then. The square footage shown in Figure 2-5 is divided among six major categories of commercial and industrial land use.

Commented [NT12]: Will update

**Figure 2-4. Existing and Approved Land Use As a Percentage of Total City Acreage, 2011**



Source: City of Larkspur, Department of Public Works and Engineering, 2011.

**Figure 2-5. Commercial and Industrial Floor Area in Larkspur, 2006**

Land Use Category	Square Feet
Industrial	
General Commercial	
Commercial Office Administrative and Professional Offices	
Commercial Retail	
Commercial Residential (Mixed uses)	
Commercial Recreational	

Commented [NT13]: We are re-assessing for more current information

<sup>8</sup> Areas with redevelopment potential consist mainly of existing commercial developments.

<b>Total</b>	<b>1,931,448</b>
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Source: Marin County Community Development Agency staff survey, 2006.

## Land Use Categories

All land within Larkspur is classified into land use categories, which are shown on the Land Use and Circulation map. State law requires the General Plan to determine “standards of population density and building intensity” for each land use category.<sup>9</sup> However, in the event of a discrepancy between residential units per acre and persons per acre, the unit (not the population) density shall govern.

For residential uses, the densities shown (in dwelling units and in persons per gross acre) are maximums which are to be allowed only for developments that successfully promote social and economic diversity.<sup>10</sup> Even then, the figures do not constitute an entitlement, nor is there any guarantee that any individual project will be able or will be permitted to achieve the maximum densities shown. For the commercial and industrial categories, the specific uses mentioned are illustrative only.

### Residential

**Open Residential.** This single-family residential category allows up to 0.2 units per gross acre (up to 2 people per 5 acres). Minimum lot size is 5 acres, but smaller existing parcels would not be precluded from developing one housing unit.

~~**Very Low Density Residential.** This single family residential category allows up to 1 unit per gross acre (up to 2 people per acre). Minimum lot size is 1 acre, but smaller existing parcels would not be precluded from developing one housing unit.~~

Commented [NT14]: This designation no longer exists.

**Low Density.** This category allows up to 5 dwellings per gross acre (approximately 10 persons per acre). One ~~house dwelling~~ is allowed on each lot, unless a building permit is granted for an ~~accessory dwelling second~~ unit. The addition of ~~accessory dwelling units 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 ~~245 percent~~%. (Some lots predate zoning restrictions and do not meet these requirements, but may be determined to be legal building sites depending on how they were created.)

The City may require minimum lot sizes as large as 10 acres for ~~areas existing sites within designated open space and subject to~~ Residential Master Plan (RMP) zoning. While maintaining an overall project density of 5 dwelling units per gross acre, the City may allow mixed residential (i.e., smaller lot sizes, multiple units on a single lot, and larger FAR's where permitted by a specific plan or Planned Development District).

<sup>9</sup> California Government Code § 65302(a)  
<sup>10</sup> Second units permitted by local regulation. State-mandated density bonuses for the provision of affordable housing are in addition to densities otherwise permitted in each of the residential land use classifications.

**Medium Density.** This category allows up to 12 dwellings per gross acre (approximately 24 persons per acre), with two dwelling units permitted on a lot. Maximum density decreases with slope to a minimum of two units per gross acre for slopes greater than 45 percent.

**High Density.** This category allows multiple dwelling units up to 21 units (about 42 persons) per acre on a flat site (less than 10 percent slope), with a minimum density of 18 units per acre. 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/Industrial**

**Administrative and Professional Offices.** 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. Some retail or service businesses may be allowed with a conditional use permit (provided they are primarily community-serving).

It is intended that Administrative and Professional Office areas will be characterized by buildings of low intensity and landscaped grounds. Floor area ratio (FAR) should not exceed 0.35, and landscaped areas (including patios and walks) should cover at least 30 percent of the lot area. Mixed-use office/residential may be allowed at a higher intensity (0.35 FAR for office/21 residential units per acre) with approval of a conditional use permit. Studios and one and two bedroom units are encouraged.

**Neighborhood Commercial.** This designation provides for neighborhood shopping areas to meet the frequent and recurring needs of nearby residents. Customers can be expected to arrive on bicycle or on foot, as well as by car. This category allows "retail" uses (e.g., apparel, art galleries, florists, grocery stores, photo, sporting goods, shoes); "personal services" (e.g., laundry and dry cleaners, shoe repair, salons, health and wellness studios); bars and restaurants; and finance, insurance, real estate, administrative, executive, and business offices, and the like. Buildings shall be low intensity (maximum two stories) and have a maximum FAR of 0.4.

Commented [NT15]: Need to broaden concept of service uses

Upper-story residential units over first-story commercial uses are encouraged and exempt from FAR restrictions, except as may otherwise be stated in a specific plan or planned development plan. Studios and one- and two-bedroom units are encouraged. Senior housing is preferred. Upper-story residential density shall be limited by parking and height restrictions and mixed-use housing (i.e., commercial/residential) shall not exceed 21 residential units per acre. Live/work units may be conditionally permitted.



**Commercial.** This designation provides for the broader needs of residents of Larkspur and adjoining communities for goods and services, as well as neighborhood shopping needs. It is characterized by businesses that rely on customers making trips by car, and those uses that do not necessarily benefit from the high-volume pedestrian concentrations found in neighborhood shopping centers and [the Downtown](#). These include auto accessory stores, carpet stores, catering establishments, department stores, and the like, as well as uses allowed in Neighborhood Commercial areas.

Upper-story residential units over first-story commercial uses are encouraged and are exempt from FAR restrictions, except as may otherwise be stated in a specific plan or planned development plan. Senior housing is preferred. Upper-story residential density shall be limited by parking and height restrictions and mixed-use housing (i.e., commercial/residential) shall not exceed 21 residential units per acre. Studios and one- or two-bedroom units are encouraged. Live/work units may be conditionally permitted.

Buildings are comparable in scale to those in the Neighborhood Commercial category and have a maximum FAR 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 Neighborhood Commercial land use category, but shall be governed by an adopted specific or master plan.

**Downtown.** This designation applies to Larkspur's Downtown. It allows most of the same uses as those allowed in the Neighborhood Commercial designation, but with the goal of promoting personal services and retail sales of convenience goods while enhancing the vitality and character of the historic commercial area. All uses are to be compatible with the present mix of small-scale restaurants, drug stores, retail shops, and art galleries. Floor area ratio should not exceed 1.0.

Studios and one- and two-bedroom second-story residential units over first-story commercial uses are encouraged and exempt from FAR 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 housing (i.e., commercial/residential) shall not exceed 21 residential units per acre. The present two-story scale of buildings is to be maintained, and off-street parking is required for new development.

**Industrial and Service Commercial.** 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 and truck sales and repair, food and drink processing, construction yards, print shops, artist studios, and similar uses. Live/work units may be conditionally permitted. Floor area ratio should not exceed 0.4. [Commercial retail and personal service uses may be permitted with a conditional use permit.](#)

## Public and Government

**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 other publicly-owned facilities, not including schools and colleges. Floor area ratio should not exceed 0.25.

**Open Space**

**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 Area.** 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. Floor area ratio should not exceed 0.10.

**Shoreline/Wetland Conservation Area.** This designation applies to lands containing wetlands (mudflats, tidal and seasonal marshes), beaches, rocky shorelines, 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.

**Educational/Environmental Resources Area.** This designation applies only to the College of Marin campus in Larkspur. It allows outdoor athletic and recreational programs and activities, landscape management and horticultural educational, environmental science, and nature study, and floodplain and wildlife habitat. No additional structures are allowed, except for classrooms and educational purposes, consistent with State law which gives community college districts independence from local zoning where their educational programs are involved.

**Commented [NT16]:** There is no zoning designation for schools or public facilities and the FAR follows the designated district.

**Commented [NT17]:** There are only two open space zoning districts - Open Space and Educational / Environmental (COM). We will explore these sub-designations as protected public/environmental resources categories in the Open Space / Environmental Resources /Element

**Water Area.** This designation applies to the channels of Corte Madera and Larkspur Creeks, the lagoon within the Larkspur Marina development, and San Francisco Bay.

### Residential Neighborhoods

Larkspur wants to maintain the many desirable physical and social characteristics its residential neighborhoods now have, ~~including the as well as the~~ existing balance of residential and commercial uses. To protect the integrity and cohesiveness of existing neighborhoods, incompatible development must not be allowed.

Commented [NT18]: This suggests that commercial uses are located within residential neighborhood.

As land costs rise, property owners seek to maximize their investments by extensively remodeling and expanding existing houses. In some cases, they may find it economical to tear down an existing house and replace it with a new, larger house. This is especially true in older neighborhoods where houses were built many years ago as summer cottages. While the private redevelopment of single-family homes increases property values for their owners and their neighbors, it may also threaten the character and scale of existing neighborhoods.

~~In some cases, may property owners propose Some of the~~ large new houses that would literally overshadow their smaller neighbors. ~~Although they meet all zoning ordinance requirements, most substantially renovated structures are subject to design review.~~ Others are proposed that do not meet current setback, site coverage, floor area ratio, and parking requirements. Property owners then seek approval of a variance, use permit, or exception (depending on the requirement). For ~~both design review and~~ floor area ratio exceptions, the Planning Commission must make a finding that the visual scale and bulk of a new or renovated house is compatible with the pattern in the neighborhood before approving the application (findings ~~for FAR exceptions~~ are established in the Larkspur Municipal Code).

~~The Larkspur Heritage Preservation Board also maintains and regularly updates a historic resources inventory, which includes residential structures are integral to maintaining the historic character of larkspur's older neighborhoods. This inventory helps to inform decision-makers as to whether renovations to homes will maintain the historic resource.~~

### Single-Family

Each of Larkspur's single-family neighborhoods has a distinct character which derives from its period of development or natural setting. Detailed descriptions of each neighborhood can be found in Appendix ~~BXX~~.

Commented [NT19]: To be determined

### Multiple-Family

~~More than Almost~~ half of ~~the all~~ housing in Larkspur is ~~in~~ multiple-family (multi-family) ~~developments housing (48 percent).~~ ~~In 2010, the State Department of Finance estimated that 53 percent of Larkspur's housing was multi family versus whereas single family housing accounts for 44 47 percent that was single family of housing.~~ This ratio is ~~unusual~~

Commented [NT20]: Will update

relatively unusual for suburban communities, ~~where the percentages normally are reversed.~~ Of the ~~twelve~~ eleven municipalities in Marin County, Larkspur has the highest percentage of multi-family housing.<sup>11</sup> In order to meet future housing goals as described in the Housing Element, it will remain important to protect Larkspur's existing stock of multi-family housing. Multi-family neighborhoods are also described in Appendix B.

## Commercial Areas

### Downtown

Downtown Larkspur is a generally one-lot deep, pedestrian-oriented commercial strip along Magnolia Avenue that retains Larkspur's historic, small-town character both in architectural design and in its role as the City's "main street." The area is designated as "Downtown" on the Land Use map. The Downtown is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is home to several notable historic buildings, including ~~the City's Town~~ Hall and Fire Station #15. ~~Several~~ Specialty retail stores, ~~a~~ cafés, and restaurants complete the Downtown's walkable commercial frontage and serve the immediate retail and service needs of the surrounding neighborhoods and Larkspur as a whole. ~~The historic~~ City Hall and Fire Station #15 sit on a small rise near the south end, and a shopping center anchors the north end. Across from City Hall is St. Patrick's Church and School. Other significant landmarks include the Blue Rock Inn and the Lark Theater.

The Downtown Historic District was officially recognized by the State of California in 1981 and was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1982. The Downtown is covered by a Historic Preservation District Overlay zone which requires Heritage Preservation Board review of requests for zoning changes and planning, building, demolition, and grading permits.

#### ***Downtown Specific Plan***

As the historic center of Larkspur, the Downtown is unique among the City's commercial districts. The 1990 General Plan contained several goals relating to: preservation of the Downtown's historic character; preservation of the existing mix of commercial, residential, professional, public and institutional uses; enhancement of the Downtown's vitality; and the creation of a "sense of place," or town center, along Magnolia Avenue. The City determined that the adoption of a specific plan for the Downtown area would be the most effective approach to achieving these goals.

The Downtown Specific Plan was adopted in 1992 and includes goals, policies, and programs to realize the community's vision for the Downtown area as established in the 1990 General Plan. The collaborative planning process was guided by a Steering Committee comprised of members from the Larkspur Community Association, Heritage Preservation Board, 1990 General Plan Citizens Advisory Committee, the Chamber of Commerce, the Planning Commission, and the Design Review Board.

<sup>11</sup> California Department of Finance, ~~Demographic Research Unit~~ (2010)

This General Plan acknowledges the Downtown Specific Plan's guidance of land use decisions in the Downtown area. (NOTE: See discussion below of the Central Larkspur Specific Plan, which addresses development of two subareas located in the Downtown/Transitional Downtown area.)

### ***Protecting the Character of the Downtown***

One major threat to the character of the Downtown is the commuter traffic that passes through it on the Tamalpais Drive/Magnolia Avenue/College Avenue route that connects Highway 101 in Corte Madera with communities in the Upper Ross Valley. The Circulation Element of this General Plan (Chapter 3) includes policies and programs to mitigate this vehicular congestion. ~~Policy LU-5.3 and Action Program LU-5.3.a~~ in this Element also address Downtown circulation issues.

Commented [NT21]: Check these references after edits

Retail businesses in the Downtown are threatened by competition from large shopping centers and discount stores, both within Larkspur and in nearby communities. ~~However,~~ Downtown Larkspur ~~should~~ capitalizes on its Historic District status, walking scale, and other assets to improve its economic standing. ~~Past A 1989 surveys showed~~ that the community viewed Downtown businesses as friendly and personal, but that there was not enough diversity, and (at the time) Downtown needed to improve its appearance.<sup>12</sup> ~~While there have been notable improvements and building upgrades in the last several years, portions of the Downtown, particularly CLASP subareas 1 and 2, remain under-utilized.~~ Larkspur should cooperate with business organizations to enhance the physical environment of the Downtown and attract diverse new businesses. Community-serving businesses should be encouraged, while taking into consideration the economic viability and the street vitality of the ~~Old~~ Downtown. Building preservation, restoration, and any new construction should be in harmony with the street scale and historic periods represented.

### **North Magnolia Commercial Corridor**

The North Magnolia commercial corridor is an approximately one mile long commercial strip along Magnolia Avenue north of Skylark Drive and south of Murray Lane. The corridor is characterized by single-story retail and other commercial businesses which directly abut the marsh on the east side and a single-family residential neighborhood on the west side. The corridor is largely served by on-street parking, ~~though some varied levels of~~ off-street parking ~~for the businesses is~~ provided on certain sites.

The Citizen Advisory Committee for the ~~2030~~ General Plan Update conducted a land use study of the North Magnolia commercial corridor in 2010. Among the ~~Committee's CAC's~~ findings were:

- The ~~Commercial area~~ area is ~~was~~ underutilized, with lingering quasi-industrial uses such as mini-storage facilities breaking up the commercial streetscape;
- The two different commercial ~~classifications~~ land use designations identified in the

<sup>12</sup> Larkspur Community Association survey, February 1989.

1990 General Plan (the west side of Magnolia Avenue designated General Commercial, and the east side Neighborhood Commercial) promoted disjointed, incompatible uses;

- Pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure was limited, leading to an overreliance on personal automobiles for access;
- The marsh bordering development on the east side of Magnolia Avenue was a valuable natural asset that should be protected and made more accessible (whether physically, or visually) from the street;
- The single-story development type dominating the corridor could be expanded to second- or third-story mixed-use development in areas abutting hillsides or where views or adjacent residential development would not be impacted.

The ~~Committee~~-CAC determined that the North Magnolia Avenue commercial corridor could become a “second Downtown,” an attractive destination with community gathering spaces and a vibrant restaurant and retail environment, rather than an area to pass through. The ~~Committee’s~~-CAC’s findings and goals for the corridor necessitate the development of a Community or Local Area Plan, which would provide specific development and land use standards for the corridor’s revitalization.

Since 2010, when the hardware store relocated to Bon Air Road, significant portions of the “Shophe’s on Magnolia” (1133-1169 Magnolia Avenue) have remained vacant. Further, the development of the College of Marin’s Child Care Studies Center at 1126 Magnolia Avenue has reduced the availability of parking option for businesses and customers in the area. Otherwise, conditions in the area have not changed significantly since 2010.

### Medical Office Area

The Medical Office area lies along Bon Air Road between Magnolia Avenue and Sir Francis Drake Boulevard and along South Eliseo Drive between Bon Air Road and Corte Real (excluding the residential uses present on the south side of South Eliseo Drive). The proximity of Marin General Hospital (which lies outside of the City’s Planning Area) has had a significant influence on land use in this area, where numerous medical and dental offices serve central Marin. While offices are the primary use in the area, which is designated within the Administrative and Professional Office land use category, related retail and personal service uses, physical rehabilitation centers, and small convalescent hospitals are also allowed.

Sohner Plaza, at the northwest corner of Bon Air Road and Magnolia Avenue, also houses medical and administrative offices and related retail and personal services that benefit central Marin. In 2010, a neighborhood-serving hardware store (operating under a conditional use permit) relocated from its former location on North Magnolia Avenue to the Plaza. Across Bon Air Road is a small commercial area, also occupied by medical offices.

### Redwood Highway Area

**Current Uses**

The Redwood Highway Area (formerly known as “Greenbrae East” or the “East of 101” area) is a thirty-acre area of land lying east of Highway 101 ~~and~~ south of Corte Madera Creek ~~and north of Wornum Drive~~. In 2014~~2~~, the varied land uses in this area included:

- Three mobile home parks containing approximately 300 mobile home and recreational vehicle sites;
- A retail center with a grocery store (Cost Plus Plaza);
- Industrial and service industrial uses (e.g., a concrete company, construction material suppliers, auto and truck repair);
- Small independent retailers;
- A veterinary hospital; and
- A cooperative artist studio.

The industrial uses in this area are a product of an ~~earlier stage era in Larkspur's history~~ when manufacturing, ~~and~~ heavy commercial uses, ~~and mobile homes~~ developed in central Marin. Today, these ~~diverse uses/businesses~~ help to meet an array of local and regional community needs. The Cost Plus Plaza shopping center and other uses along the Redwood Highway frontage provide a variety of services and retail uses, including a full-service grocery store, serves serving residents of the mobile home parks, other City residents, and regional visitors, ~~with such retail uses as Cost Plus World Market, Beverages and More, and Trader Joe's. In 2011, Trader Joe's was the only full-service grocery store in the Larkspur Planning Area east of Highway 101.~~

**Commented [NT22]:** Not earlier than Downtown Larkspur. We believe that some of the uses and mobile home parks may have been developed before the area was incorporated into Larkspur.

**Land Use Studies**

The Larkspur Planning Department conducted a special study of the Redwood Highway area in 1987. The study found that at the time, most residents, property owners, and business owners in the Redwood Highway area preferred to maintain the status quo, rather than encourage land use changes. The 1987 study also identified flooding and protection of adjacent marshes as ~~major~~ land use issues.

Following the 1987 study, the City rezoned approximately 10.7 acres of land where there were existing mobile home and recreational vehicle parks to a Mobile Home Park district to ensure mobile homes would not be forced out by other uses. These areas are designated Mobile Home Park on the General Plan Land Use map. The mobile home parks provide a valuable supply of affordable housing.

The Citizen Advisory Committee for the 2030 General Plan conducted a land use study of the Redwood Highway area in 2010. Among the ~~Committee's CAC's~~ findings were:

- The existing mix of industrial and commercial uses meets a community need and should be maintained.

- The mobile home parks constitute a valuable source of affordable housing.
- Development in the area is extremely vulnerable to both seasonal flooding and flooding due to sea level rise in the San Francisco Bay.

In particular, the CAC identified the risk of flooding due to rising sea levels, ~~coupled with~~ and existing seasonal flooding ~~issues~~, as a significant limiting factor to ~~increasing-increased~~ commercial/industrial intensity and residential density in the area. The developed area is bordered by the Corte Madera Ecological Preserve on the east and the Corte Madera Shorebird Marsh on the south and southeast, ~~and regularly experiences seasonal flooding~~. The CAC also noted the need for improved pedestrian and bicycle facilities within the area. (This issue is addressed in Chapter 3, Circulation.)-

PLACEHOLD for background on Draft Circulaiton and SMART Station Area Plan

#### ***Relationship to other jurisdictions***

Most of the Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) railroad right-of-way (formerly the Northwestern Pacific Railroad right-of-way) to the east and the marshlands beyond are in the jurisdiction of the Town of Corte Madera. A small unincorporated pocket of land at the north end of the area abuts both Larkspur and Corte Madera, and includes a portion of the SMART right-of-way and a small residential community referred to as the Greenbrae Boardwalk. The Greenbrae Boardwalk is a colony of 50 houseboats stretching along the south shore of Corte Madera Creek near where it enters the Bay.

Though the Greenbrae Boardwalk may only be accessed through the City of Larkspur, it lies within the Town of Corte Madera's Sphere of Influence. Greenbrae Boardwalk residents hold a long term lease with the County of Marin for a County-owned parking lot located within the City of Larkspur. The City does not intend to annex the Greenbrae Boardwalk over the lifetime of the General Plan.

## Planned Developments

### **Bon Air / Drake's Landing**

The Bon Air Shopping Center and Drake's Landing Office Center are the major commercial components of the 70-acre Bon Air Master Plan development on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard west of Highway 101. The shopping center, which covers approximately 20 acres, is anchored by a supermarket and supported by specialty retail businesses, restaurants, small offices, and banks. The Drake's Landing Office Center (122,000 square feet) contains professional offices and a restaurant. The area's residential component consists of 42 townhomes (Drake's Landing) and 129 single family homes (Cape Marin; includes 20 below market rate units). The Bon Air ~~Master Plan~~Precise Plan allows for second-story housing above first-floor commercial.

A small commercial area with a mix of medical and professional offices lies just west of the



Bon Air Shopping Center on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard.

Commented [NT23]: Delete - this is not Planned Development

**Larkspur Landing/San Quentin Peninsula**

**Current Uses**

The San Quentin Peninsula is comprised of approximately 150 acres east of Highway 101 and north of Corte Madera Creek. In 2014<sup>8</sup>, land uses in this area included:

- An approximately 16-acre shopping center and office complex (Marin Country Mart);
- Several office buildings and a small industrial / bulk retail center;
- A 146-room hotel (The Courtyard at Marriott);
- A movie theater (Century 21 Theatre);
- Three City parks (Neighborhood Park, Miwok Park, and Remillard Park);
- Two multi-family developments: 342 units at Lincoln Village Circle, and 248 Units at Old Quarry Road (total 590 units);
- Drake's Way EAH affordable housing development: (24 units);
- ~~Drake's Cove~~ A-market-rate housing development: (23 units); ~~(partially completed in 2011);~~
- The Larkspur Ferry ~~t~~Terminal;
- The Marin Airporter terminal.

Commented [NT24]: Anticipated completion of final two dwellings by 2019.

In 2011, Marin Country Mart tenants included restaurants, locally-owned and chain retail stores, a gym, professional offices, and specialty retail boutiques. Just beyond the shopping center is the historic Remillard Brick Kiln, surrounded by office buildings, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and protected by Heritage Preservation zoning. In 2007, the City granted approvals for a project on a parcel owned by the Ross Valley Sanitary District (located at the intersection of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard East and Larkspur Landing Circle East) that proposed 126 housing units, a hotel, and the District's administrative offices and corporation yard.

San Quentin State Prison is located at the easterly end of the San Quentin Peninsula, just outside of the City limits in the unincorporated County. It falls under the City's Sphere of Influence. (See further discussion of San Quentin State Prison on page 2-32.)

**Land Use and Circulation**

Larkspur Landing's high-density housing in close proximity to regional public transit facilities (Larkspur ferry and local and regional bus lines) qualifies the area as a *transportation-oriented development*, a development model encouraged by the Association of Bay Area Governments to reduce commuting by private automobile. While the City has virtually no vacant lands available for residential development, it does contain several commercial areas near major transit stops. The General Plan Land Use Element contains policies and programs to encourage adding multi-family development to these existing commercial

areas. These policies will allow the opportunity for the City to provide its fair share of needed new housing in the region as well as to enhance the economic viability of these commercial areas. By focusing opportunities for new residential development at these commercial areas near transit facilities, the City will be doing its part to provide housing whose residents have mass transit options to commute to work as well as proximity to commercial facilities providing services and goods for these local residents.

Additionally, a voter-approved commuter rail system connecting Sonoma and Marin counties with the Larkspur Ferry Terminal (Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit, or SMART) is planned to terminate in Larkspur Landing, enhancing the area’s existing role as a regional transportation hub. Rehabilitation of the Cal Park Tunnel, which links San Rafael and Larkspur Landing, was completed in December 2010. The Tunnel will accommodate both SMART rail cars and a multi-use pathway for use by pedestrians and bicyclists. The Larkspur SMART train station is planned to be located adjacent to the current Marin Airporter site, displacing a portion of the overflow parking used by Marin Airporter and Larkspur ferry passengers.

**Commented [NT25]:** Update to include current status of SMART rail service, future station, and, Central Marin Ferry Connection

Sir Francis Drake Boulevard East, a regional commuter corridor stretching from east to west through the San Quentin Peninsula, provides access to:

- Highway 101, and Highway 580 (via the Richmond/San Rafael Bridge);
- San Francisco, via the Larkspur Ferry Terminal; and
- The San Francisco International Airport, via the Marin Airporter coach service.

**Commented [NT26]:** There remains a pick-up / drop-off at Larkspur Landing

PLACEHOLD to include updates on 1-580 and Richmond-San Rafael Bridge Improvements

### Vacant or Underutilized Sites

#### Central Larkspur Specific Plan Area

The City Council adopted the Central Larkspur Specific Plan (CLASP) in 2006 with the intent to revitalize one of the City’s gateways to its historic Downtown. The CLASP Area encompasses 27.58 acres of land along, and including, Doherty Drive and along Magnolia Avenue between East Ward Street and Doherty Drive.

**Figure 2-6. Central Larkspur Specific Plan Subareas**

Subarea	Parcels Included (2010 Parcel Maps)	General Plan Designation	Existing Use	Acreage
1	020-254-08, 10 020-254-01, 11 020-254-02 020-254-07, 09 020-254-12	Downtown Commercial	Commercial and retail businesses; vacant lot; City parking lot; American Legion Hall; Larkspur Plaza Driveway; Doherty Park.	2.46

2	022-110-33 022-110-41, 42, 46	Downtown Commercial	Gas station; retail, commercial, personal service, and food sales.	2.77
3	020-110-45	Low Density Residential	Former wholesale/retail nursery.	16.8

**Commented [NT27]:** Update to reflect current condition

The CLASP contains land use goals, policies and development standards intended to encourage mixed residential and commercial uses in Subareas 1 and 2, and mixed-density residential development in Subarea 3, the former Niven Nursery site. The CLASP also implements Action Program [22] of the 1990 General Plan, which directed the City to develop a specific plan for the former Niven Nursery site prior to changing the land use designation.

**Commented [NT28]:** Expand on background and current conditions of Subareas 1 and 2, including mixed-use housing opportunities.

**CLASP Subarea 3**

CLASP Subarea 3 is a 16.8 acre former wholesale and retail nursery. Following the adoption of the CLASP, the site was re-zoned from Light Industrial to Planned Development. The CLASP designates the site as mixed residential, which is consistent with the low density residential land use designation established in the General Plan. The mixed residential designation encourages a mix of housing types, including single-family homes, cottage homes, and multi-family dwellings. Accordingly, density may vary within the site; however, the overall density will conform to the maximum density of five dwelling units per gross acre as allowed by the low density residential designation. The site also includes a Parkland/Public Facilities designation to indicate that a neighborhood park and/or public facility is planned for the property.

The City granted approvals to a mixed-density residential project on the site in 2009. Development of the Rose Lane residential project began in 2011 and all development approved for the development was completed by mid-2015. The Rose Lane development consists of 29 single Family Dwelling units, 42 Senior Condominiums, 8 Senior Condominiums, and 6 affordable cottages. Several of the senior condominiums and cottages were also affordable units, along six second units restricted for rental to low- and very-low income residents, qualifying as an Alternative Equivalent Action (AEA).

In accordance with the approvals, the City retains at 2.43 acre site has the option to buy a portion of the property to develop as a community facility. Development of the residential project began in 2011.

**Commented [NT29]:** Provide background on CFP Master Plan and Design Process here

**Former Railroad Right-of-Way**

Portions of the former Northwestern Pacific Railroad right-of-way in Larkspur were purchased by the City or other public agencies and developed into paved multi-use paths. These paths are regularly used by Larkspur residents and regional visitors for recreation purposes, commuter travel, or to get to and from common destinations such as schools and shopping centers. A north/south segment owned by the City parallels Holcomb Avenue from the southern City limit to the Downtown, and an east/west segment (portions of which are owned by either the City of Larkspur or the Town of Corte Madera) parallels William Avenue

and the south boundary of Redwood High School.

The east/west segment, referred to as the Sandra Marker Trail, continues in an easterly direction through Corte Madera and connects to a north/south segment on the east side of Highway 101 outside of the City’s Planning Area. This latter north/south segment is owned by the Sonoma-Marin Rail Transit Authority (SMART) and remains undeveloped. SMART reserves use of the right-of-way for future rail development. (Note: The Circulation Element, Chapter 3, contains goals, policies, and programs pertaining to the use of former rail right-of-ways for transit and paths.)

PLACEHOLD for Background on 1250 South Eliseo Boulevard

**San Quentin Prison**

As of 2011, the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) had no plans for closing or otherwise changing the use of San Quentin State Prison, which is located on the San Quentin Peninsula within the unincorporated County and in Larkspur’s Sphere of Influence. The 2009 CDCR Master Plan Annual Report recommended an annual investment of \$17 to \$21 million in the prison’s infrastructure through 2020. The State has also invested millions in larger projects at the prison site, including a \$136 million Central Health Services Center that was completed in 2009.

Plans to build a nearly \$400 million Condemned Inmate Complex were scrapped by California Governor Jerry Brown in 2011 due to budget constraints, though it is unclear whether the State will revive the project in the future if the economy improves. In 2007, the Larkspur City Council approved Resolution No. 24/07 opposing the Condemned Inmate Complex and supporting an assembly bill sponsored by Assemblyman Jared Huffman that aimed to block the project’s construction in light of cost and environmental impacts. Though AB 1743 was approved, ~~it was hobbled at the executive level when~~ Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger vetoed the language placing restrictions on the project’s funding. In November 2010, the County of Marin filed a lawsuit against the State to block the solicitation of bids for the construction of the Complex, claiming that Governor Schwarzenegger’s line-item veto was illegal.<sup>13</sup> The Larkspur City Council joined the County in opposing the proposed expansion, but the City was not party to the County’s lawsuit.

Commented [NT30]: Will update

**Potential Future Land Use Changes**

In recognition of the State’s intent to continue operating the prison, the Marin Countywide Plan designates the prison site as Public Facilities. However, the County also prepared a San Quentin Vision Plan (SQVP) in 2003 that provides development objectives and policies should the State cease operation of the prison and make the site available for private development. The SQVP was guided by the San Quentin Reuse Planning Committee, comprised of stakeholders from the private and public sector (including the City of Larkspur). The SQVP envisions a sustainable urban village with a range of housing types

<sup>13</sup> Johnson, Nels. “Marin sues state over San Quentin Death Row Plan.” Marin Independent Journal. November 3, 2010.

and a circulation system that promotes non-vehicular modes of transportation (e.g., walking, biking, and transit). It also promotes the relocation of the ferry terminal currently located at Larkspur Landing to San Quentin.<sup>14</sup>

## Regional Relationships

Larkspur lies within Marin County's eastern urban corridor, where most of the County's population lives and approximately 91 percent (nearly 31 million square feet) of the County's commercial and industrial floor area is located.<sup>15</sup> Highway 101 is a north-south transportation spine that connects Marin communities in the eastern urban corridor. Larkspur is also part of a smaller sub-region, the Lower Ross Valley, with which it is even more closely linked by Corte Madera Creek (which flows through the valley), by Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, and by public service and school districts that cross city boundaries. In an urban area such as central Marin County, land use, transportation, and environmental problems transcend the boundaries of individual cities. Many of these problems can be solved only through a pooling of efforts that cuts across political and geographical boundaries.

## Environmental Responsibility

The Citizen Advisory Committee for the 2030 General Plan identified environmental responsibility as a key community value. Environmental responsibility encompasses a range of land use issues related to minimizing the impact of development on the natural environment. Some specific issues include:

- Environmental justice (i.e., not locating low-income housing in environmentally hazardous areas);
- Resource conservation (e.g., using recycled materials in new construction, remodels, or additions, and energy conservation); and
- Reduction of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from mobile sources (e.g., cars and trucks).

Environmental responsibility also encompasses the impact of the natural environment on development. The most pressing environmental threat to development in low-lying areas in Larkspur, as identified by the CAC and several regional organizations, is sea level rise due to climate change. Sea level rise will impact built structures and infrastructure (including roadways, utility lines, and submerged pipelines) in the City along the San Francisco Bay and the banks of Corte Madera Creek. The most pressing threat to hillside development is the potential for wildland fires. Earthquakes and associated hazards (e.g., liquefaction and ground shaking) also pose a hazard to development throughout the City.

(See Chapter 7, Health and Safety, for a discussion of environmental hazards including sea level rise, wildland fires and earthquakes, and policies and programs the City will implement

<sup>14</sup> Marin County Community Development Agency. San Quentin Vision Plan, 2003.

<sup>15</sup> Marin Countywide Plan, 2007.

to protect human life and property from these hazards.) Policies and programs in the Health and Safety Element identify and require annual review of those areas covered by the plan that are subject to flooding identified by flood plain mapping prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) or the Department of Water Resources” (Gov. Code § 65302(a)).

**Applicable State Laws**

**California Environmental Quality Act**

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) mandates an environmental review process for all projects throughout the State. A “project” is generally defined as an action having potential for resulting in either a direct physical change in the environment, or a reasonably foreseeable indirect physical change in the environment.<sup>16</sup>

Senate Bill 97 (adopted in 2007) mandated that a project’s greenhouse gas emissions are subject to environmental review under CEQA. The CEQA Guidelines were updated in March of 2010 to include thresholds of significance for greenhouse gas emissions. The CEQA Environmental Checklist, provided in the CEQA Guidelines, lists common areas of impact to consider in the environmental review process, including greenhouse gas emissions, biological resources, noise, traffic, and others.<sup>17</sup>

**Global Warming Solutions Act**

In 2006, the California legislature adopted AB 32, the Global Warming Solutions Act, which set a statewide goal to reduce GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. AB 32 also gave the California Air Resources Board (CARB) the authority to set regional GHG emission reduction targets. In 2010, the City of Larkspur adopted a Climate Action Plan to reduce GHG emissions from both municipal operations and the community to 15 percent below 2005 levels by 2020. The Climate Action Plan is the City’s guiding document to achieve the necessary GHG emission reductions from development in the City.

**Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act**

The Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act (SB 375) was adopted in 2008 to enhance the State’s ability to meet the statewide GHG reduction goal established by AB 32. The Act requires the State’s 18 metropolitan planning organizations to create planning documents called Sustainable Communities Strategies (SCS) to illustrate how their regional GHG emission targets will be achieved. The SCS integrates land use, housing, and transportation planning at a regional level, planning processes that heretofore had been managed separately by the metropolitan planning organizations and regional transportation agencies. The Bay Area’s metropolitan planning organization and regional transportation agency (the Association of Bay Area Governments and the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, respectively) began the SCS process in 2011, with completion anticipated by 2013.

**Commented [NT31]:** Update to reflect adoption and updates to Plan Bay Area / SCS and current status.

<sup>16</sup> California Public Resources Code §21065  
<sup>17</sup> California Code of Regulations, Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, Sections 15000–15387.

~~Consistency between General Plans and the SCS is not required. While the Government Code states that a sustainable communities strategy does not regulate the use of land (Gov. Code § 65080(b)(2)(K)), local governments should consider and, if appropriate, incorporate applicable policies into local land use elements. The sustainable communities strategy should already reflect the basic outlines of local plans. Some transportation funding is tied to consistency with the regional transportation plan (RTP). Consistency with the sustainable communities strategy can help streamline desired project under the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970 (CEQA). Ultimately, CEQA analysis for the general plan requires analysis of any inconsistency with the regional transportation plan (RTP).~~

Commented [NT32]: Added clarity as to the relationship of the SCS and General Plan.

~~This General Plan Update is being prepared to be consistent with the goals and strategies of Plan Bay Area 2040 to reduce sprawl and GHG emissions and provide more affordable housing. Draft policies and programs are aimed at enhancing the viability and resiliency of its commercial areas, with one of the methods being the encouragement of multi-family housing associated with these commercial areas. The plan contains ancillary policies and programs to facilitate and encourage this additional development, assuming it is consistent with other City goals and policies. These commercial areas are near major transit stops. Focusing new multi-family residential development near the transit centers in Larkspur would be consistent with Plan Bay Area 2040 Housing Objectives. Policies to enhance the economic resiliency of commercial and employment centers is consistent with Plan Bay Area 2040 Economic Development Strategy. Finally, General Plan policies addressing GHG emissions, flooding and sea level rise, and wildfire hazard reduction are all consistent with the Plan's Resilience Strategy.~~

~~The City will continue to review the draft General Plan policies and programs to seek consistency with Plan Bay Area 2040 goals and strategies. As importantly, the General Plan will identify actions that Larkspur can realistically take, given its built-out status with limited options for facilitating new residential development and constructing transportation improvements, to do its part in reducing regional VMT and GHG emissions and providing additional housing at infill sites near transit availability.~~

## Public School Sites

Three public school sites are located in Larkspur and are designated Public Schools on the Land Use map. Current school enrollment and enrollment projections are discussed in Chapter 5, Community Facilities and Services.

1. Redwood High School (grades 9-12), a 60 acre site on Doherty Drive, is part of the Tamalpais Union High School District (TUHSD). TUHSD's administrative offices and corporation yard, an alternative high school, and an adult educational school are also located on the site.
2. Henry C. Hall Middle School (grades 5-8) occupies a 9.7 acre site on the north side of Doherty Drive. Piper Park wraps around the east and north sides of the school, and Boardwalk No. 1, a residential area, is located on its west side. Hall Middle School is in the Larkspur- Corte Madera School District.

3. The former Larkspur Corte Madera School, a 5.3 acre school site on Magnolia Avenue near the Larkspur/Corte Madera city limits, ceased operating as a public school in 1979 due to declining enrollment. Marin Primary and Middle School, a private school, has leased the school buildings from the Larkspur-Corte Madera School District since 1980. The Larkspur-Corte Madera School District retains some offices on site, and the grounds and playground equipment provided by the private school are open to public use.

Three public schools attended by Larkspur children are located outside of the City's Planning Area.

- Neil Cummins Elementary School (grades K-4) is a 10 acre site located on Mohawk Avenue in Corte Madera.
- Anthony G. Bacich Elementary School (grades K-5) is a 9.5 acre site on McAllister Avenue in Kentfield.
- Adaline E. Kent Middle School (grades 6-8) is located on an 8.7 acre site on College Avenue at Stadium Way in Kentfield.

Two private schools are also located in Larkspur.

- St. Patrick's School (grades K-8) is located on Magnolia Avenue at King Street. The site's land use designation is split between Downtown commercial and High Density Residential.
- Marin Primary and Middle School (grades K-8) is operated at the former Larkspur-Corte Madera school site on Magnolia Avenue.

Marin Catholic High School (grades 9-12) is located at the corner of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard and Bon Air Road in Kentfield, just outside the City's Planning Area.

## Public Facilities

Public facilities and services in Larkspur are discussed in detail in Chapter 5, Community Facilities and services. Public facilities in Larkspur include the following:

- City Hall and Fire Station No. 15 share a site at the corner of Magnolia Avenue and King Street.
- Fire Station No. 216, Drake's Landing, is located on Barry Way at Sir Francis Drake Boulevard.
- The Larkspur Ferry Terminal is located on a 25 acre site owned by the Golden Gate Bridge Highway and Transportation District on the south side of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard east of Highway 101. Commuters embark from the ferry terminal for San Francisco. The terminal also includes the District's ferry maintenance facility and fuel storage tanks. Most of the site is occupied by surface parking.
- The Twin Cities Police Authority occupies a 1.3 acre site in the southern portion of Piper Park at 250 Doherty Drive. A new 17,970 square foot building and associated



structures were under construction in 2011 to replace the former 3,150 square foot facility. (See Chapter 5, Community Facilities and Services, for a more detailed description of the facility.)

- In 2011, the City shared corporation yard facilities with the Tamalpais Union High School District at 305 Doherty Drive. The City was actively seeking different locations for its corporation yard at the time.
- The College of Marin owns an approximately 25-acre site in Larkspur on Magnolia Avenue at Estelle Avenue. The site is designated Educational/Environmental Resource Area on the Land Use map.

Uses on the site are limited to outdoor athletic and recreational programs and activities, landscape management and horticultural educational, environmental science, and nature study, and floodplain and wildlife habitat. No additional structures are allowed on the land, except for classrooms, consistent with State law which gives community college districts independence from local zoning where their educational programs are involved. In 2011, the College began planning for a Child Study Center at the site.

Public facilities outside of the City limits but within Larkspur's Planning Area include:

- San Quentin Prison;
- ~~College of Marin's Kentfield Campus, most of which is located in unincorporated Kentfield.~~

Commented [NT33]: No longer in Larkspur's SOI

## Open Space Areas

### Parks in Larkspur

Larkspur's twelve neighborhood and community parks are designated as Parkland on the Land Use map. Neighborhood parks range in size from one third acre to eight acres, and vary in use from nature observation to active recreation. The community park is Piper Park, which encompasses 22 acres. A complete description of Larkspur's parks is located in Chapter 5, Community Facilities and Services.

### Parks outside Larkspur

Located just outside the City's Planning Area is the 13-acre Hal Brown Park at Creekside, located on the northern side of Corte Madera Creek west of Bon Air Road. The Park is owned and operated by the Marin County Department of Parks and Open Space.

### Hillside and Right-of-Way Open Space

The Marin Open Space District owns and manages three open space preserves with lands located in Larkspur's Planning Area, which are designated Open Space on the Land Use map. The Baltimore Canyon Preserve consists of 193 acres in the southwestern corner of

Larkspur. The Preserve is popular among Marin County hikers, and its network of trails connects to neighboring open space areas in Mill Valley and the unincorporated County. The King Mountain Preserve consists of 108 acres within Larkspur and is also a popular site for hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding. The Blithedale Summit Preserve (previously referred to as Northridge Preserve) is one of the District's largest preserve, totaling approximately 900 acres, a portion of which are located within Larkspur's Planning Area.

Other hillside areas designated as Open Space include the 20-acre ridge above Larkspur Landing. The Open Space designation was a condition of development approval of the residential developments at Larkspur Landing. Segments of the former railroad right-of-way along Holcomb Avenue were developed into a multi-use path (portions of which are owned either by the City or the Town of Corte Madera). These segments are shown as Open Space on the Land Use Map.

### **Possible Future Parklands and Open Space**

Most of the City is developed, and lands containing important open space, biological, sensitive habitat, and recreational characteristics are currently classified in the General Plan as Open Space (including the classifications of Shoreline/Marsh Conservation and Water) or Parkland. In general, there are no large vacant parcels available for future designation as Open Space or Parkland. The Land Use Diagram (LU-1) shows the locations of the lands classified for Open Space and Parkland. No additional lands would be reclassified as part of this General Plan Update (see additional discussion of open space and parklands in the -Open Space and Conservation Element).

There are two parcels of land that may have some potential for adding open space to the City's inventory of open space lands. The Tiscornia / Escalle Winery Property (APN 20-160-05) is a 23-acre parcel located southwest of Magnolia Boulevard. The Housing Element identifies this site as a Housing Opportunity Site that could potentially be developed with 23 residential units. The much of the site contains steeply sloped woodland and the western edge of the edge abuts the King Mountain Open Space Preserve. A future Residential Master Plan application could include clustering of units in the lower portion of the site, fronting on Magnolia Avenue, with the upper elevations of the site being designated for Open Space. ~~portion abuts the King Mountain Open Space Preserve~~

### **Greenways**

A Greenway is a pedestrian and bicycle, nonmotorized vehicle transportation, and recreational travel corridor that meets other requirements established by State Civil Code Section 816.52. The City has identified and designated a number of greenways as trails or parks and open space lands that allow public access. In 2017, the City adopted a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (BPMP) that identifies and maps these greenways; see the Circulation Element for a description of the designated pedestrian and bicycle path system for the City. As described in

the previous section, an important series of greenways are the trails on the historic railroad right-of-way. The trail system provides connections to the trail system on the Marin Municipal Water District with connections to more distant State Parks and the ocean as well as trails in Corte Madera, San Rafael, and other surrounding communities. This trail system provides access to the hillside Open Space Preserves, 11 City Parks, 3 school district-owned parks, and bayside lands. The City has a well-connected system of greenways that are heavily used by local residents and visitors. The BPMP identifies the projects that City plans to implement to improve the safety and accessibility of the existing bicycle and pedestrian system.

### Shoreline/Wetland Conservation Areas

Portions of the shoreline along San Francisco Bay and the lands upland of Corte Madera Creek are designated Shoreline/Wetland Conservation areas. The Shoreline/Wetland Conservation areas are not continuous along the Creek because of pre-existing development. The designation applies to a 600 foot long strip on the south side of the Creek between Larkspur Plaza Drive and Bon Air Road. The width of this strip ranges from about 60 to 145 feet (where it expands into a wetland mitigation area) and covers 2.8 acres of wetlands, drainage ditch/view corridor, and multi-use path.<sup>18</sup>

Other areas designated Shoreline/Wetland Conservation are (1) the marsh bordering Redwood High School on the south and east, which varies in width from 150 feet to 450 feet, with the widest expanse at the southeast corner of the high school grounds; and (2) a strip of land between Harvard Drive and Corte Madera Creek.

The Redwood Highway area, the land between Sir Francis Drake Boulevard and San Francisco Bay, the periphery of Wood Island, and the land beneath the Highway 101/Greenbrae interchange are also designated Shoreline/Wetland Conservation areas.

### Land Use Changes

1. Renamed "Restricted Commercial" designation to "Neighborhood Commercial."
2. CAC suggested possible rezone of mobile home park at Redwood Highway and Wornum Drive to allow for mixed use.
3. Planned Development District at 2000 Larkspur Landing Circle approved in 2007.
4. Re-designate west side of north Magnolia Avenue to Neighborhood Commercial (formerly General Commercial).

5. Study re-designating the site at 1250 South Eliseo Drive for housing if re-use of the building for nursing home / assisted living facilities is no longer feasible.

~~5. Larkspur Landing area (including ferry terminal): possible changes after Station Area study, to be determined.~~

<sup>18</sup> U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service maps. The Marin Audubon Society, in a communication of March 10, 1990, notes that "Tidal marshes exist in a continuous strip along Corte Madera Creek, except in a few locations along South Eliseo Drive where buildings have been constructed over the creek, where interrupted by bridges, and where substrate has been covered by riptide or boat docks at the Larkspur Marina."