

# **FAIRFAX GENERAL PLAN** **(DRAFT)**

## **TOWN CENTER ELEMENT**

### ***SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION / INTENT AND PURPOSE***

#### **SECTION 1-1: AUTHORITY**

The California Government Code, at Section 65300, requires each city and county to adopt a general plan “for the physical development of the county or city, and any land outside its boundaries which bears relation to its planning. In this case, “city” and “town” are the same.

The Fairfax General Plan defines the community’s goals for a reasonable planning horizon, both in the near future and long-term. The General Plan also includes policies developed through a public participation process that guide the land use mosaic that is the Town.

As discussed in the state’s General Plan Guidelines, “the general plan serves to:

- Identify the community’s land use, circulation, environmental, economic, and social goals and policies as they relate to land use and development.
- Provide a basis for local government decision-making, including decisions on development approvals and exactions.
- Provide citizens with opportunities to participate in the planning and decision-making processes of their communities.
- Inform citizens, developers, decision-makers, and other cities and counties of the ground rules that guide development within a particular community.”

Section 65303 of the Government Code “enables a county or city to adopt any other element or address any other subjects, which, in the judgment of the legislative body, relate to the physical development of the county or city. Once adopted, an optional element carries the same legal weight as any of the seven mandatory elements and must be consistent with all other elements, as required by Section 65300.5.”

The Town Center Element provides additional strategies and policies that are more specific, but still consistent with, the Land Use and Circulation Elements. In particular, the sections of the Town Center Element relate to the urban design pattern for the downtown area, the pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular circulation network, as well as parking, and the historic form and character of the buildings and other structures.

The Town Center Element contains strategies and policies that provide specific guidance to enhance the sense of place and the quality of life in the downtown area while promoting the economic base of the Town. Strategies are combinations of goals and objectives that include overarching statements of purpose with measurable targets for success. Policies are specific statements that give guidance to the Town's decision-makers. The policies are intended to implement the strategies.

The Town Center Element is implemented through design guidelines and specific development standards for both public and private projects subject to discretionary design review. Design guidelines are flexible recommendations that are intended to establish the aesthetic character of the downtown area. An example of a design guideline is a palette of landscape materials from which specific items might be chosen to enhance the visual quality of the downtown area streets. A standard is a fixed rule or measurement that defines the character of the urban form in the downtown area. Fixed measurements, such as building heights or sidewalk widths, are standards.

Projects of any kind that are proposed for development in the downtown area must be consistent with the Town Center Element, as well as the seven mandatory elements of the Town's general Plan. Town staff will report to the Planning Commission and the Council as to proposed actions conformance with the General Plan. Findings will include:



- Conformance with the land use designations specified by the Town Center Element;
- Conformance with the residential density and/or commercial use intensity parameters included in the Element;
- Provision of adequate on-site improvements consistent with the General Plan;
- Conformance with the development standards included in the Town Center Element, particularly regarding height limits; and
- Responsiveness to the bicycle and pedestrian policies included in the General Plan.

## SECTION 1-2: ORGANIZATION OF THE TOWN CENTER ELEMENT

## The Town Center/Downtown Planning Area

The Planning Area for the Town Center Element is defined as the area that includes the commercial core of the community along with public use areas, such as the Pavilion, Town Hall, the Women’s Club, Peri Park and the areas between these facilities, with Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, Center Boulevard, Broadway, Bolinas Road, and Bank Street to Elsie Street, as the main thoroughfares.

The commercial core, by itself, is referred to as “the downtown area” in this plan.

Figure TC-1: Town Center Planning Area, indicates the extent of the area that represents the focus of this Element.

### *Emerging Themes*

The public involvement process established by the GPAC resulted in the emergence of several key issues and preferences. Primarily, “people love Fairfax”, and they wish to preserve and enhance its sense of community and the closeness to the surrounding natural beauty. One of the most important preferences involved a wide agreement that the Town’s pedestrian and bicycle friendliness should be enhanced in any way possible.



The community universally values “the small-town feel” of the downtown and wish to preserve it. The downtown is more than a physical resource. It sets the spirit of the community and demonstrates and fosters the values of its citizens.

Issues that could use improvement have also emerged. Areas of the downtown could be linked together better, such as; the area from the Post Office and Fair-Anselm to the Broadway Boulevard area near the Parkade or the area where the north side of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard along the Parkade does not relate to the south side. Business owners along Bolinas Road universally felt that the activity along Broadway was not translating to business coming into their shops. Similarly, businesses on the east end of Center Boulevard also sought ways to visually define a town center from the viewpoint of motorists passing through on Sir Francis Drake to help support local merchants. Highlighting and restoring the Pavilion was supported by the community comments as well.

Automobile circulation and parking currently work fairly well in Fairfax, with the exception of the sometimes-cumbersome Bolinas-Broadway-Claus-Sir Francis Drake intersection. The community agrees that the best use of the center of town is for people to meet and enjoy themselves, and that traffic and parking should be arranged to avoid conflict with this experience.

**Figure 1.1: Town Center Planning Area**

## ***SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS***

**Center Boulevard and linking downtown areas:** During the same time frame as the GPAC work on the Town Center Element, a proposal, also involving extensive citizen input, was developed and implementation begun on improvements to the portion of Center Boulevard extending from Pastori to the Fairfax Theater. GPAC recommended continuing this work and, in fact, extending the character and intent, as appropriate, to the rest of the downtown area. Key themes for this area include wide pedestrian lanes and bicycle infrastructure; landscaping and efficient location of crosswalks; traffic calming; and the linking of the east end to central downtown.



**Sidewalks:** Widening and repairing sidewalks has been a key point of merchant feedback. As opportunities are presented, sidewalks should include room for street furniture and possible restaurant seating and for benches and lighting. Particular attention should be paid to making the area east of the Theater look inviting and safe for pedestrians. By drawing people east on Center, businesses are better supported and considerable opportunity exists for eventual public parking.



**Auto circulation:** The Bolinas-Broadway-Claus-Sir Francis Drake intersection sometimes works adequately now, but it is confusing, inefficient and prone to gridlock. Examination of this complex intersection currently in the very center of downtown leads to an interesting solution; simplifying this intersection, if possible, would save auto fuel, pollution, and land

area taken up by asphalt. If the Fairfax Gas station property ever became available for other use, it would enable simplification of this intersection by rerouting Bolinas Road traffic, and enabling a possible expansion of the Parkade, for some combination of additional parking, a transit center, a small park, or a central visual feature. Furthermore, it would also enable the synergistic improvements detailed below.

**Bolinas pedestrian mall:** The above and other goals came together in a creative vision arising separately from several of the working groups at one of the Saturday charrettes. Bolinas Road could eventually become a pedestrian-only area from Broadway to Elsie Lane. Traffic would be routed along the approximate route of present Bank Street to Elsie Lane. This idea would actually result in more parking through a re-engineering of the Pavilion lot, and would immediately make the Pavilion more central to the flow of traffic through the Town. It addresses the biggest request of citizens and merchants for a pedestrian oriented town center



expanding down Bolinas Road, and for a town center oriented toward the meeting of people and the enjoyment of the great weather and beautiful surroundings of Fairfax. Research has found that other communities have seen substantial benefit from the creation of pedestrian-only zones, with retail revenues increasing significantly in nearly every community.

Such a change would be accomplished in stages, starting intermittently with community events such as farmers markets and festivals, and continuing with preparation of the new circulation route. Businesses located between Bolinas Road and the new route would then orient additionally toward the new street; possibly the Town could help with this process, using grant money, as available. Temporary road closures, for both lanes or one lane could be used to test the pedestrian concept. Similarly, a phasing plan, including identifying the necessary improvements to Elsie Lane, would have to be prepared and analyzed.

Before any changes would be made, detailed circulation, parking and economic impact studies would be required.

**Residential neighborhood concerns:** Another effect of the traffic gridlock is the tendency for motor traffic to cut through the Dominga neighborhood via Sherman Avenue in order to avoid the Bolinas Road/Broadway intersection. This is especially true during the rush hour periods. This route is also popular with pedestrians and local cyclists seeking a quiet and safe way around downtown. It is the intention of the General Plan to daylight the Town's creeks currently in culverts, where possible, without removing any of the existing residences or losing access to any building. This presents an opportunity for a novel solution, daylighting the section of creeks currently under public streets while still allowing pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular access to the existing residences. Where possible, street traffic could be restricted to one lane, with bridges connecting to the existing residences and other uses, with the second lane used to open the creek below. The quiet neighborhood character would be preserved and the natural amenity would be reinstated. . Before any action would be taken, a detailed study of the possible opportunities, and potential impacts, both positive and negative, would be required.

The need for safe bicycle and pedestrian routes, particularly for children going to and from school, is adequately met and has continuity through most of Fairfax, with the exception of the above mentioned Bolinas-Broadway-Claus-Sir Francis Drake area and the downtown neighborhood defined by Pacheco, Mono and Inyo Avenues. In the latter area, bicyclists and pedestrians are shunted onto Center Boulevard, a main artery. Pacheco, Mono and Inyo Avenues terminate in dead ends. As the opportunities arise, provisions should be made to connect these streets to adjacent areas for bicyclists and pedestrians, but not for vehicular traffic.

**Defining features along Sir Francis Drake Boulevard:** There has been feedback suggesting that Fairfax could look more welcoming, eye-catching, accessible and well-defined to people driving along Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. Possibly a central visual feature (such as a fountain or public art in the Parkade area), or “welcome-to-Fairfax” archways, or even simply a distinctive pavement treatment could address this, and thus draw more people into the town to support the local businesses.

**Hillside Right of Way:** Opening of the existing pedestrian rights of way linking the downtown area with the hillside residential areas should be pursued. A key benefit of this action is safety in the event of a wild land fire or other catastrophic emergency. However, other very significant advantages include support of pedestrian and bicycle transportation, decreased congestion and need for parking downtown, greater likelihood of residents spending an afternoon in Fairfax rather than driving to another community, and the nurturing of the sense of community that everyone loves about Fairfax. Specifically, in terms of the Town Center Element, routes between the downtown area and hillside easements should be reclaimed, repaired and reopened for community use.

**Bike staging area:** Fairfax is widely known as being a gateway for recreational bicycling, both on road and off. It is recommended that attention be paid to creating an area in which recreational bicyclists could prepare for their rides and regroup or clean up afterwards. Such an area would include bathrooms, showers and storage facilities. Advantages to the town of such an area would be to encourage recreational bike users to visit Fairfax and, significantly, to stay and patronize downtown businesses before and after their rides. By having secure storage, bicyclists might be able to take public transportation to Fairfax, rather than feeling that they need a private vehicle to store their street clothes or their bikes and other equipment. Possible locations could be near Frogs, the Pavilion, or west of Fair-Anselm.



**Parking recommendations:** As described, the GPAC created an inventory of the parking spaces in the

downtown area, including a map. In addition, parking was a topic on which opinions were actively solicited in surveys of residents and during interviews with business owners. Responses to the latter did not indicate that the town was in need of more parking, but did show a preference for a policy of losing no spaces overall, which has been GPAC's goal throughout these recommendations.



One recommendation GPAC would make is that a parking lot be established near the downtown area that would be free, or nearly free, to merchants and their employees, probably through a nominal-cost permit for merchants. Also noted during the parking survey, a number of spaces could be added by merely restriping the existing ones. GPAC also recommends that the Parkade remain largely a parking area for the foreseeable future, although this objective could change with the likely alteration of the number of vehicles on the road as energy costs increase. On-street parking can be shifted to currently underused areas nearby. In particular, the recommended conversion of part of Bolinas Road to a pedestrian mall can be, at least, parking-neutral, and the eventual simplification of the Claus intersection could then lead to substantially more parking in an extended Parkade if needed. Hillside easements could lessen the number of residents who need to park downtown. A bike staging area could lessen the impact of recreational bicyclists on downtown parking.

**Parkade park:** An idea that was generated early in the GPAC process was the conversion of part or all of the existing Parkade to a green community space. Feedback on this idea was not enthusiastic, as it would lose a very useful parking area in order to create a park in an area surrounded by vehicular traffic that is therefore a less desirable location than the existing excellent town parks. GPAC does not propose this concept. Greening the edges of the Parkade may alleviate aesthetic concerns. This area is the historic location of the Fairfax train station, and the Town should keep the option available for the return of light rail by not allowing development to occur in the historic right of way.

### Section 1-3: Relationship to the other Elements of the General Plan

The Fairfax General Plan contains seven mandatory elements (land use, housing, circulation, noise, conservation, open space, and safety) plus one optional element, this Town Center Element. Section 65300.5 of the Government Code requires that the elements of the Plan must comprise “an integrated, internally consistent and compatible statement of policies...” All of the elements are given equal status, and no one element has precedence over any other. Policies contained in one element, such as the bicycle policies in the Circulation Element, must be consistent with similar policies in the Town Center Element. To avoid confusion, the wording may be identical.

The Government Code requires that the elements of a general plan be integrated and internally consistent, including background data and planning statements that result in strategies and policies.

The Town Center, Housing, and Land Use Elements of the Fairfax General Plan include statements and policies that form the basis for each element and the entire General Plan.

## Section 1-4: Public Participation

### GPAC PROCESS

The primary contribution that the GPAC brought to the Town center Element recommendations was the gathering of a great deal of input from citizens and business people. Details on much of this process were presented to the Planning Commission on several occasions throughout the planning process. GPAC's activities included:

- Taking a survey at the 2003 Fairfax Festival comprising short and open ended questions;
- Interviewing the majority of business owners and property owners within the downtown area;
- Conducting a complete parking space survey of the downtown area, measuring every space and creating a parking map of Fairfax;
- Conducting two Saturday charrettes (workshops) in the Women's Club to which all interested citizens were invited, both of which were very well attended, and both of which were designed to facilitate creative discussion and critique of ideas and, most especially, generation of new ones. The second of the two charrettes was organized to lead to a convergence of ideas, and a number of clear preferences emerged.
- Inviting a number of guests, with technical and planning expertise, to speak at GPAC meetings to contribute to the committee's understanding.



In addition, the GPAC meetings were open and noticed. After the outreach activities, such as the charrettes noted above, the GPAC meetings always had new attendees. The main source of new members has been the citizens who meet the GPAC at public events and/or sat in on meetings. Potential members apply to and are interviewed by the Town Council.

## **SECTION TWO: STRATEGIES AND POLICIES**

### **Section 2-1: Introduction**

**Strategies–Goals** are general directives guiding the creation and implementation of the Town Center Element. They answer the questions of Who and What? In this case, the Council and the Planning Commission are the Who.

**Policies** are specific statements that are intended to guide future actions, including clear commitments that require no interpretation by staff. They answer the questions of What, How Much, and by Whom?

### **Section 2-2: ~~Strategies~~Goals**

**Strategy–Goal TC-1:** Work together as a community to develop a vision for the Town Center Area of Fairfax

**Strategy–Goal TC-2:** Work with the community to maintain and enhance the historic character of the Town Center Area

**Strategy–Goal TC-3:** Involve the merchants and property owners to strengthen and diversify the economic vitality of the Town Center Area

**Strategy–Goal TC-4:** Create a strategic action plan for the Town Center, including an urban design program for the Parkade and a parking improvement program

**Strategy–Goal TC-5:** Actively seek out and review all available funding sources that might be used to implement the Town Center Element improvement program

### **Section 2-3: Policies**

**Policy TC-1:** New and/or renewed development in the Town Center Planning Area shall preserve and enhance the village character and pedestrian scale of the downtown area. Large, highly visible parking lots characteristic of strip shopping centers are inconsistent with village character.

**Policy TC-2:** New and/or renewed development in the Town Center Planning Area should be compatible with the architectural character of the downtown in terms of height, design treatment, colors, textures, and materials. Future buildings constructed in the downtown area shall be within the vertical form of the existing buildings that they might replace.

**Policy TC-3:** Mixed-use development is encouraged in the Town Center Planning Area and should be consistent with the Town Center Plan (Figure TC-2).

**Policy TC-4:** New and/or renewed development in the Town Center Planning Area shall be consistent with the Development Standards and Design Guidelines encompassed in the Town Center Plan (Figure TC-2).



**Policy TC-5:** Building heights for new and/or renewed development shall be appropriate for two-story buildings with architectural details compatible with the village character of the Town Center Planning Area. Building height to allow for a residential level above a commercial space with a high first floor ceiling.

**Policy TC-6:** New and/or renewed development shall be compatible with the existing scale and character of the Town Center Planning Area. A Significant

Buildings and Structures Plan should be created by staff. This plan should inventory and establish policies for preservation of significant structures in the Town Center.

**Policy TC-7:** Bicycle and pedestrian oriented development should be encouraged in the Town Center Planning Area.

**Policy TC-8:** Sir Francis Drake Boulevard should serve as the primary east-west artery through the Town of Fairfax, including the Town Center Planning Area. Provisions should be made to support Marin County's designated east-west bicycle corridor, which passes through Fairfax along Center and Broadway. Appropriate measures should be utilized to create safe pedestrian and bicycle crossings of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard and to enhance overall cohesiveness of the Town Center Planning Area.

**Policy TC-9:** Broadway and Center Boulevard, and Bolinas Road should serve as secondary routes through the Town, primarily for local traffic, and utilizing appropriate design features to ensure safe pedestrian crossings, bike use, and an overall pedestrian scale streetscape.



**Policy TC-10:** Shopping in the Town Center Planning Area should be made more attractive by creating safe and pleasant pedestrian routes, managing the parking supply for both cars and bicycles more efficiently, and developing and maintaining an attractive well-designed streetscape that encompasses landscaping and pedestrian amenities.

**Policy TC-11:** Bolinas Road should eventually become a pedestrian-only area from Broadway to Elsie Lane. Traffic would then be routed along the approximate route of the present Bank Street to Elsie Lane. Create safe pedestrian crossings between the Parkade and surrounding shops and services.

**Policy TC-12:** Any parking spaces removed as a result of streetscape related improvements should be replaced in appropriate locations and lots in the surrounding vicinity.

**Policy TC-13:** Provide non-vehicular connections to residential neighborhoods where possible.

**Policy TC-14:** Promote locally owned businesses.

**Policy TC-15:** Provide locations for public art.

**Policy TC-16:** Soundproofing and provision for fresh air must be part of any residential development along the main streets.

**Policy TC-17:** Daylighting and creation of a buffer around the Town's creeks should be considered. A detailed study should be prepared.

**Policy TC-18:** Recommendation of native plants and the use of drought-tolerant landscaping.

**Policy TC-19:** The Town should consider purchasing or otherwise negotiating or insuring the availability of a staging area for town events and the parking of large trucks.

**Policy TC-20:** Consideration of public ~~Property~~ property consistent with the siting of renewable energy techniques.

**Policy TC-21:** Consider preserving and making continuous the network of bicycle and pedestrian routes that would allow the traversing of the downtown area along quiet back streets and alleys.

**Policy TC-22:** Consider creating a bicycle staging area including structure for bathrooms, showers and lockers, possibly in partnership with local businesses.

**Figure 2-1: Town Center Land Use Map**

## SECTION THREE: IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES PROGRAMS

### SECTION 3-1: INTRODUCTION

Implementation measures Programs are the actions used to put into effect the policies of the Town Center Element. These implementation measures programs reflect the policies contained in the previous section.

**Program TC-1.A:** The Planning Commission should define the village character and the pedestrian scale of the downtown area of Fairfax.

**Program TC-1.B:** The Council should enact an ordinance restricting the development of strip shopping centers as being inconsistent with the village character.

**Program TC-2.A:** Planning staff should prepare an inventory of the architectural character of the downtown area. The survey will consider building heights, design treatment, colors, texture, and materials. The historical significance of buildings will also be noted.

**Program TC-2.B:** The Planning Commission should define the architectural character of the downtown area, in terms of height, design treatment, colors, textures and materials.

**Program TC-2.C:** The Council will enact an ordinance that requires new buildings constructed in the downtown area to be within the vertical form of the buildings they might replace.

**Program TC-3.A:** The Town should prepare and adopt the Town Center Plan.



**TC-4.A:** Planning staff should prepare Development Standards and Design Guidelines for the Town Center Plan.

**TC-4.B:** The Town should review and approve the Development Standards and Design Guidelines for the Town Center Plan.

**TC-5.A:** The height restriction defined by the Housing Element for the downtown area of 28.5 feet or

two stories, whichever is less, applies to the Town Center Element.

**Program TC-6.A:** The Planning Department should prepare a Significant Buildings and Structures Plan that identifies and establishes policies for the preservation of significant structures in Town.

**Program TC-6.B:** The Design Review Committee will consider the historic significance of buildings and structures when reviewing development applications in the downtown area.



**Program TC-6.C:** The Planning Commission will consider the historic significance of buildings and structures when reviewing development applications in the downtown area.

**Program TC-7.A:** The Town should consider bicycle and pedestrian related development a priority when reviewing development applications for the downtown area.

**Program TC-8.A:** The Town should consider bicycle and pedestrian crossing design and location as a priority along the Sir Francis Drake Boulevard corridor when developing the Land Use and Circulation Elements of the General Plan.

**Program TC-8.B:** Town staff should prepare a risk assessment for bicycle and pedestrian crossings along the Sir Francis Drake corridor.

**Program TC-9.A:** The Town should consider bicycle and pedestrian crossing design and location as a priority along the Broadway and Center Boulevard corridor, and the section of Bolinas Road in the downtown area when developing the Land Use and Circulation Elements of the General Plan.

**Program TC-9B:** The Town shall consider the Marin County Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan and the Fairfax Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan, 2001 in evaluating bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

**Program TC-9.C:** Town staff should prepare a risk assessment for bicycle and pedestrian crossings along the Broadway and Center Boulevard corridor and the section of Bolinas Road in the downtown area.

**Program TC-10.A:** The Town should prepare a pedestrian plan for the downtown area.

**Program TC-10.B:** Town staff should prepare a risk assessment for pedestrian routes in the downtown area.

**Program TC-10.C:** The Town should prepare a vehicle and bicycle-parking plan for the downtown area.

**Program TC-11.A:** If proven feasible, as a result of detailed analysis, the Town shall develop a strategy for creating a pedestrian only area from Broadway to Elsie Lane on Bolinas Road. The strategy should include a test program and means for successful re-routing of traffic to Sir Francis Drake Boulevard.

**Program TC-11.B:** The Town should prepare a risk assessment for pedestrian crossings between the Parkade and the surrounding shops and services on Broadway and Sir Francis Drake Boulevard.

**Program TC-12.A:** The Town should refine the parking space survey prepared by GPAC to provide guidance for the parking plan included in the Circulation and Town Center Elements.

**Program TC-12.B:** The Town should prepare a “no net-loss”-parking parking plan for the downtown area, including on-street and off-street spaces and lots.

**Program TC-13.A:** The Town should prepare a non-vehicular circulation plan connecting the downtown area to the adjacent neighborhoods.

**Program TC-14.A:** The Town shall work with the Chamber of Commerce, and other business owners, to create an economic development plan for the downtown area.

**Program TC-15.A:** The Town should work with local artists to prepare a plan for locating public art in the downtown area.

**Program TC-15.B:** The Town should identify funding sources for implementing a public art program for the downtown area.

**Program TC-16.A:** Residential developments proposed for the main streets in the downtown area shall be required to incorporate soundproofing and fresh air access as part of the project design.

**Program TC-17.A:** If proven feasible, as a result of detailed analysis, the Town should prepare a plan and program for restoring creeks in the downtown area by eliminating culverts and boxed channels.

**Program TC-17.B:** The Town should create a buffer area, as part of the plan for the downtown area, along the restored Fairfax Creek.

**Program TC-18.A:** The Town should create a palette of landscape materials allowed in the downtown area, including native and drought-tolerant plant types.

**Program TC-18.B:** All new projects proposed for the downtown area, whether public or privately



sponsored, shall incorporate the use of native plants and drought-tolerant plant materials in their landscape plan.

**Program TC-19.A:** The Town should work to secure ~~an area~~ location for use as a staging area for town events and construction vehicle and equipment storage, and a transfer area serving large trucks unable to navigate Fairfax's narrow streets.

**Program TC-20.A:** The Town should prepare a plan and program for utilizing public property for the installation of renewable energy technology.

**Program TC-21.A:** The Town should prepare a plan and program to make continuous the network of quiet streets and alleys for pedestrian and bicycle routes traversing the downtown area in conjunction with ~~Implementation Measure~~Program TC-13.

**Program TC-22.A:** The Town should, as part of the Town Center Plan, identify a site, or alternative sites, for a bicycle staging area in the downtown area.

**Program TC-22.B:** The Town should identify possible funding sources for creating a bicycle staging area.

---

## DEFINITIONS

### CHARRETTE

An intensive idea, or concept, generating activity, usually held in a workshop format involving a variety of participants. Charrettes are commonly used as an element of a public participation program where community members, local jurisdiction staff and professional consultants work together as a single group, or in small group sessions, to generate planning ideas or identify alternative solutions to familiar issues or problems.

Historically used to define the small cart used by faculty assistants to collect students' work at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris

### DOWNTOWN AREA

That portion of the Town of Fairfax that includes the existing commercial core and the public use buildings and areas of the community, including Town Hall, the Women's Club, the Pavilion Peri Park, and the public library. Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, Center Boulevard, Broadway, Bolinas Road, and Bank Street to Elsie Lane comprise the main roadway network in the downtown area.

### FAIR-ANSELM

The buildings that house the shops and services located at Pastori Street and Center Boulevard.

### GOVERNMENT CODE

The California Government Code.

### GPAC

The General Plan Advisory Committee, a group of community members appointed by the Town Council to assist the Council and the Planning Commission in the preparation of the Fairfax General Plan.

### MANDATORY ELEMENTS

The seven elements, or subject categories, that must be included in a general plan, as specified by Section 65302 of the California Government Code. The seven elements are; land use, circulation, housing, conservation, open space, noise, and safety. Other, optional, elements may be added to the Fairfax General Plan if directed by the Town Council.

### PARKADE

The raised section of the downtown area between Sir Francis Drake Boulevard and Broadway that is the site of the historic commuter train station, currently used as a parking area.

### PAVILION

The Fairfax Pavilion is a multiuse historic structure built in the early 1900's along the edge of Fairfax Creek adjacent Peri Park.

### POLICY

A specific statement that guides decision-making. The Town Council establishes the policies that govern the Fairfax general Plan.

**PUBLIC ART**

Any form of art that is located in, or adjacent to, public areas of the Town, such as sidewalks, parks and public buildings. Such places might include the Town Hall, the Parkade, the post office, the library, Peri Park, and the downtown area sidewalks. Public art could also be in the form of street surface decoration.

**STRATEGY**

A plan of action intended to achieve a specific goal. Policies, programs, implementation measures, standards and guidelines are used as action items to implement strategies.

**STREET FURNITURE**

Sturdy public use elements located in the downtown area. Benches, seats, tables, trash receptacles, planter boxes, drinking fountains, bike racks, and signboards and kiosks are examples of street furniture.

**TOWN CENTER**

The downtown area of Fairfax, including the commercial core, the public building, the creeks, and the parks, the roads, streets and alleys, and parking spaces and areas that comprise the infrastructure.

## **APPENDIX A: FAIRFAX TOWN CENTER TRAFFIC CONCEPTSIE-BANK ROADWAY IMPROVEMENT**

The following ~~section~~ appendix presents issues, ~~and~~ concerns and suggestions regarding the Fairfax Town Center, incorporating work done by Crane Transportation Group. A brief discussion of alternative solutions and planning assumptions for the Town Center is ~~then~~ provided, ~~and then~~ as well as a sequence of roadway improvements to implement the Fairfax Town Center Plan ~~is described~~.

### **Section ~~3A~~-1: Existing Circulation Problems in the Town Center**

- Elements of the existing Sir Francis Drake Boulevard / Claus Drive / Broadway / Bank Street roadway network are awkward for pedestrian, bicycle and vehicle circulation. There is opportunity to improve vehicular flow especially in the mornings; to reduce noise and pollution in the town center by eliminating the multiple queuing areas in the present intersection; to create opportunities to improve the Bolinas Road area for pedestrian and bicycle use; and to draw business down Bolinas Road by making it more inviting and interesting.
- Pedestrian and bicycle circulation is subordinate to vehicle flow in the Town Center.
- A major focus and goal of The Town Center Plan is to separate areas of vehicle/pedestrian interface in the Town Center (especially along Bolinas Road).
- A sight line hazard exists for eastbound Sir Francis Drake vehicles turning right to proceed south on Claus Drive and westbound vehicles turning left to proceed south on Claus Drive, versus eastbound Broadway vehicles turning left to proceed north on Claus Drive. A sign is posted prohibiting the Broadway eastbound left turn during weekday AM and PM peak hours, but the prohibition is frequently ignored.
- Queuing space is severely limited on Claus Drive between Sir Francis Drake Boulevard and Broadway.
- Study was given to the possibility of the Sir Francis Drake Boulevard/ Broadway/ Claus Drive intersection functioning as a single “mega” intersection, but analysis reveals that the variety of vehicle through and turning movements that must be accommodated, along with pedestrian crossing time, makes this initial concept unworkable (too many separate signal phases). Additionally, it is unlikely that Caltrans would cooperate with this goal due to the effect of further slowing Sir Francis Drake east-west through traffic.
- Broadway west of Bank does not provide viable east-west access due to variable roadway widths, with some sections narrowing to essentially one lane. Broadway west of Bank Street does not provide access to a viable north-south alternative connector to Sir Francis Drake Boulevard (i.e., alternative to Claus Drive). The next available connector west of Claus Drive (Azalea Drive) has a steep south-to-north grade and inferior sight lines at the Azalea Drive/Sir Francis Drake Boulevard intersection.

- It is the opinion of the consulting traffic engineer that the Town Center circulation system would benefit from simplifying elements of the Sir Francis Drake Boulevard/ Claus Drive/ Broadway roadway network.
- Claus Drive has relatively low demand as currently configured, but complicates operation of the signal; residents would likely object to losing turning movements on this approach to Sir Francis Drake Boulevard.

### **Section 3-2: Preliminary Circulation Alternatives**

A range of circulation alternatives was presented to the GPAC for the purpose of addressing pedestrian, bicycle and vehicle circulation in the Fairfax Town Center. Each alternative was tested for intersection level of service operation at three key intersections: Broadway/Bank Street, Bank Street/ Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, and Sir Francis Drake Boulevard/Claus Drive. With existing (2007) conditions, as well as with all roadway alternatives tested, vehicle queues exceed available roadway lane capacity on one or more approaches to these intersections. Residents of Fairfax are well aware of lengthy queues at these intersections during commute peak periods.

The focus of the circulation alternatives tested was to consider both major and minor roadway changes to reduce vehicle congestion and dominance in the Town Center, ~~allowing Bolinas Road between Elsie Drive and Broadway to be pedestrian dominated,~~ and to a greater degree than occurs today, balance bicycle, pedestrian and vehicular activity in the Town Center, specifically along Bolinas between Elsie Drive and Broadway and along Broadway near Claus Drive and along the Parkade. It is a “given” that Sir Francis Drake Boulevard will be the major east-west vehicular corridor and is outside the direct jurisdiction of the Town of Fairfax; decisions for changes to this roadway will depend upon Caltrans cooperation. However, this roadway is a major element of the Town Center; a planning goal is to connect land uses on the north side of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard with those south of the Boulevard. The Parkade is the key to this connection, providing opportunities for pedestrian paths and landscape themes followed on the south side to be carried through on the north side of the Town Center.

Assumptions must be made about the roadway network in order to test the alternatives and variations. For all alternatives, and as a fixed assumption, Bolinas Road is always fully open to emergency vehicle access.

### **Section 3-3: Planning Assumptions**

- Pursuant to the outcome of the public visioning process associated with the Town Center Plan, the concept being explored is to shift most or all of the vehicular traffic from the portion of Bolinas Road between Elsie and Broadway, to the existing Elsie-Bank roadway with a connection to Broadway and Sir Francis Drake, thus providing traffic flow where it is currently the most difficult while creating an improved pedestrian area where pedestrians currently congregate ~~while providing improved traffic flow where it is currently the most difficult.~~

- Bolinas Road would always be designed and maintained to allow emergency vehicle access.
- Pedestrian access would be emphasized with high visibility crosswalks throughout the Town Center area.
- Mono Avenue has one-way eastbound traffic flow, with Mono Avenue parking lot spaces west of Bolinas Road re-striped to enable vehicles to make u-turns within the lot to return to Elsie Lane Drive, or cross Bolinas Road to proceed eastbound on Mono Avenue.
- The Elsie Drive - Bank Street corridor would be improved, and Bank Street would have a separate northbound left turn lane in addition to a through-right lane. On-street parking would be eliminated on Bank Street near the Broadway intersection to allow provision of a new northbound left turn lane
- The Creek-Sherman-Dominga-Napa-Pacheco corridor roadway network would be unchanged, other than minor improvements for parking and safety. It is anticipated that if the Elsie Drive – Bank Street corridor is improved prior to any changes to Bolinas Road (i.e., closure or limited to one-way northbound traffic flow), commute traffic on the Creek-Sherman-Dominga-Pacheco corridor will not increase during morning and evening commute hours.
- Existing (2007) weekday AM peak hour traffic volumes have been chosen as the subject of preliminary test runs for traffic operation, as volumes at this time are higher than weekday PM peak hour volumes in the Town Center area and on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard.

### **ASection 3-4: Proposed Town Center Roadway Changes**

This plan would provide a new two-direction (north-south) roadway connection between Broadway and Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, as shown on **Figure 3-4A.1, Proposed Roadway Changes**. It would help to shift downtown vehicular traffic from Bolinas Road/Broadway to the Bank Street-Elsie Drive corridor. This alternative is consistent with the conceptual design of the Town Center Plan, and incorporates a westward extension of the Parkade as a landscaped area with pedestrian paths in the Town Center. North-south pedestrian access would be emphasized with high visibility crosswalks on Sir Francis Drake and Broadway connecting to the Parkade extension pathways. Broadway / Bank Street would initially be stop sign controlled, and later signalized. Sir Francis Drake Boulevard/Bank Street and the existing signal at Sir Francis Drake Boulevard/Claus Drive would initially form a coordinated system of signalized intersections, with coordination carried through at the Broadway Boulevard/Bank Street intersection when signalized. Claus Drive southbound through traffic would be blocked by an extension of the Parkade, thus forcing all southbound Claus Drive traffic to turn left or right to access Broadway via Pacheco Avenue or via the new segment of Bank Street.

#### Major Advantages:

- Downtown traffic flow is improved while providing a better balance of pedestrian, bicycle and vehicle access in the downtown.
- Visibility and access to the Pavilion is increased.
- A visual gateway and major new pedestrian-oriented, landscaped area (Parkade expansion) adjacent the Town's busiest corridor, Sir Francis Drake Boulevard is provided.

This alternative would have the following additional advantages:

- Vehicle dominance and congestion at the Bolinas/Broadway intersection is reduced
- Eliminating the existing sight line conflict in the downtown area for concurrent turns from Sir Francis Drake Boulevard and Broadway (described above); specifically, Sir Francis Drake eastbound right and westbound left turns to Claus Drive can conflict with concurrent eastbound left and westbound through vehicle movements from Broadway at Claus Drive.
- The severely limited queuing space on Claus Drive between Sir Francis Drake Boulevard and Broadway is eliminated.
- The pedestrian and vehicle concentrations in the downtown are separated – major vehicular activity hub (Bank Street/Broadway) would be shifted west of the major downtown pedestrian hub (Bolin corridor and Broadway from Pacheco Avenue to Claus Drive).
- Access from Claus Drive (north of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard) to Broadway via a nearby (Bank Street) connection is maintained, instead of directing this traffic to Azalea or Pacheco to reach Broadway, as other alternatives have envisioned.
- Existing inadequate queuing space between Sir Francis Drake Boulevard and Broadway is eliminated.
- If the northernmost segment of Bolinas Road were restricted from having southbound traffic, then a left turn lane could be eliminated from Broadway, which might create space for a bicycle lane to be added on Broadway.

Disadvantages. This plan would have the following disadvantages:

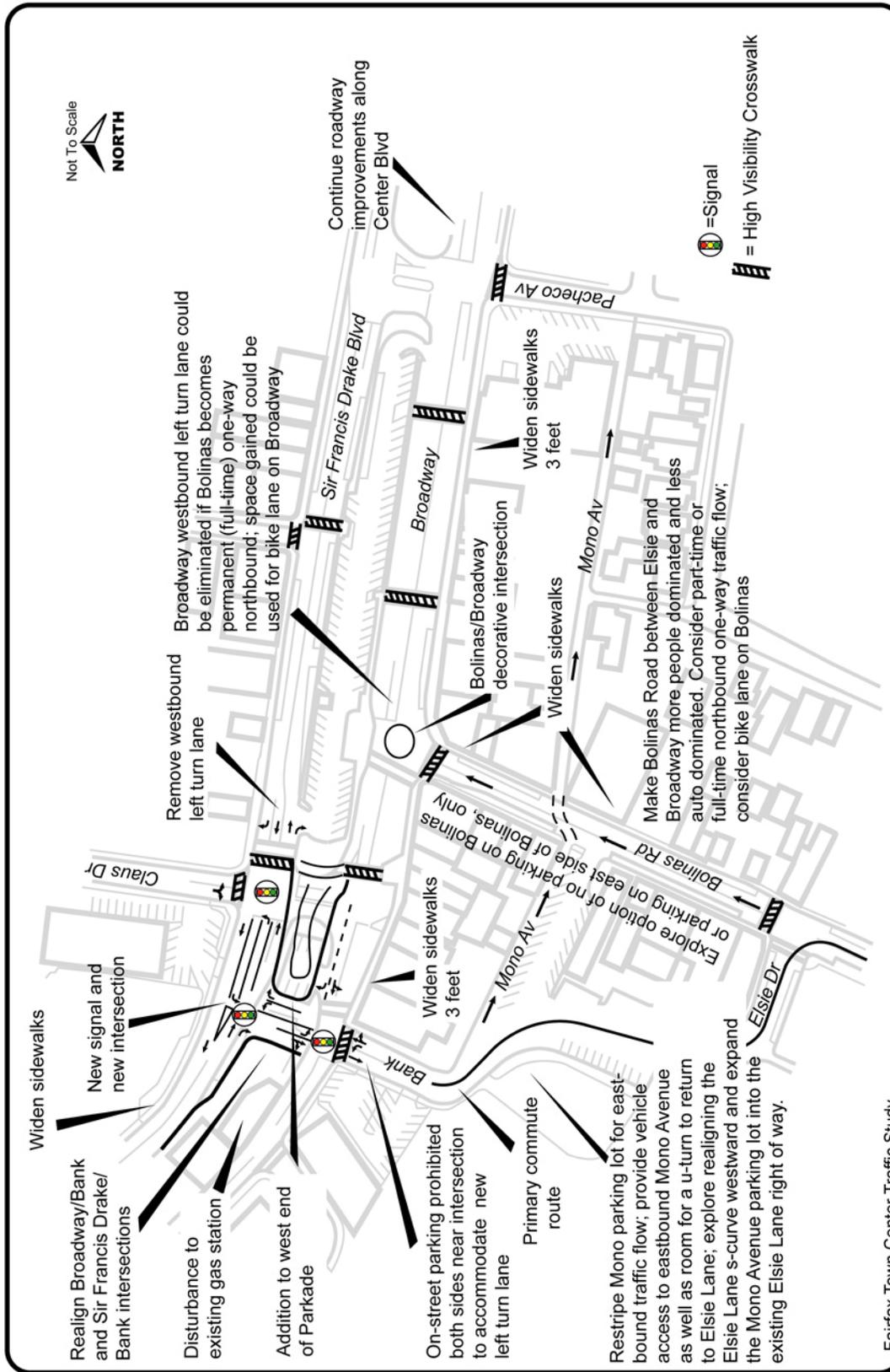
- At the new intersection traveling from Bank onto Sir Francis Drake, there will still be queuing during rush hour; however, signalization and simplification will greatly improve this over the present travel from Bolinas to Drake.
- Southbound through traffic from Claus Drive north of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard would experience a less direct route to Broadway.
- Disruption of the existing gas station on Sir Francis Drake just north of Bank Street.



Fairfax Parkade



Mono Parking Area connection to Elsie Lane



Fairfax Town Center Traffic Study

**Figure 3-4.1**  
**Connect Broadway/Bank, Sir Francis Drake/Bank and Sir Francis Drake/Claus as Coordinated, Signalized Intersections**

**CRANE TRANSPORTATION GROUP**

### **ASection 3-5: Sequence of Elsie-Bank Corridor Improvements**

- a) Determine the Elsie-Bank corridor right-of-way boundaries and ownerships of all adjacent properties, including needed portions of the Fairfax Gas Station property and rights of way along Sir Francis Drake Boulevard.
- b) Determine options for reconfiguration of the Elsie-Bank corridor, including re-configuring the s-curve in Elsie Lane westward to loop through the existing parking lot on the west side of Elsie Lane near the Pavilion. The parking spaces displaced could be moved to occupy the existing property occupied by Elsie Lane, and could be combined with the adjacent Mono Avenue parking lot. The resulting expanded Mono Avenue parking lot could be re-stripped for head-to-head parking to maximize parking space and allow eastbound u-turns in the lot. This would allow westbound vehicles to exit onto Elsie-Bank (an alternative to proceeding eastbound on Mono Avenue).
- c) Obtain needed property and construct the extension of Bank Street to Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. Initially, stop sign control the Sir Francis Drake Boulevard/Bank Street intersection. Install a stop sign as an interim control at the Bank Street southbound approach to Broadway.
- d) Extend the Parkade westward (per **Figure A3-4.1, Proposed Roadway Changes**), blocking Claus Drive at Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. Remove the westbound Sir Francis Drake left turn lane at Claus Drive and reconfigure (re-stripe) the segment of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard between the Bank Street and Claus Drive intersections to provide for a left turn onto Bank Street.
- e) Signalize the newly-created Bank Street/Sir Francis Drake Boulevard and Bank Street/Broadway intersections, and provide crosswalks, Parkade pathways and landscaping, as indicated (per **Figure A3-4.1, Proposed Roadway Changes**). Coordinate the Sir Francis Drake Boulevard/Claus Drive, Sir Francis Drake Boulevard/Bank Street, and Bank Street/ Broadway signalized intersections.
- f) Once the Elsie-Bank corridor can support the traffic flow, begin experimenting with closure or partial closure of the section of Bolinas Road from Elsie to Broadway, as described in section A-7.

### **ASection 3-6: Elsie-Bank Corridor Improvements Would Address Disadvantages Raised by the Town Center Roadway Changes**

The disadvantages raised by the Town Center roadway changes would be addressed as follows:

- Queuing space south of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard could be slightly increased by the altered Elsie-Bank alignment (this would be influenced by locations of driveway cuts); and
- Operation of the existing Sir Francis Drake gas station on a smaller parcel should be formally explored with the owners and operators of the station. It is possible that total loss of this business could be avoided.

### **ASection 3-7: Bolinas Road Changes – Test Phase**

After completion of the Elsie-Bank corridor improvements, including fully-functioning Bank Street intersections with Sir Francis Drake Boulevard and Broadway:

- a) Test two-way closure of the two-block segment of Bolinas Road from Elsie Lane to Broadway: place traffic cones or bollards to prevent through traffic on Bolinas north of Elsie Lane. Place signs on Bolinas Road directing northbound traffic to Elsie Lane. Place signs on Broadway at Claus Drive directing southbound left-turning traffic to turn right to proceed to the Bank Street intersection. Place signs on westbound Broadway at Bolinas directing westbound left turns to proceed through to Bank Street. Count volumes at the affected intersections with and without the closure. Include Bolinas Drive/Sherman Avenue as one of the count locations. Sign the project at both ends of the system and ask commuters to call in to provide comments.
- b) Test one-way (southbound) closure of the two-block segment of Bolinas Road from Elsie Lane to Broadway ~~while~~ allowing one-way northbound traffic through this segment. Place traffic cones or bollards to prevent southbound traffic on Bolinas from Broadway. Place signs on Bolinas Road directing northbound traffic to turn right (only) to proceed east on Broadway. Place signs on Broadway at Claus Drive directing southbound left-turning traffic to turn right to proceed to the Bank Street intersection. Place signs on westbound Broadway at Bolinas directing westbound left turns to proceed through to Bank Street. Count volumes at the affected intersections with and without the closure. Include Bolinas Drive/Sherman Avenue as one of the count locations. Sign the project at both ends of the system and ask commuters to call in to provide comments.
- c) Talk with or otherwise survey townspeople, including owners of properties and businesses adjacent to Bolinas Road the Elsie-Bank corridor, to determine the effect of the closures on businesses or uses of properties, if any. Based on this, determine the configuration of Bolinas Road, e.g. as one-way in the mornings and closed to automobile traffic otherwise.
- d) Compile data into a report contrasting the numeric and feedback results of the test closures. Discuss in GPAC forum. Consider additional changes (detailed below).

### **ASection 3-8: Related Opportunities to Enhance the Town Center**

Whether it is determined that Bolinas Road will be restricted to one-way northbound (or no traffic) for specified hours of the day, consider permanently prohibiting westbound left turns from Broadway to Bolinas Road, and instead direct westbound Broadway traffic to the Bank Street intersection. Use the resulting added room on Broadway (due to no longer needing the existing westbound left turn lane) to provide a bicycle lane and/or extra width to sidewalks on Broadway east of Bolinas Road as well as other improvements detailed in the Town Center Plan.



**Broadway / Bolinas Intersection**

REVISION NOTES:

The 8-26-09 revision was created from the latest clean copy (3 9 09.Town Center Element Clean Copy.doc) of the TC Element supplied by Jim. The 3-column formatting was removed for consistency with the other elements, at Shelley's request. The date was updated in the footer.

Section 3 of the Circulation Element was added as an Appendix, and then that addition was "accepted" so that changes made to that appendix's wording would be highlighted as changes.

Other corrections were made in the rest of the document, hopefully clarifying without adding new content. Formatting changes were "accepted" so as to make other changes clearly visible.

Going forward:

Figure 3-4.1 will need to be renamed as A.1, but this will need to be done by Larry. There are also two other figures listed that are yet to be added (at least they weren't in this version!)

While we've renamed the former Strategies to Goals, and the former Implementation Measures to Programs, these should probably be arranged hierarchically in a way consistent with the other elements.

Finally, formatting should be done consistent with a consistent style (currently best exemplified by the Safety Element), including getting the outlining levels correct.

Enjoy!