

2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 PROJECT LOCATION

The Specific Plan area is located in central Larkspur (Exhibit 2-1); portions of the Specific Plan area lie within, adjacent to, and northeast of downtown Larkspur (Exhibit 2-3). The total area covered by the Specific Plan is 27.58 acres. As shown in Exhibit 2-2, the Specific Plan encompasses a 22-acre rectangular-shaped area of relatively flat land that is bordered by Magnolia Avenue on the west; East Ward Street, Meadowood Drive, and Larkspur Creek on the south; Larkspur Creek on the east; and Doherty Drive on the north. The entire Doherty Drive right-of-way, from Magnolia Avenue east to the city limit (5.58 acres), is also included in the Specific Plan area. Doherty Drive is bordered by Mt. Tamalpais Racquet Club, Hall Middle School, Piper Park, and residential development on the north, and by Redwood High School, Tamalpais High School District facilities and the rest of the project area on the south.

2.2 PROJECT SETTING

The entire Specific Plan area has been disturbed in the past, and a majority of the area has been developed with commercial, recreational, transportation, and civic uses (Exhibit 2-3). The Niven Nursery occupies 16.8 acres in the eastern portion of the Specific Plan area. Abandoned greenhouses and other facilities used for nursery operations occupy most of this area. A small retail nursery currently operates on the northeastern corner of the property. The southwestern portion of the Specific Plan area has a cluster of four small commercial buildings, including the former Northwestern Pacific Railroad station and warming house; a City park; a City-owned parking lot; Larkspur Plaza, which includes Albertsons market and other retail shops; a gas station; and an American Legion hall.

Elevations within the Specific Plan area range from 7 to 22 feet above sea level, and the Specific Plan area is relatively flat except for the area just east of Magnolia Avenue, where portions of the Specific Plan area drop 7 feet in elevation in a distance of about 100 feet. Larkspur Creek is subject to tidal action and freshwater surface runoff flows. The northwestern portion of the Specific Plan area is subject to flooding as a result of backup into an existing concrete ditch during extreme high tides. Larkspur Creek is a tributary to Corte Madera Creek, located approximately 1 mile east-northeast of the Specific Plan area. The prevailing soil conditions consist of 5 to 7 feet of fill material underlain by Bay Mud.

Where not occupied by structures or pavement, disturbed areas of the Specific Plan area are dominated by weedy species and scattered ornamental and invasive trees and shrubs. Tidal wetlands and waters of the United States have been identified along Larkspur Creek.

Historically, the Specific Plan area was occupied by the Coastal Miwok Indians, and supported ranching and farming operations in the 19th century. The Niven Nursery, in the eastern portion of the Specific Plan area, dates back to the early 1920s. The railway station and warming house were built in 1929. The building that is now the American Legion hall was built sometime before 1909.

Exhibit 2-1

Exhibit 2-2 (landscape)

Exhibit 2-3

The Specific Plan area provides views of Mt. Tamalpais from various locations, views of Larkspur Creek and creekside vegetation, views of the railroad station and warming house, and a view across Magnolia Avenue to several offsite buildings that are historically significant.

The area surrounding the Specific Plan area is completely developed, consisting of a tennis club, middle school, and public park on the north side of Doherty Drive; a high school district corporation yard on the east side of Larkspur Creek; low- to medium-density residential units to the south; and downtown commercial and office uses to the southwest and west.

A detailed discussion of the existing setting of each environmental issue area is provided in Chapter 4, Environmental Impact Analysis.

2.3 GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Under California law (Government Code §65450 et seq.), a city or county may use the mechanism of a specific plan to enact specific regulations, programs, and legislation to help achieve goals expressed in its adopted General Plan. California law requires that such a specific plan include text and diagrams addressing the following issues: the distribution, location, and intensity of land uses, including open space; the location and capacity of major infrastructure systems, including transportation, wastewater, and stormwater drainage; standards and criteria for development and use of natural resources; and implementation measures, including capital improvement and financing mechanisms necessary to execute the specific plan.

The draft Central Larkspur Specific Plan was prepared to facilitate the development of the Niven property and additional underdeveloped area to the west of the Niven property. The Specific Plan is based on a firm policy position established in the Larkspur General Plan and the Downtown Larkspur Specific Plan. Additionally, the Central Larkspur Specific Plan Committee established planning principles to guide its deliberations and decisions during preparation of the Specific Plan.

The Larkspur General Plan, adopted in 1990, assigns the land use category Low Density Residential (up to five dwelling units per acre) to the Niven property (Land Use and Circulation Map, Larkspur General Plan). The General Plan provides two goals and an action program that relate to vacant properties, including the Niven property:

- ▶ **Goal 13:** On those lots where development or redevelopment is expected to occur, integrate natural features into new development, to the greatest extent reasonably feasible.
- ▶ **Goal 14:** Maintain Larkspur’s small-town character.
- ▶ **Action Program [22]:** For a change in land use to other than the existing nursery uses, prepare a Specific Plan for the Niven Nursery property that identifies community desires for future use.

The General Plan discusses planned changes for the Niven property in General Plan Figure 2-6 that designates the property as a “Location of Land Use Changes” along with the following accompanying text:

The [16.8-acre] Niven Nursery property fronting on Doherty Drive is designated Low Density Residential. However, the present wholesale and retail nursery uses on the site are viewed as desirable and will be allowed to remain indefinitely.

Therefore, the property will retain its present zoning of L-1, Light Industrial, and the zoning ordinance will be amended to restrict the property to its present use.

The property will be rezoned when it is no longer used for nursery, and a Specific Plan will be required before the property is redeveloped in any use other than nursery... Some parts of this site may have potential for higher density residential—such as housing that is affordable to seniors and others—and commercial development, but potential problems with traffic, as well as transition to adjacent uses, must be addressed first.

The Larkspur Downtown Specific Plan provides a detailed plan to guide and facilitate the continuing development of the Downtown area. The Downtown Specific Plan boundaries include Subareas 1 and 2 of the Central Larkspur Specific Plan. Goal 1 and Goal 2 of the Larkspur Downtown Specific Plan pertain to the Nazari property in Subarea 1 and the Lucky supermarket property (now the Albertsons supermarket) in Subarea 2 as listed below:

1. Lucky Supermarket. If the Lucky supermarket expands, the addition shall visually support the creation of a plaza around the railroad buildings on the Nazari property. Loading facilities shall be located so that they will not disrupt the connection between Larkspur Plaza and the Nazari property.
2. Nazari Property. Goals for this site are:
 - ▶ Consideration of a public plaza on the corner of East Ward and Magnolia.
 - ▶ Creation of an open space that preserves the context of the historic railroad buildings, with a possible view and pedestrian corridor to them from Magnolia Avenue.
 - ▶ Development of a Class I bicycle/pedestrian path with separation of bicyclists from autos in the former railroad right-of-way.
 - ▶ Placement of storefront and business facades facing Magnolia Avenue, Larkspur Plaza, and the public open spaces.
 - ▶ Encouragement of pedestrian connections between Magnolia Avenue, Larkspur Plaza, and public open spaces on the site.
 - ▶ Prohibition of through vehicle traffic on the railroad right-of-way.
 - ▶ Coordination of the design of the site with the creation of a northern gateway into the Downtown.
 - ▶ Creation of a human-scaled building ensemble composed of elements reflecting the architectural scale of existing buildings in the Downtown.

Goal 4 of the Downtown Specific Plan states the following under “Plan Objectives and Programs”:

4. Improve the sense of connection between the components of the Downtown including Larkspur Plaza, the Nazari property and the retail core of Downtown, the Lark Creek Shoppes, and Larkspur Creek.
 - b. Allow for expansion of the Lucky supermarket and development of the Nazari property that will create linkages between these properties and the existing Downtown.

The Central Larkspur Specific Plan has six proposed goals that define the plan's overall purpose and provide general direction for formulating policies and objectives.

- ▶ **Goal 1: Land Use.** Develop the Specific Plan area as an integrated and cohesive mixed-use neighborhood that is a focal point and an activity center for Downtown and serves as a transition to the surrounding community. The majority of the land area will be in low-density residential use compatible with the surrounding community. Provide sufficient open space to preserve and enhance environmental resources and serve as a community amenity.
- ▶ **Goal 2: Transportation.** Create a pedestrian friendly environment, minimize traffic impacts and promote alternative modes of transportation by balancing the density, intensity, and mix of land uses. Provide a system of traffic improvements, safe, direct and attractive bicycle and pedestrian routes, and adequate parking.
- ▶ **Goal 3: Housing.** Develop the area as a predominantly low-density residential neighborhood emphasizing a range and diversity of housing types, perceived scales and density. Encourage a range of housing affordability, including housing affordable to very low-, and moderate-income households and senior citizens.
- ▶ **Goal 4: Community Design.** Design the area and individual buildings to complement and respect Larkspur's small town character and our historic Downtown. The scale and design of residential development should be similar to that in the Heather Gardens, Monte Vista, and the Baltimore Park neighborhoods. The design should emphasize a variety of building sizes, scales and architecture. The design should be pedestrian friendly, and have a strong landscape character. The design should integrate the three subareas of the Specific Plan area.
- ▶ **Goal 5: Utilities.** Provide for the distribution, location, extent and intensity of public and private transportation, sewage, water, drainage, solid waste disposal, energy, and other essential facilities to support the land uses described in the Specific Plan. Private development shall pay for utility improvements required to serve new growth.
- ▶ **Goal 6. Planning.** Provide a clear plan for implementing the community's goals for the Central Larkspur Specific Plan area. The implementation plan shall include regulations, programs, public works projects, and financing measures to achieve the distribution and location of land uses, including open space, described in the Specific Plan. The Specific Plan will also provide implementation measures for the land use, housing, transportation, community design, and utility goals of the plan.

2.4 PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

The Specific Plan proposes a mixed-use development area with retail, recreation, cultural, civic, and residential uses that would contribute to the vitality of the Downtown area, combining current land uses with new development. Subarea boundaries have been established to define three distinct planning units within the Specific Plan area. A number of land uses are permitted in each of the subareas, including a range of office, retail, and residential uses, as described in the Specific Plan and regulated by the City Zoning and Subdivision Ordinance. The development subareas are shown in Exhibit 2-4. Subarea 1 consists of five properties fronting on Magnolia Avenue and East Ward Street in the southwest portion of the site, encompassing the historic railroad structures and adjacent commercial buildings, a City park, an access driveway to Larkspur Plaza, a City-owned parking lot, and the American Legion hall. Subarea 2, which fronts on Doherty Drive near Magnolia Avenue, has existing commercial establishments including Albertsons supermarket and a gas station. Subarea 3 encompasses the Niven property. The Doherty Drive right-of-way is included within the Specific Plan boundaries but is not developable for any other use and thus is not included within the development subareas. The Specific Plan boundaries include Doherty Drive to facilitate the design of road improvements that would be most compatible with plan goals.

Proposed uses and land use intensities and densities for each of the subareas are shown in Table 2-1. Properties in the various subareas are described in Table 2-2 and shown in Exhibit 2-4. Other actions that would be required prior to development within the Specific Plan area are described in section 2.5.1, Other Required Actions.

2.4.1 SUBAREA LAND USES

The land uses for each subarea as permitted under the Specific Plan are detailed below. Summaries of land area and development characteristics are provided in Tables 2-4, 2-5, and 2-6 (following the discussion of traffic generation and trip rates in Section 2.5.2).

SUBAREA 1

Subarea 1 is a triangular-shaped area bounded by Magnolia Avenue on the west, East Ward Street on the south, and the Niven property and Larkspur Plaza on the northeast. Currently, land uses within the subarea include Doherty Park; an oversized driveway access from Magnolia Avenue to Larkspur Plaza; a portion of the former Northwestern Pacific railroad right-of-way, including two historic railroad buildings; two one-story commercial buildings; a City-owned parking lot; and an American Legion hall that was built sometime before 1909.

Part of the undeveloped land in Subarea 1 along Magnolia Avenue is used for parking. As illustrated in Table 2-1, principal permitted land uses in Subarea 1 include multifamily residential, retail sales, business and personal services, hotel/inn, office, cultural/civic, and public parking. Total development intensity, exclusive of parking, would not be permitted to exceed a floor area ratio (FAR) of 0.6; however, Specific Plan Land Use Policy 9 (Hotel/Inn) and Standard 2 (FAR Bonus) offer additional development capacity (FAR of 0.8) as an

Exhibit 2-4

Table 2-1 Land Use Development Potential				
Subarea	1	2	3	Totals
Land Use Category				
Storefront Downtown	■			
Transitional Downtown		■		
Mixed Density Residential			■	
Principal Uses				
Single-Family Residential			■	
Cottage Homes			■	
Multi-Family Residential	■	■	■	
Retail Sales	■	■		
Business & Personal Services	■	■		
Hotel/Inn	■	■		
Office	■	■		
Cultural/Civic	■	■		
Public Parking	■	■	■	
Public Park			■	
Development Intensity/Density				
Floor Area Ratio (FAR)	0.6 to 0.8 ⁽¹⁾	0.4 to 0.6 ⁽²⁾	⁽³⁾	
Permitted Floor Space (sq. ft.) (Commercial/mixed-use)	57,074 to 76,100 ⁽⁴⁾	48,340 to 67,600 ⁽⁵⁾		105,414 to 143,700 ⁽⁶⁾
Hotel Rooms	36	N/A	N/A	36
Single-Family Homes	N/A	N/A	25 to 35 ⁽⁷⁾	
Cottage Homes	N/A	N/A	23 to 33 ⁽⁷⁾	
Multifamily	28 ⁽⁸⁾	19 ⁽⁹⁾	27 ⁽¹⁰⁾	
Total Residential Units	28	19	85	132
Notes:				
⁽¹⁾ Land Use Standard 1 sets a base FAR of 0.6; Land Use Standard 2 allows a bonus of up to 0.8 FAR for a hotel.				
⁽²⁾ Land Use Standard 8 sets a base FAR of 0.4; Standard 2 allows a bonus of up to 0.6 FAR, if the bonus floor area is used for affordable housing.				
⁽³⁾ Overall development determined by housing allowances and related standards governing size of units, including maximum 0.4 FAR for individual single-family parcels.				
⁽⁴⁾ The range of floor space reflects the bonus FAR explained in Note (1) above.				
⁽⁵⁾ The range of floor space reflects the bonus FAR explained in Note (2) above.				
⁽⁶⁾ The range of floor space reflects the FAR bonuses explained in Notes (1) and (2) above.				
⁽⁷⁾ Lower and upper range permitted. Total single-family and cottage units may not exceed 58.				
⁽⁸⁾ Number of units depends upon mix of uses. Floor area of housing included in overall FAR (see Specific Plan text).				
⁽⁹⁾ FAR/Density bonus allowed for affordable housing. The bonus floor area may only be used for affordable housing.				
⁽¹⁰⁾ Restricted to affordable units.				
Source : 2003 Central Larkspur Specific Plan				

incentive to encourage development of a hotel/inn in Subarea 1. Building coverage would not exceed 40% of the site area. Doherty Park, a small, triangular-shaped neighborhood park with grassy areas and picnic facilities, would remain in its current condition. As described further below, the Specific Plan policies for Subarea 1 include both the retention of some structures and facilities at the site and the redevelopment of some underused areas.

Table 2-2 Subarea Data			
Subarea	Subarea Properties	Land Area	
		Square Feet	Acres
1	A. Nazari ⁽¹⁾	63,064	
	B. City Parking Lot	19,600	
	C. American Legion	10,180	
	D. Driveway Property ⁽²⁾	5,020	
	E. Doherty Park	9,674	
	Subarea 1 total	107,538	2.5
2	A. Gas Station Property	24,550	
	B. Larkspur Plaza	96,300	
	Subarea 2 total	120,850	2.7
3	Niven Nursery	731,808	16.8
Total		960,196	22
Notes: ⁽¹⁾ The total area of the Nazari parcel is 66,789 square feet. A portion of this parcel, 3,725 square feet, is outside of the Specific Plan boundaries, and the remaining 63,064 square feet is inside the Specific Plan boundaries. ⁽²⁾ The total area of the City-owned driveway property is 5,020 square feet. Specific Plan Land Use Policy 16 would make a portion of this property available for private development. For purposes of estimating development potential, it is assumed that up to 2,280 square feet of the driveway property could be made available for private development.			
Source : 2003 Central Larkspur Specific Plan			

Nazari Property

The Nazari property encompasses the two former railroad buildings, the railroad right-of-way, two one-story commercial buildings, and vacant land along Magnolia Avenue. The two one-story commercial buildings, currently occupied by retail and office uses, would be permitted to be demolished to accommodate construction of new buildings and facilities.

Railroad Buildings

Two existing historic buildings, the former railroad station (now occupied by a restaurant) and warming house (now used as an architect's office), would remain in their present location, and would be preserved to protect their historic value. The buildings would be used in a manner that would contribute to the vitality of adjoining development and immediately surrounding

community-serving outdoor spaces. A complete description of historic and cultural resources is provided in Section 4.11, Historical, Cultural, and Archaeological Resources, of this Revised Draft EIR.

Railroad Plaza

Specific Plan Land Use Policy 11, Railroad Buildings, would require that adequate open space be provided adjacent to the two preserved railroad buildings to provide an appropriate setting for these historic structures. The open space would be accessible to the public and sized and designed to accommodate community-oriented activities. Transportation Policy 20 (North-South Regional Bikeway) would further provide that a new bikeway and footpath alignment be added to connect the bikeway segment on the former Northwestern Pacific Railroad right-of-way with the existing bikeway along Magnolia Avenue. Transportation Policy 8 (Parking Access, Subarea 1) would provide two-way access to Subarea 1 parking located within the former railroad right-of-way directly from East Ward Street.

Hotel/Inn

As mentioned above, Specific Plan Land Use Policy 10 (Hotel/Inn) and Standard 2 (FAR Bonus) would encourage development of a hotel/inn and provide for a bonus FAR of 0.2 as an incentive for development of this use, bringing the total FAR of the site to 0.8.

Residential

The amount of residential space is governed by the overall 0.6 FAR; a maximum of 28 units is permitted. Ground-level residential units may not occupy the street-level space fronting Magnolia Avenue.

Driveway Property

The existing access driveway to Larkspur Plaza from Magnolia Avenue would remain. Specific Plan Land Use Policy 16 (Reclaim City-Owned Land) calls for the City to reclaim a portion of this land (2,280 square feet) by requiring that the driveway entrance be narrowed to provide a more appropriately scaled roadway as a condition of development.

City Parking Lot

The City-owned parking lot at the intersection of East Ward Street and Magnolia Avenue would remain, or would be improved. At present the lot provides 28 parking spaces. Specific Plan Land Use Policy 14 (Parking Lot Improvements) calls for this lot to be redesigned to increase the number of spaces and include landscaping that would allow it to be used as a public gathering space. Land Use Policy 13 (Parking Lot to Be Retained) states that it is the City's policy to continue to maintain and operate the public parking lot in its present location. However, this policy would also allow a sale or trade of the parking lot for conversion to a public library or for mixed-use development (with the resultant revenues being used to help

finance public parking or other community facilities). The General Plan land use designation and the zoning on the property currently allow these uses.

American Legion Property

Another historic structure, the American Legion hall, would also be retained. Existing club activities are encouraged to continue.

Doherty Park

Doherty Park is a developed city park fronting on Magnolia Avenue north of the Nazari property. The park is 9,674 square feet in area and is assumed to remain in use as a park.

SUBAREA 2

Subarea 2, a rectangular-shaped parcel located near the intersection of Magnolia Avenue and Doherty Drive, encompasses the entirety of Larkspur Plaza, which includes a 23,400-square-foot Albertsons supermarket; a contiguous 2,500-square-foot store space and an adjoining 8,200-square-foot commercial building occupied by small retail, personal service, and food sales establishments; a gas station; and 178 parking spaces for these businesses.

Permitted uses in Subarea 2 would include retail sales, business and personal services, office, and residential. A FAR of 0.4 would be allowed in this area. Specific Plan Land Use Policy 23 (Albertsons Loading Dock) would allow an increase in developable floor space of 4,500 square feet. Specific Plan Land Use Standard 8 (Subarea 2 FAR) would conditionally permit additional floor area, not to exceed a FAR of 0.2, for residential space meeting the City's definition of affordable housing. A maximum of 19 multifamily residential units would be permitted and are assumed to be developed for this analysis. Office space is limited to 20% of the total floor area.

Service Station

Specific Plan Land Use Policy 25 (Service Station Encouraged) encourages the continued operation of the service station.

Albertsons Loading Dock

An additional 4,500 square feet of retail or personal services space could be added to the west side of the building if the loading dock is removed.

SUBAREA 3

Subarea 3 consists of the approximately 16.8 acres formerly used for the Niven wholesale nursery operation, which dates back to the early 1920s. Currently, most of this subarea is occupied by abandoned greenhouses and other structures that had been used for nursery operations, although several buildings remain in use for the limited purpose of growing and

wholesaling orchids. A small retail nursery operates on a month-to-month lease in the northeastern corner of the subarea. A caretaker resides in a modular unit on the property.

Permitted land uses under the Specific Plan would be limited to residential, community facilities for the residents, and public-serving parking, as well as a public park. The land use entitlements necessary for adoption of the Specific Plan include an amendment to the Land Use Element of the General Plan to designate a public park in Subarea 3. Housing built within Subarea 3 would require dedication of approximately 0.9 acre to satisfy the General Plan park designation and the City's Park and Recreation Land and Fees Ordinance (Larkspur Municipal Code §17.13). The land devoted to the creek open-space buffer would not satisfy the park requirement. Aside from requirements stated in the goals, policies, and standards of the Specific Plan, other actions would be required before development may occur in Subarea 3, include the following:

- ▶ Removal Action Workplan (RAW) for contaminated soils (lead, arsenic, DDT) in Subarea 3 (ENSR, International 2002)
- ▶ Soil surcharge in Subarea 3 to precompress the underlying Bay Mud, engineered fill for upper three feet of existing fill materials in Subarea 3, and treatment of corrosive soils in Subarea 3 (Harza Engineering Company 1998a) (Appendix C-1)

The residential density of Subarea 3 would be limited to 85 dwelling units with a maximum 0.4 FAR for individual single family parcels (Table 2-1). The residential development would include a mix of housing types.

Single-Family Detached Homes

Construction of single-family homes would be limited to between 25 and 35 houses (depending upon the number of cottage homes constructed). These houses could be attached or detached and would comply with specific design criteria outlined in the Specific Plan including a building height not to exceed 30 feet, a total building coverage per lot of 40%, and a minimum of 25% of the units with a floor area of 3,000 square feet or less (Land Use Standards 10 [Standards for Single-Family Detached Homes], 10A [Unit Size Range], 10B [Building Height Limit], 10C [FAR], and 10D [Lot Coverage]).

Cottage Homes

Construction of cottage homes would be limited to between 23 and 33 houses (depending upon the number of single-family detached homes constructed). These houses could be attached or detached and would comply with specific design criteria outlined in the Specific Plan, including a maximum building height of 30 feet (Land Use Standards 11 [Standards for Cottage Homes], 11A [Unit Size Range], 11B [Building Height Limit], 11C [Minimum Site Area], and 11D [Design]). Land Use Standard 11A states:

11A. Unit Size Range. The size of cottage homes shall be within the following ranges:

Unit Size (square feet)	% of Units
850 to 1,200	10 to 25
1,201 to 1,550	25 to 35
1,551 to 1,700	25 to 35
1,701 to 1,980	20 to 30

Affordable Multifamily Housing

Specific Plan Land Use Policy 29 (Affordable Housing Site) provides for a 1.2- to 1.5-acre site to be made available for purchase by the City, a nonprofit housing provider, or a third-party developer entity for the purpose of construction of up to 27 units of very low-, low-, and moderate-income housing. The applicable design criteria are a maximum building height of 35 feet, maximum FAR of 0.6, and maximum lot coverage of 50% of the lot area (Land Use Standards 12 [Standards for Multi-Family Housing], 12A [Building Height Limit], 12B [FAR], and 12C [Lot Coverage]). Between 40% and 50% of the units would be restricted to households in which one or more of the residents is 62 years of age or older (Land Use Standard 13 [Standard for Senior Housing]). Priority for eligibility would be given to households with one or more persons employed within a 5-mile radius (Land Use Standard 14 [Standard for Locally Employed Persons]). Units would be available to very low-, low-, and moderate-income households in proportion to the needs identified in the most current “Regional Fair share” allocation or the Housing element (Land Use Standard 15 [Standard for Affordability]).

Inclusionary Housing

In the event that the offer to purchase property for an affordable multifamily housing project is not exercised, the Larkspur General Plan’s policy requiring that at least 10% of the units be affordable would be implemented.

Total Housing

If the multifamily housing site is developed as affordable housing, up to 85 residential units may be developed in Subarea 3. If the offer to purchase is not exercised, and the affordable multifamily housing project is not developed, up to 63 market-rate units may be built, of which a minimum of 30 units would be cottage homes. In addition, affordable units would also be required, equal to at least 10% of the market-rate units ($0.10 \times 63 = 7$); it is the City’s practice to round up). The maximum number of units that would be allowed if the affordable multifamily project is not developed is 70 units ($63 + 7 = 70$).

Open Space

An open-space buffer would be provided along Larkspur Creek. The buffer would be at least 50 feet wide from the top of bank on the north/south reach of the creek at the eastern edge of

the Specific Plan area. No building could be located within 50 feet of the top of the bank. On the southern perimeter of the Specific Plan area the buffer would be at least 25 feet wide from the top of the bank on the east/west reach of the creek. No building could be located within 25 feet of the top of the bank. No impervious surface would be located within the open space buffer (Land Use Standard 17, Impervious Surfaces).

Sufficient land would be provided adjoining the western entrance road to Subarea 3 and the backside of the Larkspur Plaza commercial buildings to provide a well-landscaped buffer between the commercial and residential areas.

According to the General Plan, there are no locations within the Specific Plan area that are designated for a public park. The project includes an amendment to the Land Use Element of the General Plan to designate a public park in Subarea 3. The land devoted to the creek open space buffer would not satisfy the park requirement. Housing built within Subarea 3 would require dedication of approximately 0.9 acre to satisfy the General Plan park designation and the City's Park and Recreation Land and Fees Ordinance (Larkspur Municipal Code Section 17.13).

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Trails and Paths section of the General Plan (Chapter 8) identifies existing and planned trails in the city. According to the Bicycle/Pedestrian Circulation Plan, there is an existing bike path on the west side of Magnolia Avenue, a planned bike path along the south side of the Specific Plan area, and a planned bike lane on both sides of Doherty Drive.

Community-Serving Facilities

Community-serving space may be built, including offices, lounge areas, meeting rooms, and indoor and outdoor recreation facilities. These facilities would be privately-owned, primarily for the use of residents of Subarea 3.

2.4.2 CIRCULATION

The circulation system for the Specific Plan area would be designed to facilitate traffic flow, improve safety, and incorporate a bikeway. The City has identified these improvements for consistency with the General Plan, and they are designed to implement General Plan policies. A full consistency analysis is contained in Appendix B-2. Doherty Drive would be improved as follows:

- ▶ The section of Doherty Drive from Magnolia Avenue to the entrance to Redwood High School would be reconstructed. Reconstruction would be coordinated with the development of Subarea 3. (Specific Plan Transportation Policy 2 [Doherty Drive Improvements])
- ▶ A Class 1 bike path would be incorporated along the south side of the right-of-way. (Transportation Standard 1 [Doherty Drive Improvement Standards] and Standard 1.B [Bikeway])

- ▶ Vehicle access to Hall Middle School would be modified to relieve congestion along Doherty Drive. (Transportation Standard 1 and Standard 1.C [Hall School])
- ▶ The Golden Gate Transit District bus stop at Hall Middle School would be relocated to the west near the location of the planned pedestrian/bicycle crossing of Doherty Drive and Larkspur Plaza Drive. (Transportation Standard 1 and Standard 1.D [Bus Stop])
- ▶ At the approach to and intersection with Magnolia Avenue, the north-side curb of Doherty Drive would be extended to provide space for a Class 1 bike path connection to the Class 1 bike path that currently terminates on Magnolia Avenue about 150 feet north of the Magnolia Avenue/Doherty Drive intersection. (Transportation Standard 1 and Standard 1.F [Magnolia/Doherty Intersection])

In addition to the improvements to Doherty Drive, the following modifications would be incorporated into the project design to be completed as a part of private development projects, except where noted:

- ▶ Vehicular access to Subarea 3 from Doherty Drive would be limited to two locations: immediately opposite Larkspur Plaza Drive and immediately opposite the entrance to Piper Park. Intersection design would be consistent with standards outlined in the Specific Plan. (Specific Plan Transportation Policy 14 [Vehicular Ingress and Egress from Doherty Drive to Subarea 3])
- ▶ The eastern road entering Subarea 3 from Doherty Drive would be aligned to be adjacent to the designated open-space buffer along Larkspur Creek to its east. (Transportation Policy 15 [Eastern Access Road from Doherty Drive to Subarea 3])
- ▶ Residential streets in Subarea 3 may incorporate traffic-calming devices that discourage high-speed travel and use of the streets by unrelated through-traffic. (Transportation Policy 5 [Traffic-Calming] and Policy 36 [Traffic-Calming Methods])
- ▶ Each interior right-of-way would include a 5-foot-wide landscaped strip and a 4.5-foot-wide sidewalk on each side of the roadway. Exceptions may be made to the sidewalk requirement where adjoining open areas allow space for a parallel pedestrian path. (Transportation Standard 7 [Sidewalks and Landscape Strips])
- ▶ The existing driveway entrance to Larkspur Plaza from Magnolia Avenue would be narrowed to provide a more appropriately scaled roadway (Transportation Policy 11). The road system would be designed to discourage through-traffic between East Ward Street and Doherty Drive. This improvement may have joint City and private development participation. (Transportation Policy 18 [Vehicular ingress and egress from Ward Street to Subarea 3])
- ▶ The intersection at Doherty Drive/Larkspur Plaza Drive would be improved with traffic lights, changes in roadway paving material, and advanced intersection warning paving. (Transportation Policy 3 [Doherty Drive/Larkspur Plaza Drive Intersection Improvement Standards], Standard 2 [Traffic Lights], Standard 3 [Changes in Roadway Paving Materials], and Standard 4 [Advance Intersection Warning])

The existing regional bikeway shall be upgraded within the Plan area, and connections to the bikeway north of the plan area shall be improved as follows:

- ▶ The existing segment of the bikeway north of Ward Street to the Class 1 bikeway along Magnolia Avenue in the vicinity of the Creekside development shall be upgraded to improve safety for bicyclists and pedestrians.
- ▶ A new alignment shall be added to connect the bikeway segment on the former Northwest Railroad right-of-way north of Ward Street with the existing Class 1 bikeway along Magnolia Avenue via Larkspur Plaza Drive and the existing bikeway in the Creekside development. (Transportation Policy 20 [North-South Regional Bikeway])

2.4.3 UTILITIES

The Specific Plan includes onsite and offsite requirements for utilities, including sewer, water, and storm drain facilities, consistent with and implementing General Plan policies as noted in Appendix B-2:

- ▶ All new utility lines would be installed underground within street rights-of-way or in easements on private property. (Specific Plan Utilities Policy 2 [Undergrounding])
- ▶ Sanitary sewer facilities would be upgraded to adequately serve planned development. (Utilities Policy 7 [Sanitary Sewers])
- ▶ The existing 32-inch storm drain under East Ward Street would be upgraded to 42 inches. (“Stormwater Drainage” in Specific Plan Chapter 6, Utilities)
- ▶ A 42-inch storm drain would be provided under Doherty Drive to serve a major portion of Subarea 3. The storm drain would be located at the easternmost end of the subarea, in the approximate vicinity of the new Piper Park intersection. (“Stormwater Drainage” in Specific Plan Chapter 6, Utilities)
- ▶ A detailed drainage plan would be required for the development of Subarea 3 and would ensure that discharge into Larkspur Creek would not exceed existing discharge conditions. (Utilities Policy 10 [Drainage Plan, Subarea 3])
- ▶ Discharge of surface pollutants to Larkspur Creek and Corte Madera Creek would be minimized. Planning and design techniques would be implemented to promote stormwater quality protection and would incorporate onsite swales and detention areas in Subarea 3. (Utilities Policy 11 [Pollutants])

2.5 METHODOLOGY AND ASSUMPTIONS FOR THE EIR ANALYSIS

2.5.1 OTHER REQUIRED ACTIONS

If the Specific Plan would be adopted, the following planning actions would be required:

- ▶ General Plan amendments (parkland, bike routes, etc.) (see Appendix B)

- ▶ Downtown Specific Plan amendments (boundary changes to remove Subareas 1 and 2 from the Downtown Specific Plan)
- ▶ Rezone of Subarea (from L-1, Light Industrial, to P-D, Planned Development District)

It is assumed that these actions would take place during the approval process for the Specific Plan.

2.5.2 THEORETICAL MAXIMUM DEVELOPMENT DENSITY AND INTENSITY

The proposed Specific Plan would permit a number of land uses including a range of residential types, retail, business and personal services, hotel/inn, office, cultural/civic, and public parking. The actual development that would occur subsequent to adoption of the Specific Plan would be driven by market forces in effect at the time development projects are proposed; it could include any number of combinations of type, intensity, and density, in compliance with the permitted land use types and development policies contained in the Specific Plan. Because the actual development that could occur in the future is too speculative to predict with any certainty at this time, the theoretical maximum development that could occur under the Specific Plan was defined and used for the project description for purposes of the CEQA analysis. This allows the EIR to disclose a worst-case scenario of future development of the Specific Plan.

For purposes of this environmental analysis, each subarea in the Specific Plan was reviewed to determine the theoretical maximum development density and intensity that could occur based on the policies contained within the Specific Plan. For example, policies within the Specific Plan pertaining to maximum FARs, caps on the amount of a type of development (i.e., office development limited to 20% of the FAR), and preservation of historic structures were assumed in defining theoretical maximum intensity.

Traffic generation is the most variable element of the potential land uses. The permitted land use types within each subarea were reviewed and those uses expected to result in the highest level of traffic generation were assumed to be developed in order to provide the worst case analysis. It is important to note, however, that it is highly unlikely that actual future projects would develop up to the density or intensity depicted in the theoretical maximum development project. A case in point is the existing Larkspur Plaza, which was not developed to the maximum permitted development capacity allowed by the General Plan.

2.5.3 TRAFFIC GENERATION AND TRIP RATES

Traffic generation was considered to be a defining factor in determining the magnitude of potential impacts because of its potential to contribute to regional and offsite circulation, air quality, water quality, noise, and vibration impacts. As shown in Table 2-3, the vehicle trip rates for land uses considered for the worst case analysis are taken directly or based in part on data from the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) *Trip Generation*, 6th Edition (Institute of Transportation Engineers 1997), which is considered an industry standard reference, and from surveys by Wilbur Smith Associates.

Table 2-3 shows a rate for a larger-than-average single-family home (3,000-plus square feet), based on a trip generation survey conducted by Wilbur Smith Associates, transportation consultants, in the city of Corte Madera in May 2002 at Verona Place. The survey found that the sample of 7 large homes located on a cul-de-sac generated peak-hour trips at an overall average rate that was 30% higher than the ITE published rate.

Table 2-3 Summary of Project Vehicle Trip Rates			
Land Use	Vehicle Trip Generation Rates		
	A.M. Peak Hour	P.M. Peak Hour	Daily
Large Single-Family Homes* (per unit)	1.10	1.52	14.3
Single-Family Homes (per unit)	0.75	1.01	9.57
Multifamily Homes (per unit)	0.56	0.76	7.18
Cottage Homes (per unit)	0.56	0.76	7.18
Specialty Retail (per 1,000 SF)	1.03	2.59	40.67
Office (per 1,000 SF)	1.56	1.49	11.01
Hotel/Inn (per room)	0.56	0.61	8.23
Community Facilities (per 1,000 SF)	1.32	1.75	22.88
* Trip rates for large single-family home land use obtained from Wilbur Smith Associates. Source: Institute of Transportation Engineers 1997, except where indicated			

ITE does not provide a standard rate for Multifamily Home or Cottage Home, for which the ITE Townhouse rate was used. The Townhouse rate provides a higher-than-expected vehicle trip generation for these uses and represents a conservative approach to trip generation estimates. Within Subarea 3, 25% of the proposed 25 to 35 single-family homes would be less than 3,000 square feet, (Specific Plan Land Use Standard 10A, Unit Size Range), and are analyzed using the standard ITE single-family home trip rate.

2.5.4 DETERMINATION OF MAXIMUM DEVELOPMENT INTENSITY/DENSITY

SUBAREA 1 ASSUMPTIONS

As shown in Table 2-4, Subarea 1 comprises 107,538 square feet of land and presently contains 11,535 square feet of existing retail development. For purposes of this analysis, the entire Nazari property is assumed to be redeveloped. The historic railroad buildings would be required to be retained per Specific Plan Land Use Policy 11 (Railroad Buildings) and are assumed to be incorporated into the redevelopment plan for the site. The City parking lot is assumed to be available for development, although replacement of the existing parking spaces would be required in accordance with Land Use Policy 15 (Replacement Parking). The American Legion hall is assumed to remain pursuant to Land Use Policy 17 (Existing Uses

Encouraged), but similar to the railroad buildings, it is assumed to be incorporated into the redevelopment site design. The total area of the City-owned driveway property is 5,020 square feet. Land Use Policy 16 (Reclaim City-Owned Land) would make a portion of this property available for private development. For purposes of this analysis, it is assumed that 2,280 square feet of the driveway property would be developed. Doherty Park is assumed to remain a City park and is not included in the development assumptions. Under these assumptions, the maximum total new and existing retail development that could be developed to achieve the maximum 0.6 FAR is 58,100 square feet.

Subarea Properties (Common Names)	Land Area		Building Floor Area @ 0.8 FAR ⁽¹⁾					Total Building Square Feet
	Square Feet	Acres	Commercial			Hotel		
			Existing	New	Total	Floor Area Square Feet	Rooms	
A. Nazari	63,064 ⁽²⁾		6,880					
B. City Parking Lot	19,600							
C. American Legion	10,180		4,655					
D. Driveway Property	5,020 ⁽³⁾							
E. Doherty Park	9,674							
Subarea 1 total	107,538	2.5	11,535	46,565	58,100	18,000	36	76,100

Notes:

⁽¹⁾ For purposes of analyzing this alternative, the FAR calculations are based on the total land area of the Nazari property, City parking lot, American Legion hall, and 2,280 square feet of the City-owned driveway property.

⁽²⁾ The total area of the Nazari parcel is 66,789 square feet. A portion of this parcel, 3,725 square feet, is outside of the Specific Plan boundaries, and the remaining 63,064 square feet is inside the Specific Plan boundaries. The portion that is outside of the Specific Plan area lies in and south of the East Ward Street right-of-way.

⁽³⁾ The total area of the City-owned driveway property is 5,020 square feet. Specific Plan Land Use Policy 16 (Reclaim City-Owned Land) would make a portion of this property available for private development. For purposes of estimating development potential, it assumed that up to 2,280 square feet of the driveway property could be made available for private development.

Specific Plan Land Use Standard 2 (FAR Bonus) provides an incentive of an additional 0.2 FAR for development of a hotel/inn on the site. This EIR analysis assumes development of a 36-room hotel on the site. The total development assumed is 76,100 square feet as shown in Table 2-4, composed of 58,100 square feet of retail and a 36-room hotel.

SUBAREA 2 ASSUMPTIONS

It is assumed for this analysis that the existing uses in Subarea 2 would continue, and only the *new* retail and residential use permitted to achieve the maximum FAR for this subarea is analyzed. Because the Albertsons is relatively new, it is anticipated that this use would remain in operation for some time. It is also assumed that the gas station would remain, because the Specific Plan (Land Use Policy 25 [Service Station Encouraged]) states that it is the City’s policy to encourage its continued operation and because it is the only such facility providing local service to Downtown Larkspur and residents of central Larkspur neighborhoods. Further, the existing Albertsons and gas station, combined with the 4,500 square feet of new retail and 19

residential units would represent the maximum development capacity for the site (Table 2-5). Of the permitted uses, retail development would result in the highest trip generation rate (see Table 2-3) and that is the use assumed for the new 4,500 square feet of commercial development. Redevelopment to other uses permitted in the Specific Plan would not be expected to result in higher trip generation than the vehicle trips that are already being generated by the existing Albertsons and gas station. These trips are reflected in the existing conditions for the area.

Subarea Properties (Common Names)	Land Area		Building Floor Area						
	Square Feet	Acres	Existing	New	Floor Area @ 0.4 FAR	Floor Area w/ 0.2 FAR/Housing Bonus		Totals	
						Bonus Floor Area	Units	Floor Area ⁽¹⁾	Units ⁽¹⁾
A. Gas Station Proper	24,550		3,770	0 ⁽²⁾	9,820 ⁽³⁾	0	0	9,820	0
B. Larkspur Plaza	96,300		34,100	4,500 ⁽⁴⁾	38,520	19,260	19	57,780	19
Subarea 2 total	120,850	2.7	37,870	4,500 ⁽⁴⁾	48,340 ⁽³⁾	19,260	19	67,600	19

Notes:

⁽¹⁾ Projected total development consists of 67,600 square feet of commercial and residential floor area. This total consists of 48,340 square feet of commercial and 19,260 square feet of affordable housing. The housing units are assumed to be approximately 1,000 square feet in floor area, for a total of 19 units.

⁽²⁾ The Specific Plan allows for up to 9,820 square feet of commercial development; however, the existing 3,770 square feet of gas station would generate more traffic volume than the commercial development allowed. Based on ITE's Trip Generation (1996), gasoline/service station had a vehicle trip rate of 168.56 per day (12.27 a.m. peak, 14.56 p.m. peak). Specific Plan Land Use Policy 25 (Service Station Encouraged) also states that the City encourages continued operation of the existing motor vehicle service station.

⁽³⁾ These numbers represent maximum development per the FAR allowance; however, they do not represent development that would generate maximum traffic volume.

⁽⁴⁾ The Specific Plan allows up to 4,420 square feet of new commercial development. For a conservative estimate in the EIR analysis, 4,500 square feet of new commercial development is assumed.

SUBAREA 3 ASSUMPTIONS

Assumptions regarding the use of Subarea 3 under the Specific Plan are as shown in Table 2-6.

Subarea Property (Common Name)	Land Area		Development				
	Square Feet	Acres	Public Park (acres)	Single Family Detached units <3,000 square feet	Single Family Detached units >3,000 square feet	Cottage Units	Multifamily Units
Niven Nursery	731,808	16.8	0.9	7 ⁽¹⁾	28 ⁽¹⁾	23	27

Notes: ⁽¹⁾ Per the Specific Plan, up to 75% of the single-family detached units may be greater than 3,000 square feet.

2.5.5 THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT SCENARIO CONSIDERED THE “PROJECT” IN THIS REVISED DRAFT EIR

Table 2-7 shows the maximum development intensity/density for the permitted land use expected to result in the highest trip generation. This is the theoretical development scenario that is considered the “project” for purposes of analysis in this Revised Draft EIR.

Table 2-7 Theoretical Maximum Intensity in Development Subareas			
	Subarea 1	Subarea 2	Subarea 3
Single-Family (<3,000 square feet) (units)	0	0	7
Single-Family (>3,000 square feet) (units)	0	0	28
Multifamily Residential (units)	0	19	27
Cottage Residential (units)	0	0	23
Hotel/Inn (rooms)	36	0	0
Retail (square feet)	58,100	4,500	0
Source: Wilbur Smith Associates 2003			

2.5.6 CUMULATIVE IMPACT ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY

This EIR provides an analysis of cumulative impacts that may result from the implementation of the Specific Plan, as required by §15130 of the Guidelines. Cumulative impacts are defined in Guidelines §15355 as “two or more individual effects which, when considered together, are considerable or which compound or increase other environmental impacts.” A cumulative impact occurs from “the change in the environment, which results from the incremental impact of the project when added to other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant projects taking place over a period of time” (Guidelines §15355[b]).

Consistent with Guidelines §15130(a), the discussion of cumulative impacts in this EIR focuses on significant and potentially significant cumulative impacts. Guidelines §15130(b), in part, provides the following:

The discussion of cumulative impacts shall reflect the severity of the impacts and their likelihood of occurrence, but the discussion need not provide as great detail as is provided for the effects attributable to the project alone. The discussion should be guided by the standards of practicality and reasonableness, and should focus on the cumulative impact to which the identified other projects contribute rather than the attributes of other projects which do not contribute to the cumulative impact.

PROJECTS CONTRIBUTING TO POTENTIAL CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The Guidelines identify two basic methods for establishing the cumulative environment in which a project is to be considered: the use of a list of past, present, and reasonably anticipated future projects or the use of adopted projections from a general plan or other regional planning document. For this EIR, both the list and the plan approach are used. The plan approach is used in Sections 4.6, Air Quality, 4.7, Traffic and Circulation, and others in which impacts are analyzed based on past and future population growth, which is estimated based on General Plan buildout, or city-wide policies of the General Plan. For example, the cumulative traffic impacts are based on the *Citywide Traffic Study*, which in turn is based on buildout of the city in accordance with the General Plan.

The list approach applies for all sections, in which impacts are related to the locations of past, present, and future development projects in the city. Past projects are the existing land uses in the city. The City has identified the following list of known present and probable future projects not including remodels of existing homes, new dwellings to replace existing homes, or single family homes on vacant lots, of which the city averages only one or two a year in the vicinity of the Specific Plan area. These projects, which are included in the list approach, are described below (Kaufman, pers. comm., 2003).

West of U.S. Highway 101 (U.S. 101)

- ▶ 1251 South Eliseo: Conversion of a convalescent home to a women's shelter. A traffic study completed for the project concluded that there would be no impacts on traffic (Present-approved, not yet occupied).

East of U.S. 101 (on East Sir Francis Drake Boulevard)

- ▶ Drakes Cove/Drakes Landing: 47 single-family/multifamily detached units, immediately east of Larkspur Landing (Present-Zoning approved; tentative map in process).
- ▶ An application has also been filed for the development of the sanitary district property adjacent to Drakes Cove for a hotel and office complex. The draft EIR for this project has not been released and the project is being redesigned as a hotel and multifamily housing development (Present).