

Statement to be made at the February 6th Town Council meeting by Mayor Reed about the recently distributed unauthorized flyer:

Recently, an anonymous, unsigned flyer was distributed to many Fairfax residences, which was often mistaken by recipients as having come from the Town. It encouraged people to contact Council members and our Planning Director to give feedback on what it described as a “plan that was being implemented to close Bolinas Road to cars”. It also contained a couple of sections xeroxed out of the General Plan. The sections copied and distributed reflected a possible option that was suggested by the public. These options were included, along with a study to see if the ideas were possible, in the General Plan. Unfortunately, when just a tiny part of something is quoted, an incomplete picture often results. The “plan” quoted as “being implemented” is actually one possible option that will be considered in the future, during a public discussion.

Speaking as one of the dozens of people that contributed countless hours to our General Plan, I would like to clarify: The Downtown Area Section of the General Plan grew out of two major periods of outreach that the GPAC (General Plan Advisory Committee) made in roughly 2000 and 2005. GPAC is Fairfax’s all – volunteer committee that wrote the majority of the General Plan. These GPAC volunteers saved Fairfax several hundred thousand dollars, and also gave us a general plan that really reflects the Fairfax we all know and love, and protects both the town and our public’s right to have input. During the process of writing the plan, a number of public outreach efforts, including public workshops, were held. In particular there were several workshops on the downtown area. The traffic light on Drake was one of the subjects on the agenda. While it does function for the traffic going through town on Drake, ever since it was changed from a 4 way stop 20 or so years ago, it’s made other intersections a mess. People in cars regularly run the stop signs on Bolinas, Broadway, and Bank so they can get through the light at Drake and Claus while it’s still green. Many pedestrians have learned to watch that light while crossing Bolinas or Broadway, because if it’s green, they cross at their peril. Extending Bank Street to SF Drake is one of the options that could help this situation. Bank Street used to go through there before the gas station was built, and the Town still has an easement, so there is no purchase involved.

GPAC did not come up with the idea of changes to Bolinas. The public did, at the workshops held to explore all ideas in downtown. Once the idea of a pedestrian friendly area was suggested (by three of the six different groups of the public in one workshop), an enthusiastic majority developed within these workshop participants. Enthusiasm was not unanimous; there were a few that felt strongly against it at that time (this is Fairfax). Nevertheless, as the “public had spoken”, this led the GPAC to include this idea in the general plan as something that should be considered. Crane Consulting was already hired to do traffic counts as a part of the Circulation Element (as required by CA law), and since a lot of the information already gathered for that would be needed to even see if the various Bolinas options were do-able, their scope of work was increased to include an evaluation, which you see in part of the appendix of the General Plan.

When the Council went to approve the General Plan, we recognized that much more discussion was needed on this, especially since it had been 5 years since the last public input. So we redacted the “Bolinás options” section of the plan, and recommended future public conversations about it instead. It’s a big deal, and anything like that needs a lot of weigh-in by the community. That is why the info on what has happened to date is in the appendix.

I would like to encourage everyone to participate in upcoming conversations and workshops about this. This is our community’s shared space. There are all sorts of uses that it needs to function for. If we explore together, perhaps we can come up with a plan that lets it work for everybody.