

## RESOLUTION NO. 25-28

### **A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF FAIRFAX ADOPTING A GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT TO UPDATE THE SAFETY ELEMENT, THE LAND USE ELEMENT AND THE TOWN CENTER ELEMENT IN COMPLIANCE WITH STATE LAW**

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Fairfax has initiated an amendment to the Safety, Land Use and Town Center Elements of the General Plan in order to comply with the requirements of the adopted and certified 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle Housing Element as well as the Government Code Section 65302; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Fairfax adopted Housing Element Update 2023-2031 ("Housing Element") in compliance with State Housing Element Law on December 13, 2023; and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was completed in support of Housing Element Update project and the Town Council certified the EIR on December 13, 2023; and

**WHEREAS**, as provided in Government Code Sections 65352 – 65352.5, the Town of Fairfax referred the General Plan Amendments to all California Native American tribes on the contact list provided by the Native American Heritage Commission and to other entities and consulted with the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town Council of Fairfax adopted the 2024 Marin County MJHMP and the Town of Fairfax Annex, collectively, the "Local Hazard Mitigation Plan" by Resolution 24-44 on June 5, 2024; and

**WHEREAS**, passed in 2006, Assembly Bill (AB) 2140 allows California jurisdictions to adopt their current LHMP into the Safety Element of the General Plan to be eligible for part or all of the local- share costs on eligible Public Assistance funding to be provided by the state through the California Disaster Assistance Act (CDAA); and

**WHEREAS**, pursuant to California Government Code Section 65302(g) and AB 747 (2019) the adoption of a Local Hazard Mitigation Plan and adoption and certification of the 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle Housing Element of the General Plan requires an amendment to the Safety Element of the General Plan to address climate adaptation and resiliency strategies as well as to identify evacuation routes and the routes capacity, safety, and viability; and

**WHEREAS**, adoption and certification of the 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle Housing Element of the General Plan requires amendments to the Land Use Element and the Town Center Element of the General Plan in order to accommodate the required residential housing sites and meet the Goals and Objectives outlined in the 6<sup>th</sup> Cycle Housing Element; and

**WHEREAS**, on April 17, 2025, the Planning Commission conducted a duly and properly noticed public hearing and held a second public hearing on June 26, 2026, reviewed the General Plan amendments, the staff report and all attachments, and oral and written public comments; recommended adoption of the amendments to the Town Council consistent with State law; and

**WHEREAS**, on July 16, 2025, the Town Council conducted a duly and properly noticed public hearing, reviewed the General Plan amendments, the staff report and all attachments, and oral and written public comments.

**NOW, THEREFORE, THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF FAIRFAX DOES RESOLVE, DETERMINE AND ORDER AS FOLLOWS:**

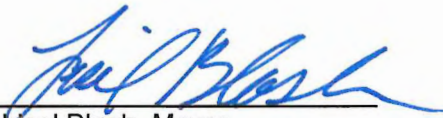
**Section 1.** That the above recitations are true and correct and are incorporated by reference into this action.

**Section 2.** Environmental Clearance: An Addendum to the 2023-31 Housing Element EIR has been prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (Exhibit 3) to demonstrate that no additional environmental impacts will occur as a result of the proposed General Plan amendments that have not been previously addressed by the Housing Element EIR.

**Section 3.** General Plan Amendment: The Safety Element , Land Use Element and Town Center Element are hereby replaced with the attached Safety Element (Exhibit 1) and Land Use Element (Exhibit 2).

**PASSED AND ADOPTED** at a regular meeting of the Fairfax Town Council on this 16th day of July, 2025 by the following vote:

<b>AYES:</b>	<b>Coler, Hellman. Blash</b>
<b>NOES:</b>	<b>Egger, Ghiringhelli</b>
<b>ABSENT:</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>ABSTAIN:</b>	<b>None</b>

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Lisel Blash, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Christine Foster, Deputy Town Clerk

Exhibits:

Exhibit 1 – Safety Element Exhibit 2 – Land Use Element

Exhibit 3 – Addendum to the Housing Element EIR

# SAFETY ELEMENT

Fairfax is located in the Upper Ross Valley, set amid scenic hills that rise dramatically from the valley floor. The town is also at the head of the Ross Valley watershed and lies at the confluence of San Anselmo Creek and Fairfax Creek. These natural resources help define the community but also hold the potential for natural hazards that pose risk to human health and property, including earthquakes, landslides, flooding, and wildfire hazards. These risks are compounded by the warming of the climate, which is projected to bring increased rainfall intensity, hotter average daily temperatures, and more extreme weather events. Urban development in the area has also brought the potential for human-made disasters. The Safety Element identifies natural and human-made hazards in Fairfax as well as measures to promote public safety and effective emergency response and recovery.

## Natural and Humanmade Hazards

---

Like other communities in Central Marin County, Fairfax located in a seismically active region and much of the community is susceptible to ground shaking in the event of fault rupture. Other related seismic and geologic hazards include the potential for landslides in steep terrain and liquefaction, a seismic phenomenon in which loose, saturated, granular soils behave similarly to a fluid when subject to high-intensity ground shaking. Landslide risk occurs mainly in the steep hills at the southern and western edges of the community, with small pockets of landslide risk also evident in the northern hills and eastern boundary. Liquefaction risk is highest on the valley floor surrounding Sir Francis Drake Boulevard and along the courses of Fairfax, Bothin, San Anselmo, and Deer Park Creeks. Flood hazard risk is also generally highest in these areas. With the exception of the Town Center area, most of Fairfax is within the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI), where human development transitions to undeveloped wildlands and where risk of catastrophic wildfire is greater. Virtually the whole of the community is categorized as a High Fire Hazard Severity Zone by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) because of the town's steep slopes, which increases wildfire susceptibility and may hinder firefighting efforts. **Figures S-1 through S-6** characterize the risk of natural hazards in the Planning Area.

In response to the risk of natural hazards in Marin, a range of public agencies and organizations have established an inter-jurisdictional framework for coordinated hazard planning and mitigation. The Town is party to the Marin County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan 2023 (MJHMP), a regional effort that articulates a plan for reducing and/or eliminating risk from natural and humanmade hazards. The MJHMP includes a local Town of Fairfax

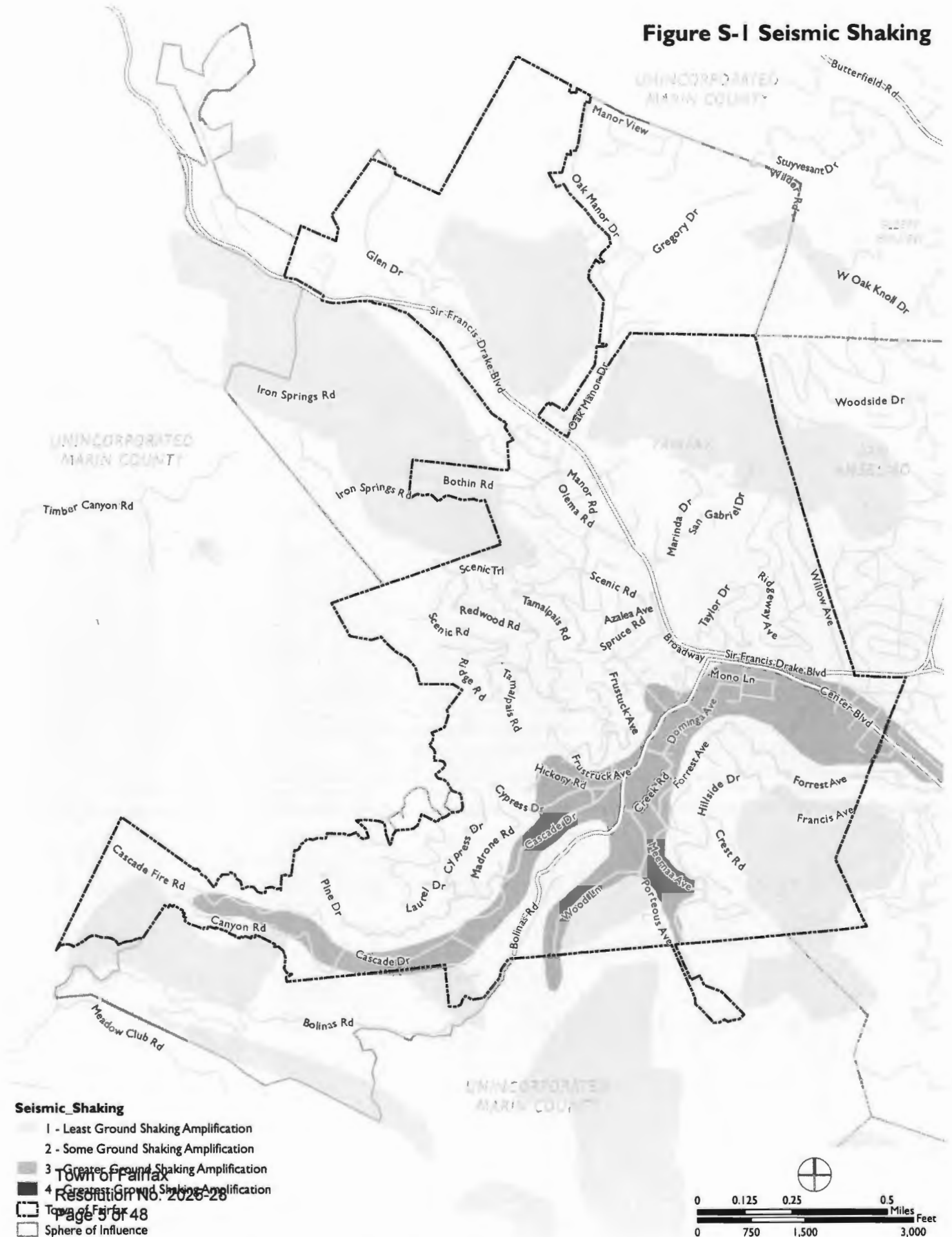
annex assessing risks associated with debris flows, drought, earthquake, flooding, land subsidence/sinkholes, severe weather, and wildfire, and it identifies mitigation goals, objectives, and projects to reduce those risks. The MJHMP and the Town of Fairfax local annex are incorporated by reference into the Safety Element of the General Plan. The Town is also a party to the Marin County Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP), which provides a science-based assessment of wildfire hazards and threats to homes in the WUI of Marin County. Originally adopted in 2016 and updated in the wake of North Bay fires of 2017, which included five of the top twenty most destructive WUI fires in history, the purpose of the CWPP is to provide fire agencies, land managers, and other stakeholders in Marin County with guidance and strategies to reduce fire hazard and the risk of catastrophic wildfires in the WUI, while promoting the protection and enhancement of the county's economic assets and ecological resources.

The North Bay fires heightened awareness of fire hazards in Marin and potential vulnerabilities. In 2018, the Marin County Board of Supervisors published a report that discussed the lessons learned from the North Bay fires, and the following year, the Marin Civil Grand Jury published a report entitled *Wildfire Preparedness: A New Approach*, that outlined a more proactive and consistent approach to public education, wildfire preparedness, and vegetation management. The Grand Jury report led to tax Measure C, a bond measure passed by voters in 2020 to fund wildland fire hazard mitigation efforts throughout the county. Funds raised through Measure C are managed by the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority (MWPA), a joint power agency formed following the passage of Measure C to develop and implement a comprehensive wildfire prevention and emergency preparedness plan for most of Marin County. The MWPA consists of seventeen-member agencies, including the Town of Fairfax, and leads the development of fire adapted communities using sound scientific, financial, programmatic, ecological practices, vegetation management, community education, and evacuation and warning systems with the support of its member and partner agencies. MWPA works in close collaboration with Fire Safe Marin, a non-profit organization dedicated to creating a safe, fire-adapted communities. The organization offers a wide range of programs and resources, which promote wildfire safety preparedness, reduce fuel loads and fire hazards, build community cooperation, and encourage environmentally sound fire mitigation practices. Fire Safe Marin is the official outreach arm of the MWPA.

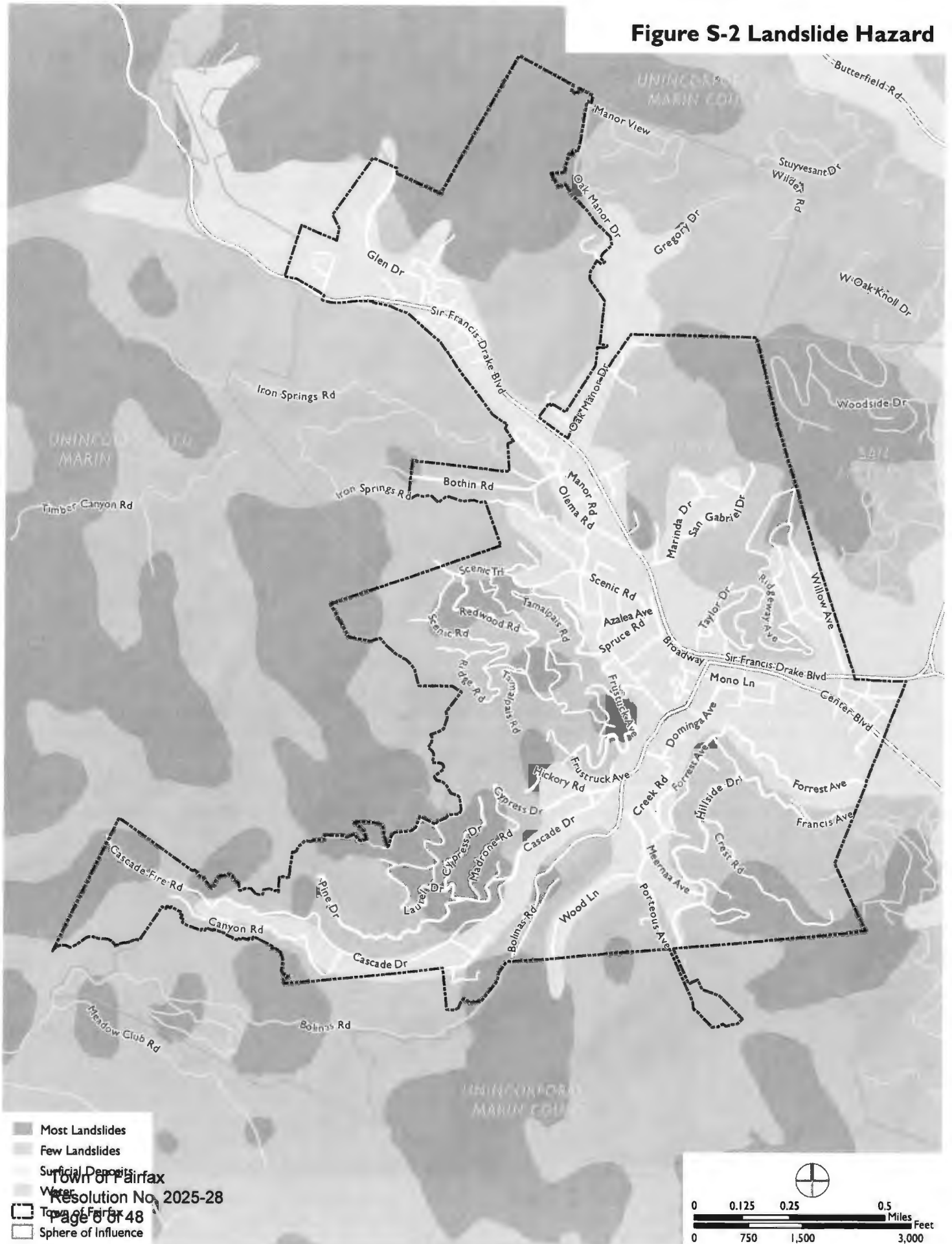
Established in 1953, the Marin County Flood Control and Water Conservation District works to reduce the risk of flooding for the protection of life and property while utilizing sustainable practices. The District leads the Ross Valley Flood Protection and Watershed Program, a regional effort initiated following the 2005 flooding that caused nearly \$95 million in damages in the communities of Fairfax, San Anselmo, Ross, Kentfield and Larkspur. The objective of the initiative is to substantially reduce the frequency and severity of flooding throughout the Ross Valley Watershed in an economically viable manner while prioritizing public safety and minimizing environmental impacts.

Locally, the Town of Fairfax Municipal Code also incorporates development standards and hazard risk mitigation protocols that address natural and humanmade hazards in the community. Safety Element policies provide a framework to guide Town planning and decision-making related to natural and humanmade hazards.

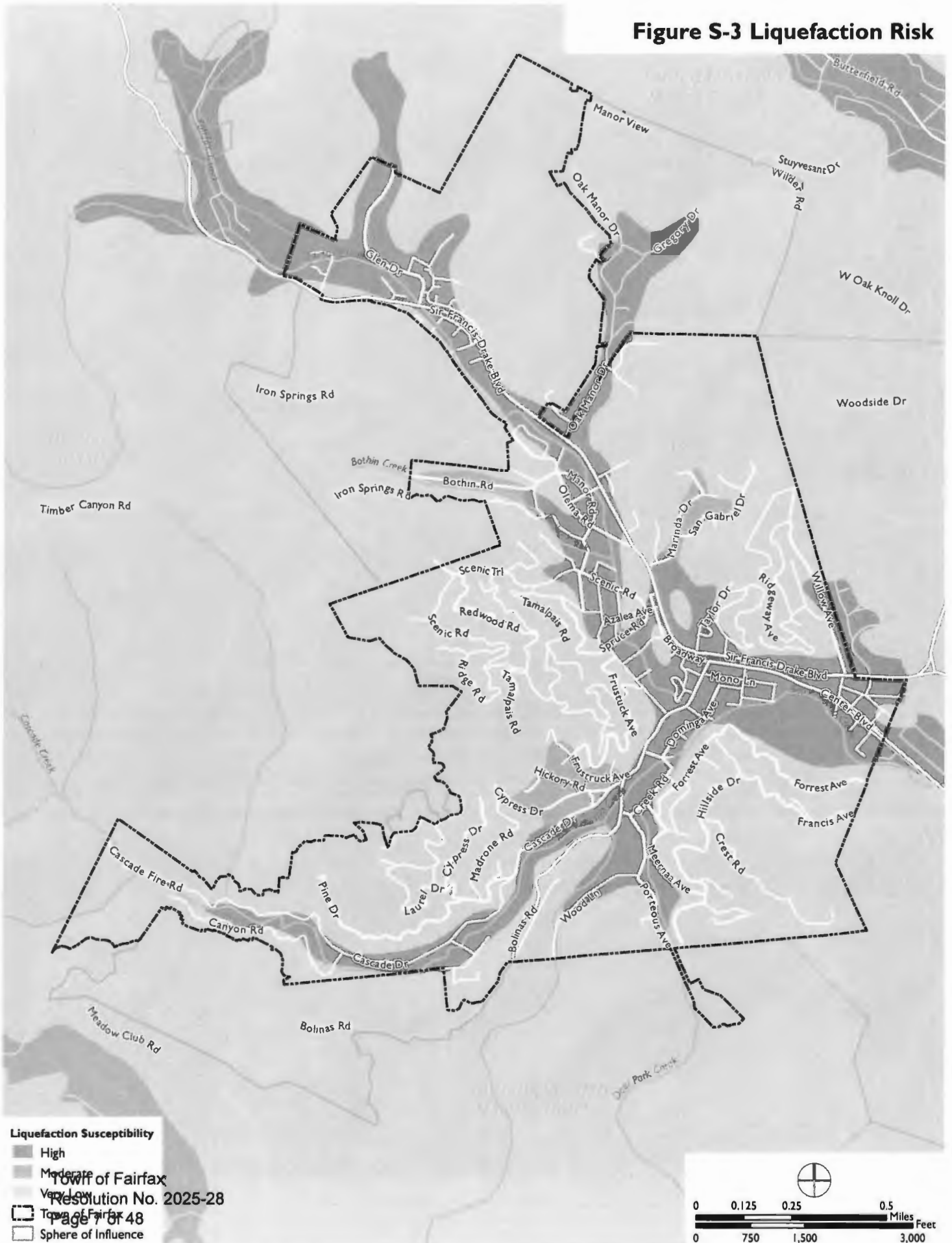
**Figure S-I Seismic Shaking**



**Figure S-2 Landslide Hazard**



**Figure S-3 Liquefaction Risk**





### Figure S-4 Flood Hazard Areas

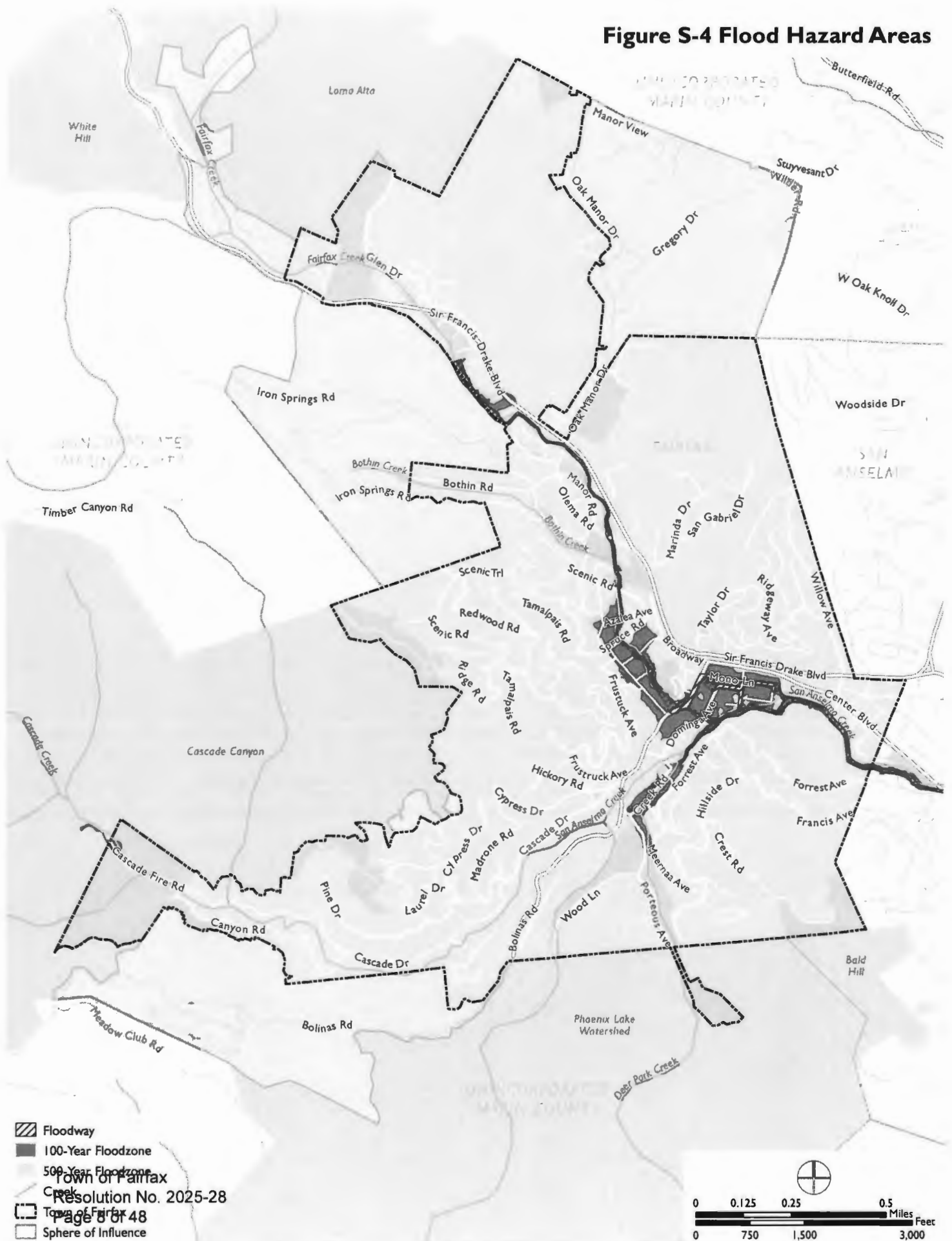
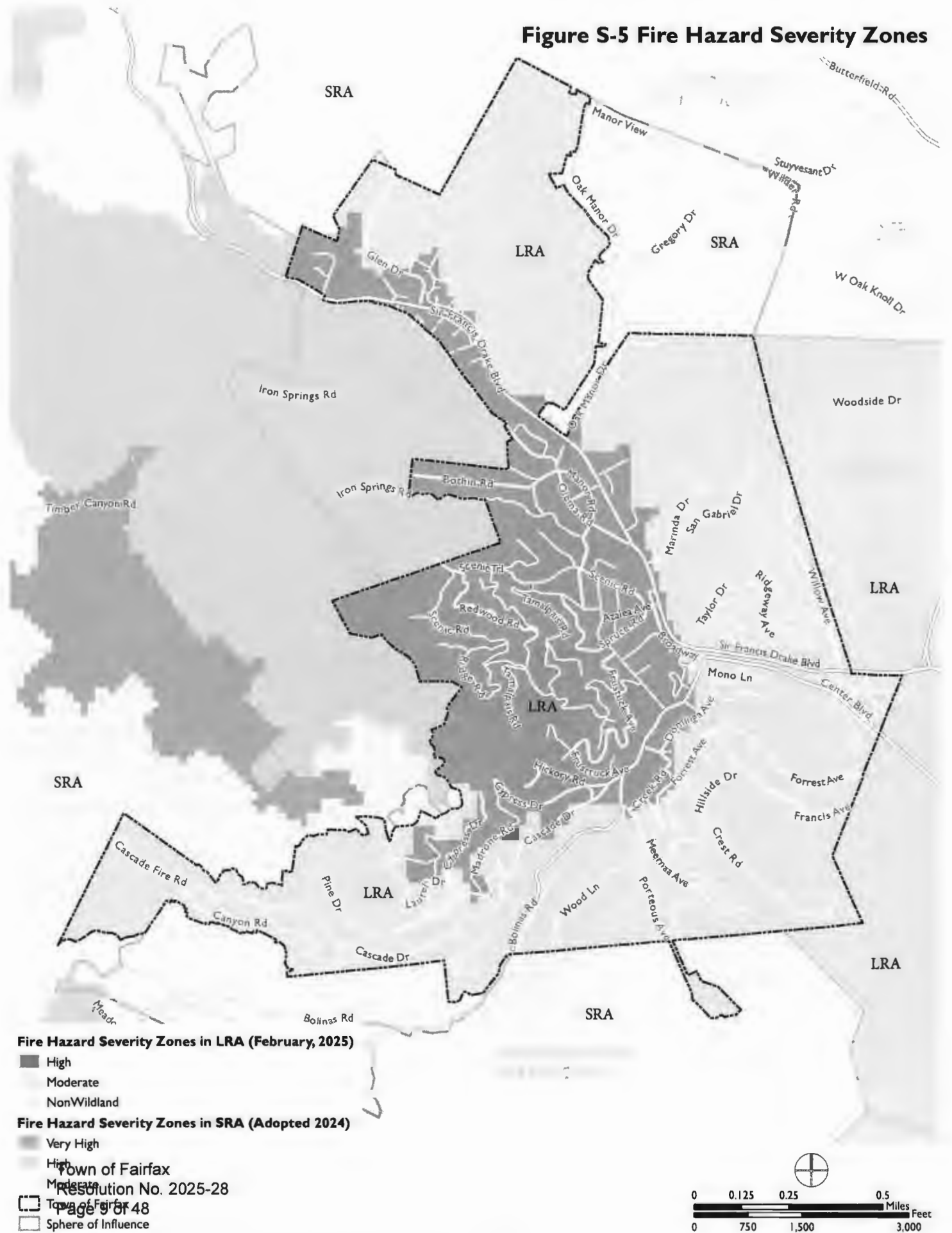


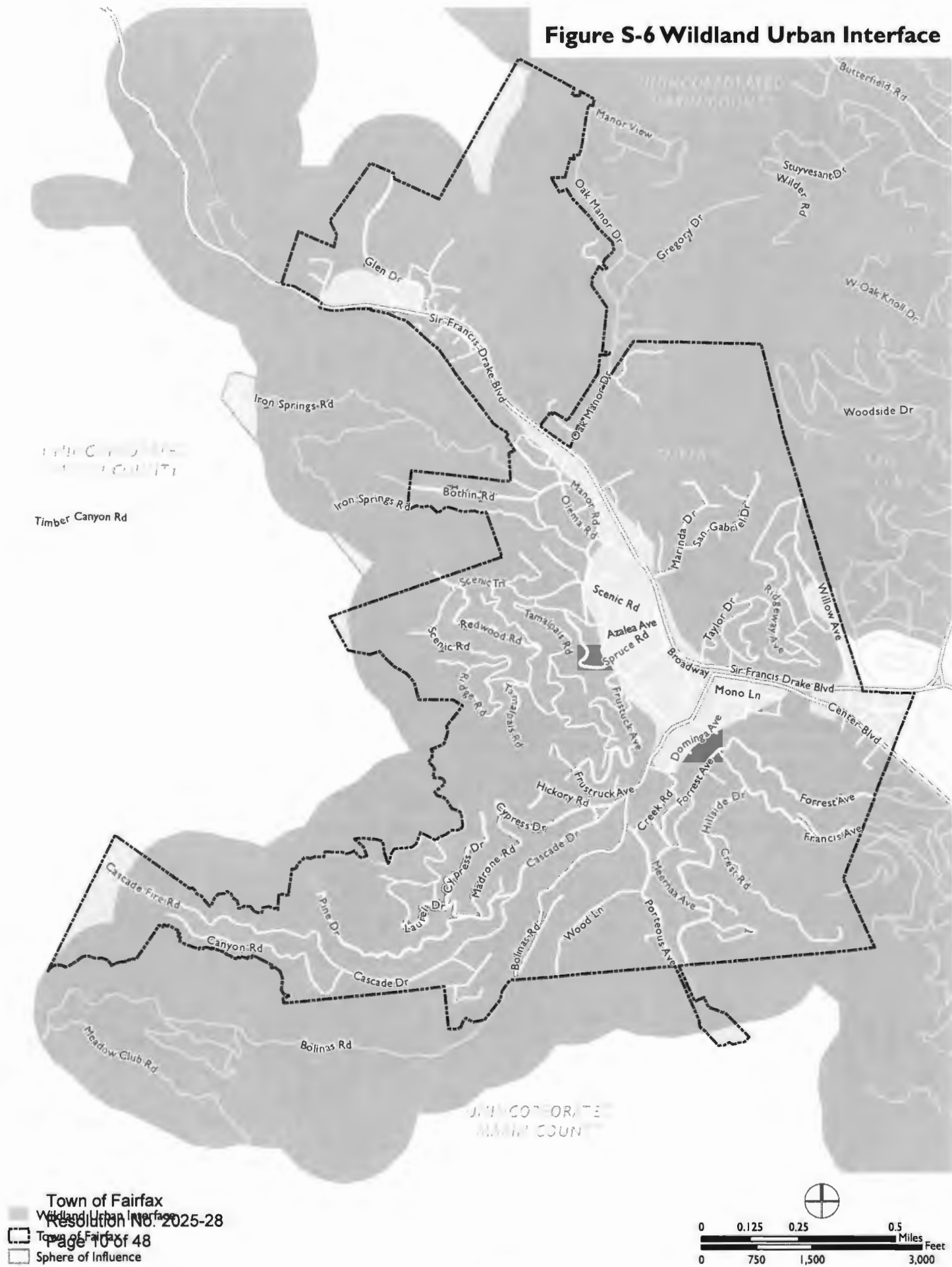


Figure S-5 Fire Hazard Severity Zones



Sources: Colfire GIS Data, 2025; MarinMap, 2022; Marin County GIS, 2022; Town of Fairfax, 2022; Dyett & Bhatia, 2022

Figure S-6 Wildland Urban Interface



**GOAL S-1 Protect life and property from natural and humanmade hazards.**

***Seismic and Geologic Hazards***

- S-1.1 Require that new development be designed and sited to minimize risks from seismic events, including ground shaking, liquefaction, and landslides. [NEW]
  - S-1.1.1 Provide educational materials to homeowners about geologic and seismic risks in the community, grants available to assist with retrofits, and techniques to mitigate liquefaction risk on their property. [Program S-1.1.4.1 modified]
- S-1.2 For new development within seismic and geologic hazard zones, including existing landslide areas, areas of high and moderate liquefaction risk, and areas of greater ground shaking amplification, require that project proponents submit geotechnical investigation reports prepared by qualified professionals and demonstration that the project conforms to all mitigation measures recommended by the reports prior to approval. [Program S-1.1.1.1 modified]
- S-1.3 Require geotechnical studies for new development in areas where sewers are not available to ensure that the surrounding soil can support alternative wastewater disposal systems. [NEW]
- S-1.4 Ensure that structures intended for human occupancy are designed and constructed to retain their structural integrity when subjected to seismic activity, in accordance with the California Building Code. [NEW]
  - S-1.4.1 Use the resale inspection program to perform basic assessments of earthquake hazards in existing residential buildings, especially buildings with unreinforced masonry (URM), and make recommendations as appropriate for follow-up inspections by a structural engineer. [Program S-1.1.3.2 modified]
  - S-1.4.2 Explore measures to encourage building owners to upgrade and retrofit structures to render them seismically safe, which may include the use of variances, tax rebates, fee waivers, credits, or public recognition. [Program S-1.1.4.1 and Program S-1.1.4.2 combined and modified]
- S-1.5 Continue to regulate development on hillsides where average slope is greater than 15 percent and limit the removal of natural vegetation in hillside areas when retaining natural habitat does not pose threats to public safety. [Objective LU-1.2 modified]
- S-1.6 Require project applicants to minimize grading in hillside areas and mitigate erosion risk by revegetation or other acceptable methods. Permit grading operations only in areas scheduled for immediate construction or paving. [NEW]

***Flooding Hazards***

- S-1.7 Coordinate with the Marin County Flood Control and Water Conservation District to address storm drainage and flood control on a sub-regional basis within the Ross Valley Watershed in order to optimize the use of existing and planned conveyance facilities. [Policy S-2.1.7, Program S-2.1.7.1, Program S-2.1.7.2 combined and modified]
  - S-1.7.1 Periodically review the risk of increased flooding hazards due to climate change and develop strategies to adapt to changing flood hazard conditions, including those related to monitoring, emergency preparedness, vegetation management, and development policies, and ensure that the Town's hazard information is up-to-date regarding climate trends. [NEW]
- S-1.8 Design, construct, and maintain street and storm drain flood control systems to accommodate storm flows and prevent water pollution, employing "green infrastructure" techniques as feasible and appropriate. [Policy S-2.1.5 modified]
  - S-1.8.1 Pursue funding individually and in collaboration with the Marin County Flood Control and Water Conservation to finance improvements to storm drainage and flood control facilities in Fairfax. [NEW]
  - S-1.8.2 Map the location of Town-owned storm drain infrastructure in key locations and inventory pipe size and other parameters. [Program S-2.1.5.2 and Program S-2.1.5.4 modified]
  - S-1.8.3 Clear debris from the creeks and culverts on an annual basis, with assistance from the North Bay Conservation Corps, other contractors, or volunteers. [Program S-2.1.5.6 modified]
- S-1.9 Continue participation in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and the Community Rating System to ensure that property owners in Fairfax can obtain flood insurance and to improve flood preparedness. [Program S-2.1.2.2 modified]
- S-1.10 Require new development in the 100-year and 500-year flood hazard zones to comply with applicable provisions for flood hazard control in the Town Code. [Policy S-2.1.2 and Program S-2.1.2.1 modified]
- S-1.11 Review all development applications for areas within a 100-year flood hazard zone for consistency with FEMA National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) standards to mitigate flood hazard potential. [NEW]
- S-1.12 Through development agreements and compliance with existing environmental regulations, require new development and redevelopment to provide necessary storm drainage improvements - including through low impact development (LID)

design strategies - and ensure that upstream stormwater generators fully address stormwater needs on their property. [Program S-2.1.3.2 modified]

S-1.12.1 Work with creekside property owners to reduce and mitigate flood hazards, such as opening up box culverts when beneficial for flood control. Promote the use of green infrastructure to convey stormwater and reduce flooding. [Policy S-2.1.6, Program S-2.1.6.1, Program S-2.1.6.2 modified]

### ***Wildfire Hazards***

S-1.13 Continue to participate in regional wildfire prevention initiatives and work to prevent wildland fire and to protect lives, property, and watersheds from fire dangers. [NEW]

S-1.13.1 Use Measure C funding from the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority to reduce wildfire hazards and achieve measurable fuel reduction in Fairfax. [NEW]

S-1.14 Maintain regulations and standards designed to achieve the greatest practical level of built-in fire protection to confine fires, including requirements for compliance with applicable provisions of the California Building Code and the California Fire Code. [Program S-3.1.5.3 modified]

S-1.15 Jointly with State, County, local and other agencies, inform property owners of wildfire risks and measures to reduce those risks, including by: [NEW]

- Maintaining and making publicly available an up-to-date map of high and very high fire hazard areas consistent with CAL FIRE designations; and
- Disseminating information on fire weather watches and fire risks via the Town's website and encouraging all Fairfax residents to engage in risk reduction and fire preparedness activities.

S-1.15.1 Promote the availability of Wildfire Risk Home Evaluations from the Ross Valley Fire Department and home hardening and defensible space grants from the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority in Townwide email newsletters and at public contact events. [NEW]

S-1.15.2 Encourage the formation of Firewise community groups within Fairfax, where residents work together to prepare themselves, their homes and their properties against the threat of wildfire with guidance from Fire Safe Marin. [NEW]

S-1.15.3 Continue to promote the Curbside Chipper Day Program (also known as "Chipper Days") that provides free curbside pickup and disposal of excess vegetation from residential properties in Fairfax. [NEW]

- S-1.16 Continue to collaborate with the Ross Valley Fire Department to require proactive weed abatement and, brush thinning, and removal services on new and existing development in areas of elevated wildfire risk in order to curb potential fire hazards. [Program S-4.4.2.7]
- S-1.17 Cooperate with the CAL FIRE and the Ross Valley Fire Department to ensure that all portions of the Planning Area are served and accessible within an effective response time and to address regional wildfire threats. [Policy S-3.1.3, Program S-3.1.3.1, Program S-3.1.3.2, Program S-3.1.3.3, and Program S-3.1.3.4 combined and modified]
- S-1.18 Coordinate with the Marin Municipal Water District to ensure planning for an adequate and sustainable water supply to meet fire suppression needs within Fairfax over the long term. [Policy S-3.1.4, Program S-3.1.4.1, Program S-3.1.4.2, Program S-3.1.4.3 combined and modified]
- S-1.19 Work with responsible agencies and nongovernmental organizations to plan for post-fire recovery in a manner that reduces further losses or damages from future fires. [Program S-4.1.1.13 modified]

***Wind Hazards***

- S-1.20 Monitor issues related to damage from windstorms and undertake precautionary measures as needed, such as tree trimming in the public right-of-way. [NEW]
- S-1.21 To the extent feasible, ensure that housing, hospitals, care facilities, community centers, places of worship, and other facilities where people gather are set a minimum of 100 feet back from high voltage power lines or substations. [NEW]

***Humanmade Hazards***

- S-1.22 Continue to require remediation of hazardous material releases from previous land uses as part of any redevelopment activities. [NEW]
- S-1.23 Regulate development on sites with known contamination of soil or groundwater to ensure that construction workers, future occupants, adjacent residents, and the environment are adequately protected from hazards associated with contamination. [NEW]
- S-1.24 Consistent with State regulations, require proper storage and disposal of hazardous materials to reduce the likelihood of leakage, explosions, or fire, and to properly contain potential spills from leaving the site. [NEW]

## Community Resilience

---

Climate change refers to long-term shifts in weather patterns, including temperature and precipitation. Over the course of the Earth's history, climate shifts have occurred naturally, but since the 1800s, human activities have been the main driver of climate change, primarily due to burning fossil fuels like coal, oil, and gas. Burning fossil fuels generates greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that act like a blanket wrapped around the Earth, trapping the sun's heat and raising temperatures. As climate change progresses, it will continue to increase the frequency and severity of flooding and rain events, landslides, droughts, wildfires, and extreme heat events, that will both individually and collectively have increasing impacts on vulnerable populations, critical services, and infrastructure in Fairfax. While comprehensive, coordinated actions to reduce GHG emissions can help mitigate the extent of these impacts over the long term, additional actions must be taken to address the people, places, and infrastructure most at risk and to leverage other opportunities to effectively build community resilience to natural hazards and the effects of climate change.

Rising temperatures and changes in precipitation projected with climate change will exacerbate the risk of loss and damage from natural hazards in Fairfax, leading to more frequent and more intense wildfires and storm events, as well as increased risk of severe landslides. The MJHMP includes a climate vulnerability assessment that identifies risks to homes, businesses, infrastructure, utilities, transportation systems, and critical facilities. In Fairfax, critical community facilities such as Town Hall, Fire Station 21, and the Fairfax Women's Club are located in areas of flood and liquefaction risk. Additionally, older bridges in town are in need of retrofit and repair, while roadways and retaining walls in steeper terrain need reinforcement and stabilization. Safety Element policies address these priorities.

Equally important is a focus on actions to increase public awareness of risks and build community response capacity. The Town has established a Community Emergency Preparedness Committee (CEPC) to support and help coordinate town-wide efforts to prepare residents to respond to emergencies of all kinds. CPEC focuses on tangible, practical, cost-effective actions regarding emergency preparedness that can be implemented at the local level. Additionally, the Town Code provides for a Citizen's Disaster Council (CDC) consisting of the current mayor, vice mayor, emergency responders (fire/police) and other key groups that meets on an as-needed basis to develop emergency plans and related recommendations. In 2019, the CDC updated the Town's Emergency Operations Plan and created first of its kind community-friendly evacuation maps for distribution to residents. Fairfax also boasts eight Firewise communities of neighbors helping neighbors take actions to prepare themselves, their homes and their properties against the threat of wildfire. Through the Firewise program, Fire Safe Marin provides residents who organize as Firewise communities with resources and support for personal preparedness, alerts and warning, and strategies to make their community more fire-resistant. Membership in Central Marin Neighborhood Response Groups also continues to grow in Fairfax, bringing together volunteers who help connect with and support their neighbors before, during, and after disasters of all kinds. RVFD also provides free Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training that teaches residents how to take care of themselves, their family, and community until first responders can assist.



**GOAL S-2 Build community resilience to natural disasters and the effects of climate change.**

---

***Resilient Infrastructure***

- S-2.1 Consider climate impacts, risk, and uncertainty in designing and evaluating capital improvement projects and adjust infrastructure design standards and project locations to address asset- and site-specific vulnerabilities. [NEW]
  - S-2.1.1 Complete the bridge repair and roadway stabilization projects identified in the Capital Improvement Program, pursuing grant funding as needed to support project completion. Program S-1.1.5.1 and Program S-2.1.5.1 combined and modified
  - S-2.1.2 Prepare a prioritized list of roadway and retaining wall stabilization projects to inform planning for the Capital Improvement Program. Prioritization should consider factors such as roadway classification, traffic volume, and importance of the role in evacuation, as well as maintenance conditions, structural integrity, and magnitude of risk in the event of failure. [NEW]
- S-2.2 Explore opportunities to increase the resiliency of Town-owned facilities and infrastructure to severe weather events and support homeowners and business owners in increasing the resilience of their buildings and properties, through retrofits, weatherization, and other improvements. [Program S-1.1.3.1 modified]
  - S-2.2.1 Seek grant funding for seismic retrofit and renovation of the Town Pavilion and Fairfax Women's Club. [NEW]
- S-2.3 Plan for the continuity of operations for critical facilities following a disaster to help prevent interruption of emergency response related to life, property, and environment preservation. Evaluate options for ensuring emergency power at critical facilities, including microgrids, solar capture and storage, distributed energy, and backup generators. Consider the ability to reduce utility costs and carbon emissions in the assessment. [NEW]
- S-2.4 Partner with utility providers, regional agencies, and neighboring jurisdictions to assess the vulnerability of energy infrastructure and identify improvements that increase resilience of local energy infrastructure. [NEW]
- S-2.5 Require new development to underground utility lines wherever feasible and continue to coordinate with electricity and telecommunications providers to underground existing overhead lines throughout Fairfax. [NEW]

### ***Community Preparedness***

- S-2.6 Enhance collaboration with neighboring communities and agencies responsible for public safety in the region to closely coordinate and implement disaster-related plans, exercises, and training. [Program S-4.3.2.1 modified]
- S-2.6.1 Through the Marin Emergency Radio Authority (MERA) continue to collaborate with regional public safety partners to maintain and periodically upgrade a fully functional, interoperable radio and communication system. [NEW]
- S-2.7 Promote community awareness and understanding of threat hazards, disaster response, and steps that can be taken to reduce personal risk by:
- Disseminating information in multiple formats to reach all segments of the community;
  - Providing emergency preparedness and emergency alert information through social media, traditional media, community fairs, and direct information to neighborhood groups, residents, service clubs, and other community organizations; and
  - Conducting educational seminars or evacuation practice events to enhance preparedness and response.
- S-2.8 Proactively engage community members in supporting and helping coordinate collaborative town-wide efforts to prepare residents to respond to emergencies of all kinds. [Policy S-4.1.1, Program S-4.1.1.1, Program S-4.1.1.2, Program S-4.1.1.3, Program S-4.1.1.4, Program S-4.1.1.5 combined and modified]
- S-2.8.1 Use the Community Emergency Preparedness Committee as a forum for discussion and identification of tangible, practical, cost-effective actions regarding emergency preparedness that can be implemented at the local level. [NEW]
- S-2.8.2 Coordinate with the Ross Valley Fire Department to promote and facilitate formation of Firewise community groups throughout Fairfax and for the establishment of Neighborhood Response Groups, targeting neighborhoods and areas that face the greatest evacuation challenges (**Figures S-8 and S-9**) as a priority. [NEW]
- S-2.8.3 As a JPA member, support Ross Valley Fire Department efforts to recruit and retain Neighborhood Response Group Coordinator to facilitate neighborhood level emergency preparedness and response activities in Fairfax. [NEW]
- S-2.8.4 Identify a network of resilience hubs, such as the library, the Pavilion, the Fairfax Women's Club, and other Town and County facilities throughout Fairfax, to serve as central points for gathering, sharing

information, and accessing resources in the event of a natural or human-made disaster. Resilience hubs should be situated away from areas at risk of hazard impacts to the extent possible, located in easily accessible locations, and equipped with backup power supplies. [NEW]

- S-2.8.5 Increase participation in the Community Emergency Response Team program administered by the Ross Valley Fire Department to train residents in the basic skills required to respond to their community's immediate needs in the aftermath of a disaster. [Program S-4.1.1.6 modified]

## Emergency Response

---

OEM has the authority to establish an emergency operations center to serve as the location from which centralized emergency management can be performed during a major emergency or disaster, facilitating a coordinated response by community, local, state, and federal agencies. OEM maintains the Marin County Emergency Portal, a website which houses the latest information on emergencies, and operates the countywide emergency alert systems: Alert-Marin, the county's primary system to alert residents of emergencies in which the public may need to evacuate, shelter in place, or take some other protective action; and Nixle, which provides other, typically less urgent information including major traffic disruptions, drift smoke from a distant fire, and to let the public know about missing persons.

The Town of Fairfax also recognizes its inherent role in preserving life, property, and the environment through its emergency operations plan (EOP), developed to ensure the most effective and economical allocation of resources for the maximum benefit and protection of the community in time of emergency. The EOP establishes the emergency organization, assigns tasks, specifies policies and general procedures, outlines evacuation routes and provides for coordination of planning efforts of the various emergency staff and service elements utilizing the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) and National Incident Management System (NIMS). Updated periodically to as necessary to meet changing conditions, the EOP is an extension of the Marin Operational Area Emergency Operations Plan, allowing Fairfax to operate and communicate more effectively in multi-jurisdictional responses.

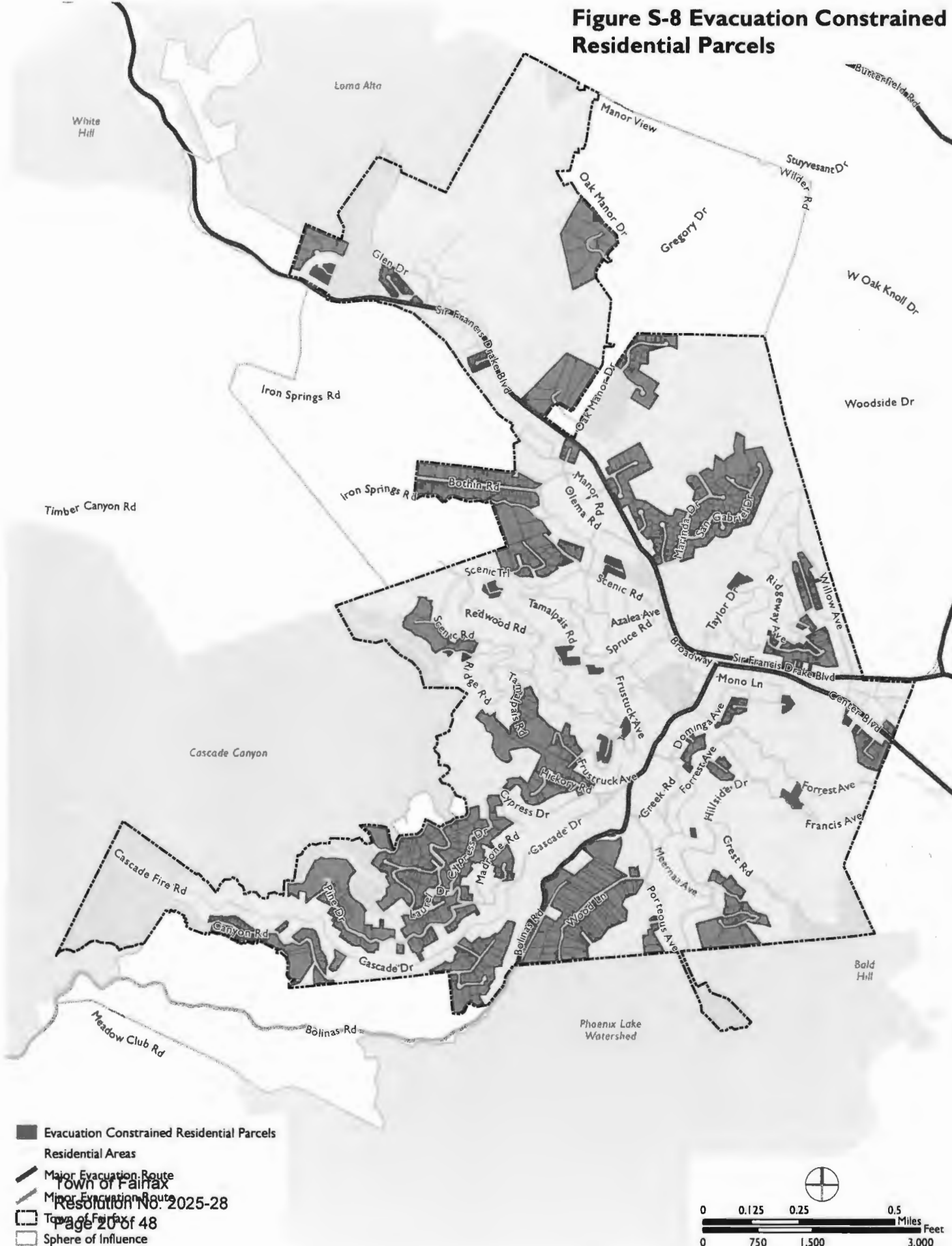
The primary emergency evacuation routes in Fairfax are shown on **Figure S-7**. Major and minor evacuation routes in Fairfax could face potential disruption from a wildfire, earthquake, or flood event, which may block roadways or damage the roadway surfaces. In the event of widespread disruption to local evacuation routes, major and minor routes may become more congested, slowing down evacuation of the community or specific neighborhoods. This issue may be compounded since Sir Francis Drake Boulevard serves as the primary evacuation route for neighboring communities, and so potential disruptions may have regional effects.

An analysis of existing development patterns and roadway connectivity completed with the use of Geographic Information System (GIS) software indicates that some residential areas of the town have constrained emergency access. Shown on **Figure S-8**, these evacuation-

### Figure S-7 Emergency Evacuation Routes and Regional Wildfire Mitigation Projects



**Figure S-8 Evacuation Constrained Residential Parcels**



Sources: Marin Wildfire, 2023; Calfire GIS Data, 2024 & 2007; FEMA National Flood Hazard Layer, 2022; MarinMap, 2022; Marin County GIS, 2022; Town of Fairfax, 2022; Dyett & Bhatta, 2022

constrained properties are all located in at least one hazard-prone area and may have access to only one emergency evacuation route, which can significantly impede the swift and orderly movement of residents to safer locations and can lead to congestion, delayed emergency response times, and heightened risk to life and property. Additionally, in the event of a natural hazard involving wildfire, earthquake, or flooding, relatively more difficult to evacuate areas of Fairfax are shown on **Figure S-9**. Difficulty was assessed in consideration of roadway conditions, communications difficulty, and presence of fire fuels using MWPA's scenario planning tool. Key factors that contribute to evacuation difficulty include heavy vegetation and steep elevations which increase burn probability, and roadway conditions such as slope, elevation, geometry, and lack of intersections, as well as distance to key infrastructure. The most difficult to evacuate areas are located in areas of steep topography and winding roads, including neighborhoods in the steep hillsides around San Gabriel Drive, Taylor Drive, and Ridgeway Avenue north of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, and around Frustuck Avenue, Hickory Road, Madrone Road, and Bolinas Road southwest of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. Although not fully reflected in MWPA scenario planning tool, areas along Cascade Drive and the northern part of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard have limited cellphone coverage, which can make access to information difficult if the power is out following a natural hazard event.

Safety Element policies focus on vegetation management and fire fuel abatement as well as repairing and maintaining roadway infrastructure, particularly along evacuation routes. Above all, ensuring that community members are prepared for emergency evacuation events and understand what to do is of critical importance.

### **GOAL S-3 Effective emergency response to disasters and emergencies.**

---

- S-3.1 Use the adopted Local Hazard Mitigation Plan and Emergency Operations Plan to guide actions and investments for emergency preparedness and response. [NEW]
  - S-3.1.1 Periodically update the Emergency Operations Plan with technical assistance from the Marin County Office of Emergency Services. [NEW]
- S-3.2 Maintain mutual aid agreements and communication links with the County of Marin and other surrounding jurisdictions that allow for supplemental aid from other police and fire personnel in the event of emergencies. [NEW]
- S-3.3 To facilitate the orderly evacuation of residential areas, maintain minimum standards for roadway design, maintenance, and vegetation management. [NEW]
  - S-3.3.1 Pursue funding to facilitate structural retrofits, roadway improvements, and abatement of vegetative hazards in existing residential neighborhoods without two points of emergency ingress/egress. [NEW]
- S-3.4 Require new residential subdivisions to have at least two ingress and egress routes that account for existing and proposed traffic evacuation volumes at buildout. [NEW]

**Figure S-9 Aggregate Evacuation Difficulty**





- S-3.5 Ensure road surfaces on designated evacuation routes can withstand extreme weather conditions and are maintained to accommodate increased traffic during evacuations. [NEW]
  - S-3.5.1 In future updates to the Capital Improvement Program, prioritize preventative maintenance and repair on roadway segments designated as evacuation routes. [NEW]
- S-3.6 Work with telecommunications providers and improve cellphone coverage in areas with known deficiencies, including along Cascade Drive and the northern part of Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. [NEW]
- S-3.7 Continue to collaborate in regional emergency planning initiatives. [NEW]
  - S-3.7.1 Partner with the Ross Valley Fire Department, the Marin County Office of Emergency Management, and neighboring jurisdictions on measures to protect critical evacuation routes such as Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, Broadway, Center Boulevard, and Bolinas Road and to develop contingency plans for operations when these and other roads are inoperable due to flooding or wildfire. [NEW]
  - S-3.7.2 Identify traffic management strategies to ensure efficient access from feeder streets onto critical evacuation routes during an emergency evacuation event in coordination with public safety partners and neighboring jurisdictions. Responsibility for implementation should be clearly identified and the strategies should be incorporated into the Emergency Operations Plan. [NEW]
  - S-3.7.3 Periodically conduct outreach to encourage residents with access and functional needs to register with the Office of Emergency Services to ensure that their needs are incorporated into all emergency response plans. [NEW]
- S-3.8 Provide information on and build community awareness of major evacuation routes and notification systems used for emergency alerts to residents and businesses in Fairfax. [NEW]
  - S-3.8.1 Study the feasibility of deploying dynamic message signs, roadway sensors, and other Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) tools to disseminate real-time traffic conditions, alternative routes, and delays to drivers, enhancing situational awareness and decision-making. [NEW]
- S-3.9 Use the countywide alert and early warning systems (Alert Marin and Nixle) to notify residents by phone, text, or email of extreme weather conditions and/or the need to evacuate in the event of emergency. The system should also be used to broadcast the location of evacuation centers, particularly for residents of vulnerable areas and neighborhoods with constrained emergency access. [NEW]

- S-3.9.1 Target efforts to increase registration to residential areas that face the greatest evacuation challenges (**Figures S-8 and S-9**) as a priority. [NEW]

## Public Safety Services

---

Responsive public safety services are integral to maintaining and strengthening quality of life in Fairfax. Law enforcement and fire protection services rooted in community-based approaches help to ensure that neighborhoods remain safe, engaged, and ready to respond in the event of an emergency. It is critical that we make wise investments in public facilities and safety to provide for our community's existing and future needs.

The Town operates the Fairfax Police Department (FPD) which is headquartered at the Fairfax Town Hall, at 144 Bolinas Road. The Ross Valley Fire Department (RVFD) is a separate Joint Powers Authority (JPA) consolidated department that services Ross, San Anselmo, Sleepy Hollow, and Fairfax. The department currently has four fire stations, with Station 21 located in the Town of Fairfax at 10 Park Road. RVDF participates in county-wide and State mutual aid systems, through which fire departments from different jurisdictions agree to assist one another during emergencies. Mutual aid is crucial in California, where large-scale disasters can quickly overwhelm local resources, necessitating a coordinated, multi-jurisdictional response.

Safety Element policies focus on ensuring that responsive police and fire services that achieve a high level of policy safety through proactive, preventative strategies and collaboration with partner agencies and the community.

### **GOAL S-4 Responsive police and fire services that ensure a high level of public safety.**

---

- S-4.1 Provide responsive, efficient, and effective police services that promote a high level of public safety. [NEW]
- S-4.2 Provide for fire prevention and emergency response services that minimize fire risks and protect life and property, including fire prevention, fire-related law enforcement, and public education and information programs. [NEW]
- S-4.3 Locate and maintain police and fire equipment, facilities, and staffing at locations and levels that allow for effective service delivery. [NEW]
- S-4.4 Require that new development contribute funds to ensure the provision of adequate police and fire services. [NEW]
- S-4.5 Continue to engage the Police and Fire Departments in the development review process to ensure that projects are designed and operated in a manner that

minimizes the potential for criminal activity and fire hazards and maximizes the potential for responsive police and fire services. [NEW]

- S-4.6 Apply Crime Prevention through Environmental Design principles in the design of new development and encourage the provision of adequate public lighting; windows overlooking streets or parking lots; and paths to increase pedestrian activity within private development projects and public facilities in order to enhance public safety and reduce calls for service. [NEW]
- S-4.7 Employ community-based policing strategies and encourage the establishment of neighborhood watch programs in partnerships with community groups. [Program S-4.1.1.7 modified]

## Land Use Element

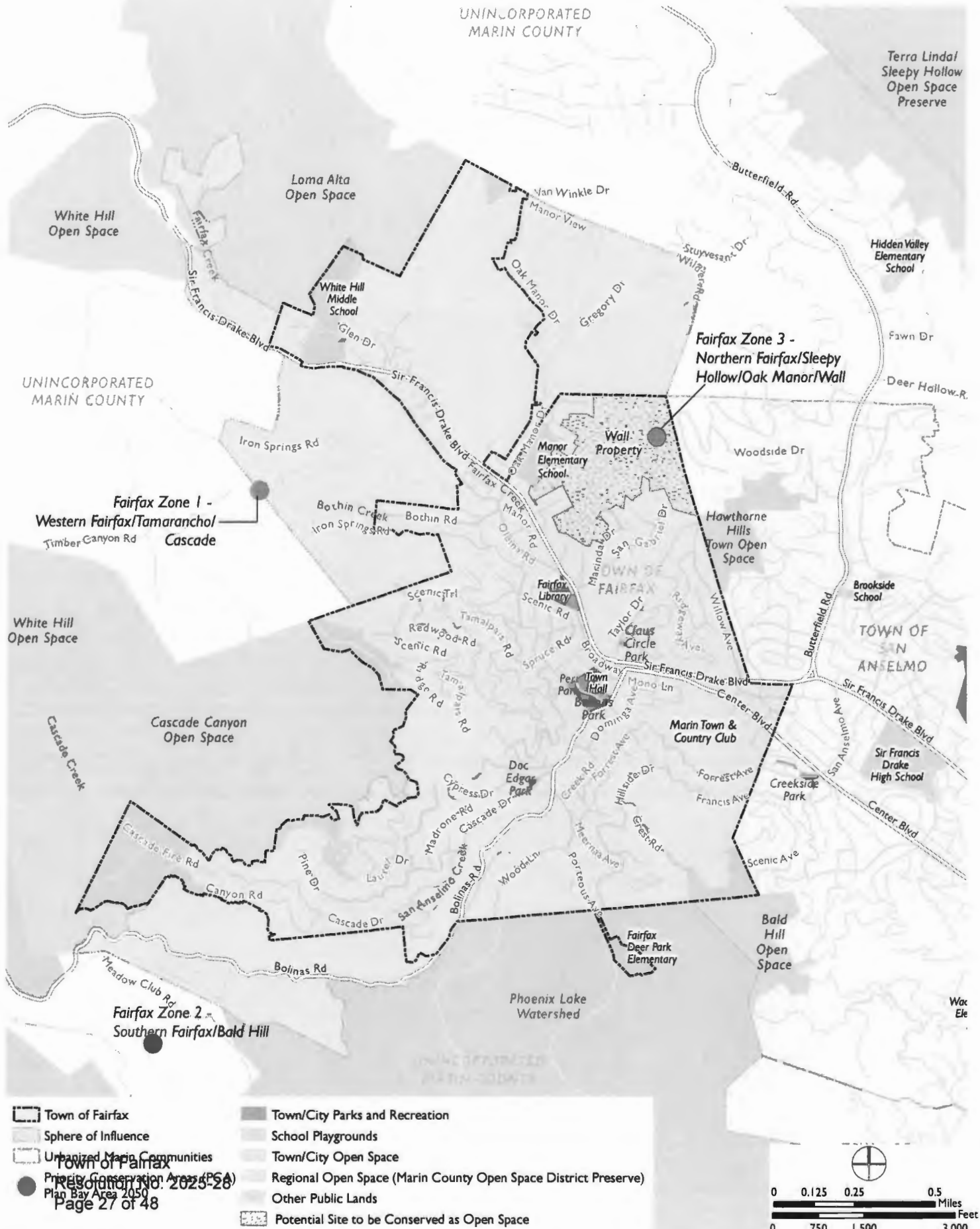
Historical development patterns in Fairfax have created a town with a distinct center and a compact form. The community grew up around the North Pacific Coast Railroad that linked San Francisco with Marin and Sonoma counties, which transported not only dairy and forest products but also vacationers and ultimately commuters. The historic alignment of the railway line ran along what is today Center Boulevard and Broadway, parallel to Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, the main thoroughfare connecting communities in the Ross Valley. Today Fairfax retains a village-like quality, with a charming downtown, distinct neighborhoods, and large areas of surrounding visible open space. The Land Use Element seeks to preserve these qualities by providing policies and programs to guide future development and conservation. The Land Use Element is the nexus of the General Plan, underpinning all other Elements.

### PLANNING AREA

The planning area is defined as the land area addressed by the General Plan, including land within Town limits and the Sphere of Influence (SOI) outside Town limits as shown on **Figure LU-1**. The planning area comprises approximately 2,040 acres (3.19 square miles) of incorporated and unincorporated land. Of this, approximately 1,435 acres (2.24 square miles) is incorporated land within the legal jurisdiction of the Town of Fairfax. The existing uses within the Town limits include residential and commercial developments, as well as public facilities including parks, schools, and government offices. The SOI is an area outside of the Fairfax jurisdictional boundary, or Town limits, that designates the Town's probable future boundary and service area. Fairfax's SOI encompasses approximately 605 acres (0.95 square miles) of unincorporated land within the County of Marin. The Marin Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) has jurisdiction over defining Fairfax's SOI and acts on annexations and the approval of service contracts outside Town limits. The purpose of the SOI is to coordinate and shape logical and orderly development while discouraging urban sprawl and the premature conversion of agricultural and open space lands by preventing overlapping jurisdictions and duplication of services. While individual jurisdictions establish their own planning goals, on a regional level, the LAFCo for each California county helps coordinate the efficient provision of services for the benefit of area residents and property owners.

The planning area boundary was determined in response to State law, which requires each city and town to include all territory within the boundaries of the incorporated area as well as "any land outside its boundaries which in the planning agency's judgement bears relation to its planning," within the general plan planning area. The Town only has jurisdiction within the Town limits, although the policy framework of the Land Use Element address coordination with the County and other jurisdictions in the region for conservation and development of land in the SOI.

**Figure LU-1: Planning Area and Context**



## TOWN STRUCTURE

Fairfax is located in scenic Ross Valley in central Marin County. As shown on **Figure LU-2**, existing development is primarily concentrated along Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, which runs along the valley floor bisecting the community. At the heart of Fairfax and the physical center of the community is the traditional downtown, comprised of a mix of commercial, civic, and residential uses. Adjacent to downtown along Sir Francis Drake there are auto-oriented commercial uses and a cluster of small-scale commercial businesses toward the eastern end of the corridor. These commercial areas together with Downtown Fairfax form the Town Center Area, beyond which medium density residential neighborhoods give way to low density residential development. The periphery of the community is defined by steep topography, forested hillsides, and undeveloped natural open space.

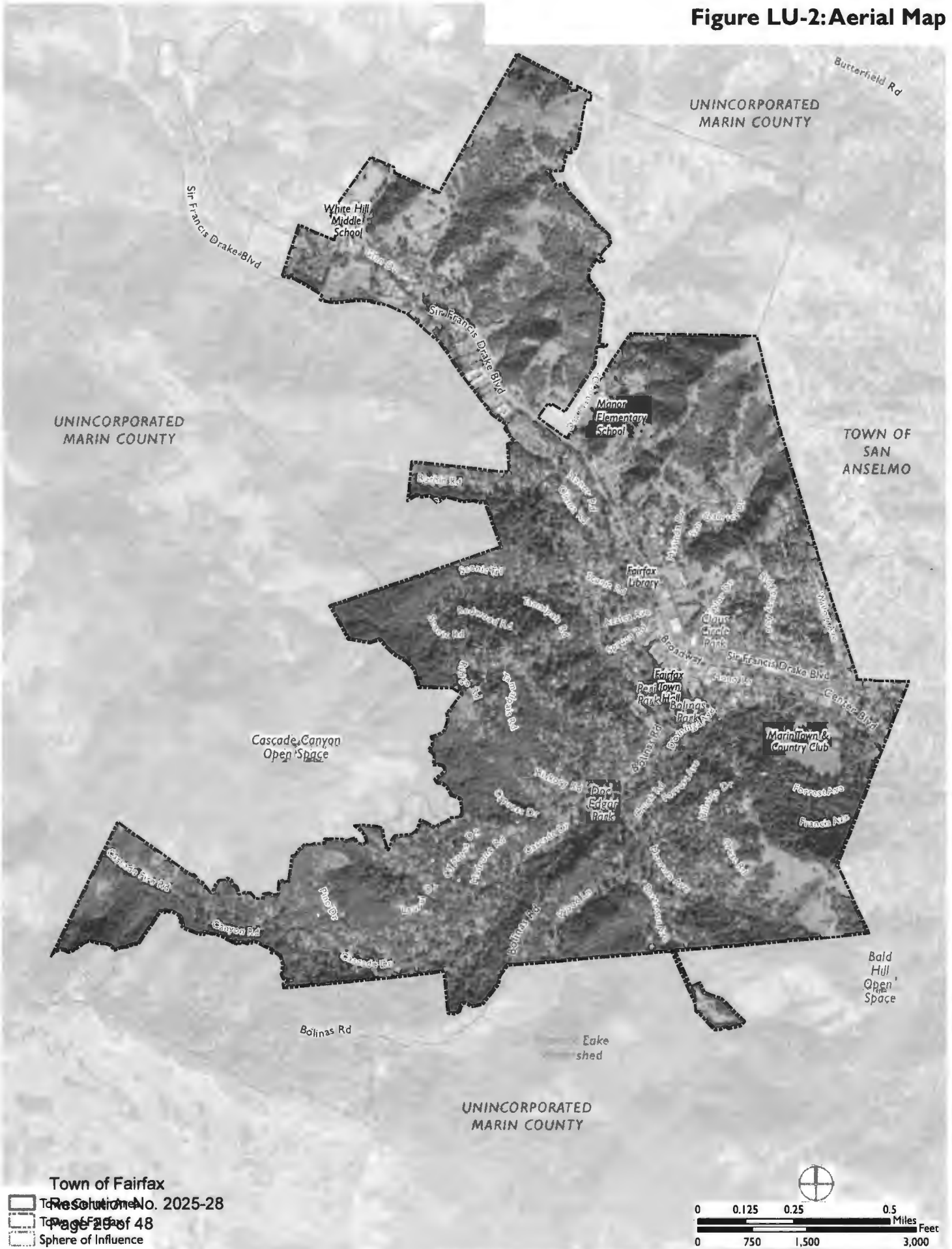
## LAND USE FRAMEWORK

Fairfax is a special place, loved by residents as well as visitors. Framed by vast areas of open space and forested hills, the natural setting is integral to Fairfax's sense of place, as are the community's village-like land use characteristics, seen in the small businesses, quaint neighborhoods, human-scaled public spaces, and bustling streets where residents bicycle and walk. The land use framework articulated in this Plan seeks to enhance livability and quality of life for current and future residents of Fairfax by focusing new development primarily within the Town Center Area while preserving the natural and open space resources that frame the community. The framework is intended to enhance the intrinsically sustainable development pattern of Fairfax by fostering an integrated, walkable mix of retail, services, civic, and residential uses at the core of the community that can be easily accessed from surrounding neighborhoods on foot or by bicycle. In established neighborhoods adjacent to the Town Center Area, the Plan seeks to foster traditional neighborhood design, characterized by a variety of lot sizes, home types, and styles as well as good connectivity within and between neighborhoods.

### Land Use Designations

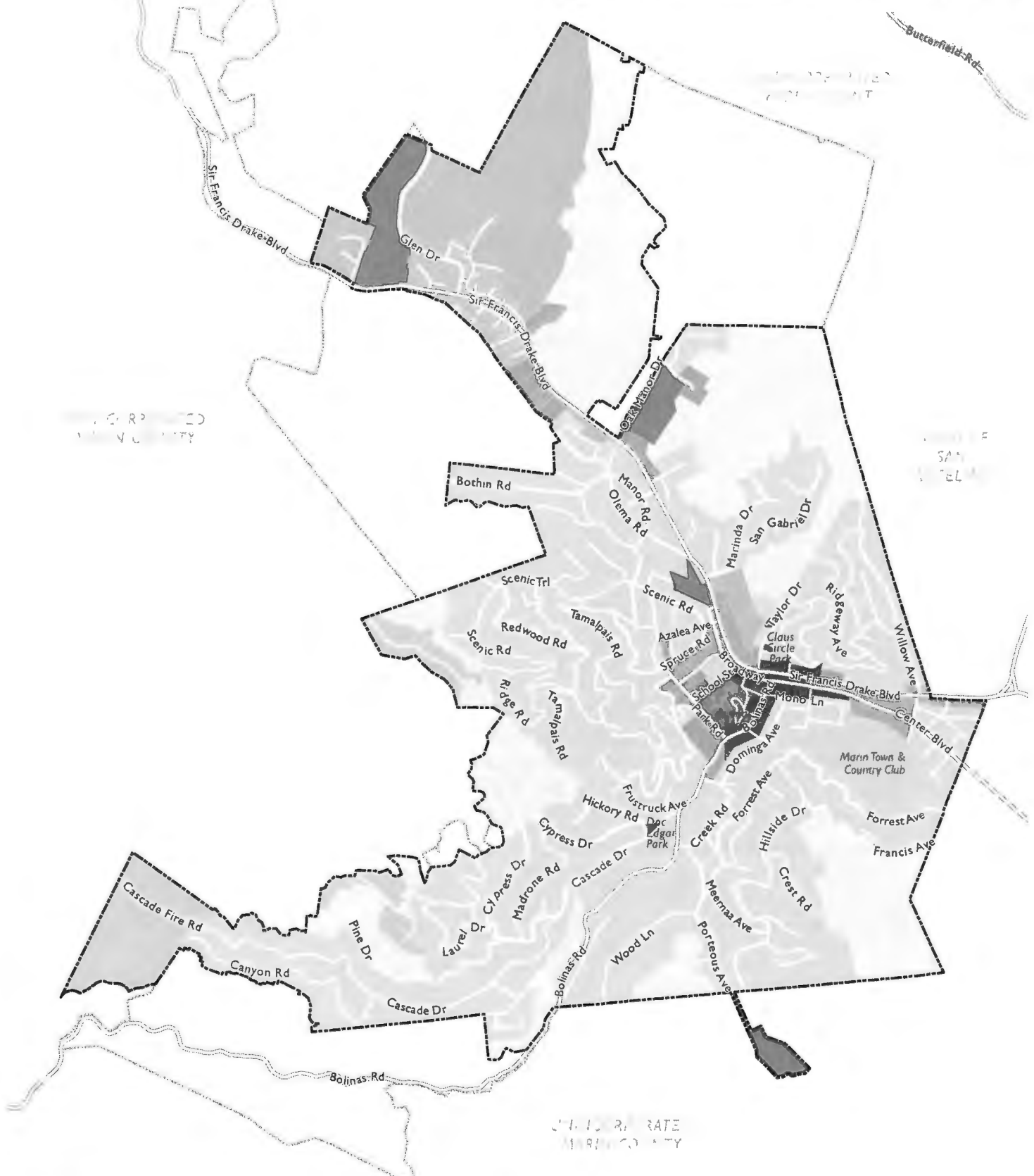
The General Plan Land Use Map (**Figure LU-3**) illustrates the long-term vision for development and conservation in the planning area, with land use designations that describe the qualities and sense of place envisioned for each area of Fairfax. Each designation includes standards for density or intensity of use. Residential densities are expressed in terms of dwelling units per acre. Building intensities for non-residential uses are expressed in terms of floor area ratio (FAR), which is the ratio of gross building area (excluding surface parking areas) to net lot area, both expressed in square feet. FAR does not regulate building placement or form; it defines the total amount of development allowed on a given lot. In the designations below, FAR represents an expectation of the overall intensity of future development. The maximums assigned to the land use designations below do not constitute entitlements, nor are property owners or developers guaranteed that an individual project, when tested against the Plan's policies, will be able or permitted to achieve these maximums.

**Figure LU-2: Aerial Map**





**Figure LU-3: General Plan Land Use Map**



<b>Residential</b>	<b>Commercial</b>	<b>Other</b>
Very Low Density Residential (VLDR)	Central Commercial (CC)	Public Facility (PF)
Low Density Residential (LDR)	Service Commercial (CS)	Parks and Recreation (PR)
Medium Density Residential (MDR)	Highway Commercial	Open Space (OS)
Planned Development District (PDD)	Limited Commercial (CL)	Town of Fairfax
	Recreational Commercial (CR)	Sphere of Influence

0 0.125 0.25 0.5 Miles  
0 750 1,500 3,000 Feet

*Residential Designations:*

**Very Low Density Residential (VLDR).** The VLDR designation applies in upland areas adjacent to the Town limit. It provides for large lot residential development with single-family homes and accessory dwelling units. The intent is also to preserve open space and undeveloped ridgelines. Permitted residential density is up to 0.25 dwelling units per acre (du/ac). Clustering of homes is encouraged to minimize areas of disturbance and optimize the provision of infrastructure.

**Low Density Residential (LDR).** The LDR designation applies in established residential areas and provides for single-family residences, including single-family attached, semi-detached, and duet homes, as well as accessory dwelling units. Permitted residential density range is 1-6 dwelling units per acre (du/ac). Public facilities such as schools, religious institutions, parks, and other community facilities appropriate within a residential neighborhood are also permitted.

**Medium Density Residential (MDR).** The MDR designation applies in areas adjacent to Downtown Fairfax and along Sir Francis Drake Boulevard. It is intended to transition from lower density single-family neighborhoods to areas of more intense mixed use and residential development. It provides for a range of residential uses, including single-family homes and more compact housing types such as townhomes, duplexes, triplexes and small-scale apartments at between 7-12 dwelling units per acre.

**Planned Development District (PDD).** This designation provides for development and conservation on large parcels on the periphery of the Town, subject to approval of a master plan or area plan. The intent is to provide for a mix of uses not available through other designations and flexibility in standards to address edge conditions. Clustering of structures is encouraged to preserve large areas of open space onsite, minimize areas of disturbance, and optimize the provision of infrastructure.

*Commercial Designations:*

**Central Commercial (CC).** The CC designation applies to properties in Downtown Fairfax, where a mix of daytime and evening uses that contributes to the economic and social vitality of the community is desired. The intent is to foster a distinctive, walkable environment at the heart of the Town. Permitted uses include restaurants, shops, services, entertainment, professional offices, and multifamily housing. The maximum permitted FAR for non-residential uses is 2.0 FAR and the maximum permitted residential density is 20 du/ac; however, sites included in the Workforce Housing Overlay are entitled to additional density if specified affordability requirements are met.

**Highway Commercial (CH).** The CH designation provides for a variety of retail, service, and wholesale businesses and offices along Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, the primary commercial arterial in Fairfax. Multifamily residential uses, live/work units, and shopkeeper housing are also allowed. The maximum permitted FAR for non-residential uses is 1.25 FAR and the maximum permitted residential density is 20 du/ac; however, sites included in the Workforce Housing Overlay are entitled to additional density if specified affordability requirements are met.

**Service Commercial (CS).** The CS designation provides for a variety of service, retail, and wholesale businesses which require larger sites and greater vehicular access than other commercial areas. Multifamily residential uses are also allowed. The maximum permitted FAR for non-residential uses is 0.5 FAR and the maximum permitted residential density is 20 du/ac; however, sites included in the Workforce Housing Overlay are entitled to additional density if specified affordability requirements are met.

**Limited Commercial (CL).** The CL designation provides for a range of neighborhood and community serving commercial opportunities outside of the Town Center Area, including medical facilities, day care facilities, professional offices, and cultural and recreation-oriented businesses. Multifamily residential uses are also allowed. The maximum permitted FAR for non-residential uses is 0.25 FAR and the maximum permitted residential density is 20 du/ac; however, sites included in the Workforce Housing Overlay are entitled to additional density if specified affordability requirements are met.

**Recreational Commercial (CR).** The CR designation provides for privately owned and operated recreational facilities that require a large area of land, such as a golf course, country club, or resort hotel. Uses in the CR designation tend toward physical activity in the open. The maximum permitted development intensity is 0.1 FAR.

*Other Designations:*

**Public Facilities (PF).** The PF designation encompasses facilities serving the good of the community, including fire and police stations; government buildings; libraries; schools; educational institutions; community centers; and other community-serving facilities. Co-location of multiple public facilities on a single site is encouraged where it will increase access to community services while offering cost savings and other benefits to community service providers. The maximum permitted development intensity in the PF designation is from 0.25 to 1.0 FAR, determined on a case-by-case basis in consideration of the neighborhood context.

**Parks and Recreation (PR).** The PR designation applies to public parks and recreational facilities in Fairfax. Permitted uses in this designation include parks, playgrounds, trails, ball fields, recreational facilities and other similar uses. There is no maximum permitted FAR in this designation.

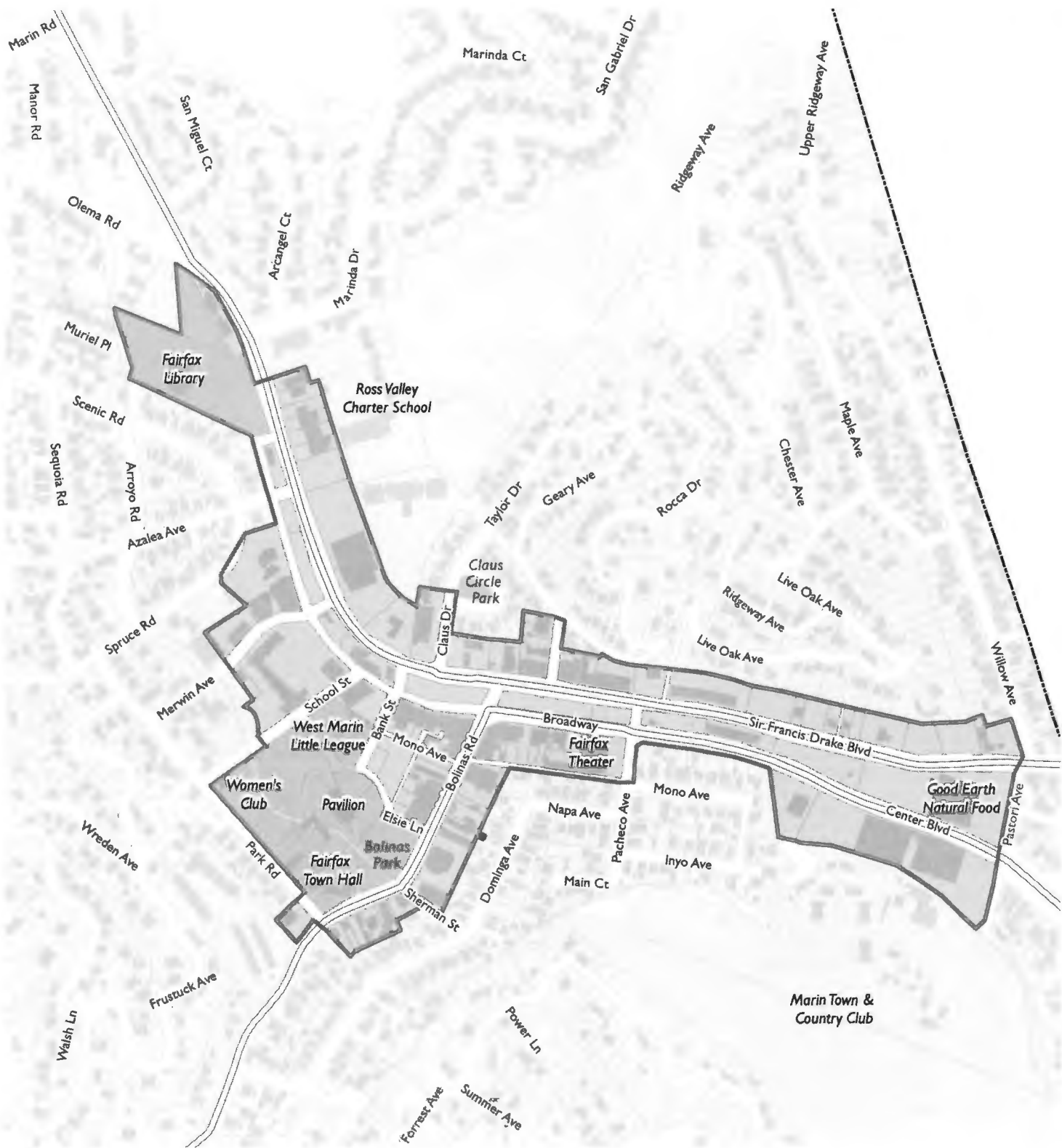
**Open Space (OS).** Typically located on the periphery of the Town, the OS designation is intended to preserve open space resources in their natural condition due to their high scenic value, environmental sensitivity, connectivity to larger habitats, and other considerations such as geotechnical, seismic, or wildfire hazards. Recreation trails may be permitted at the discretion of the Town to ensure adequate protection of underlying resources, or natural or scenic features.

## TOWN CENTER AREA

The Town Center Area is the heart of the community, cherished for its village-like qualities and small-town ambiance that are integral to Fairfax's sense of place. The area consists of Downtown Fairfax as well as adjacent commercial, civic, and residential uses, as shown in **Figure LU-4**. Broad-based community outreach conducted during preparation of the 2010-2030 General Plan identified the following key priorities for the Town Center Area:

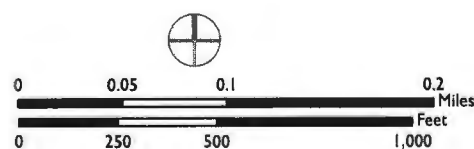
- Preserving Downtown Fairfax's village-like qualities;
- Visually defining the Town Center from the viewpoint of motorists passing through on Sir Francis Drake to help support local merchants;
- Strengthening linkages within the Town Center Area, such as connections from the east end commercial businesses to downtown;
- Improving pedestrian and bicycle safety;
- Enhancing the pedestrian realm, with widened and repaired sidewalks, street furniture, outdoor dining, and lighting;

Figure LU-4: Town Center Area



Legend:  
Town Center Area  
Town of Fairfax  
Sphere of Influence  
Parks, Recreation, and Open Space  
Major Roads

Resolution No. 2025-28  
Page 33 of 48



Sources: MarinMap, 2023; Town of Fairfax, 2023; Dyett & Bhatia, 2023

- Addressing traffic flow at the Bolinas-Broadway-Claus-Sir Francis Drake intersection;
- Restoring the Pavilion and raising its profile; and
- Greening the area and exploring options for "daylighting" culverted creeks.

Since that time, the Town has completed several important planning efforts with bearing on the Town Center Area. These include the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Update, which outlines plans for new pedestrian and bicycle connections to and through the Town Center Area, and the Workforce Housing Zoning Overlay, which provides opportunities for new multifamily residential housing on key sites in the Town Center Area to meet the needs of those who work in Fairfax and adjacent Marin County communities. In this context, there is a need for careful, coordinated area-wide planning and this Plan envisions preparation of a Town Center Area Plan for that purpose. Policies and programs in this Element also provide direction for other actions and investments with a view to strengthening the role of Town Center area as the commercial and cultural focal point of community life.

## **MARIN TOWN AND COUNTRY CLUB**

The Marin Town and Country Club site is a 25-acre property located southeast of the Town Center on Pastori Avenue. Originally gifted to Charles Snowden Fairfax, for whom the Town is named, the property was operated as a popular sports and recreation club between 1944 and 197 with baseball diamonds, a sunbathing lawn, picnic areas, and swimming pools as well as an outdoor bandstand and dance floor called The Redwood Bowl, from which live dance music was broadcast throughout the western United States on Saturday nights. Following the closure of the club, Fairfax voters approved a ballot measure designating the site for commercial-recreational uses and requiring a vote of the people to rezone for other uses. Over the years, various plans have been mooted for the site, including proposals to redevelop part of the site with housing, to create a park, and a proposal to restore the former resort and add housing, but none have moved forward. Under current zoning, the site can be redeveloped with privately owned recreational uses or the property owner can initiate a ballot initiative to rezone it.

## **HISTORIC RESOURCES**

Fairfax has a rich historic and cultural legacy that extends from pre-colonial times through the 20th Century to the present day. At the time of European contact, the planning area was part of a larger territory controlled by the Coast Miwok, hunter-gatherers who lived in permanent villages that allowed for dense populations with complex social structures. The planning area was later part of a 6,558-acre land grant from the Mexican Government to Domingo Sais, who in turn gifted a 32-acre portion area to Charles Snowdon Fairfax, after whom the Town was named when it was incorporated in 1931. In the late 19th Century and early 20th Century Fairfax was primarily a summer resort for residents of San Francisco, but the population grew rapidly with the expansion of the railroad. Inaugurated in the 1870s, the railroad was constructed to transport dairy and forest products to Bay Area cities. Scheduled service also popularized passenger trips to resorts on the Russian River in Sonoma and to Fairfax Park, and the railroad eventually provided commuter service to San Francisco with a station in Downtown Fairfax. In the 1960s and 70s, Fairfax earned singular

reputation as a hip and mellow hub of the Bay Area music scene, where Janis Joplin, Jefferson Airplane, The Grateful Dead, Van Morrison, Joan Baez and others performed.

Testifying to this heritage, today the home of Charles Snowdon Fairfax is listed on the California Register of Historic Places and there are several other buildings and structures that may be eligible for listing at the national, state, or local level, as shown on **Figure LU-5** and **Table LU-1**. The focus of policies and programs in this Element is preserving and enhancing physical aspects of the historic built environment that contribute to Fairfax's unique sense of place. Please see the Conservation Element for additional policies and programs related to cultural and historic preservation.

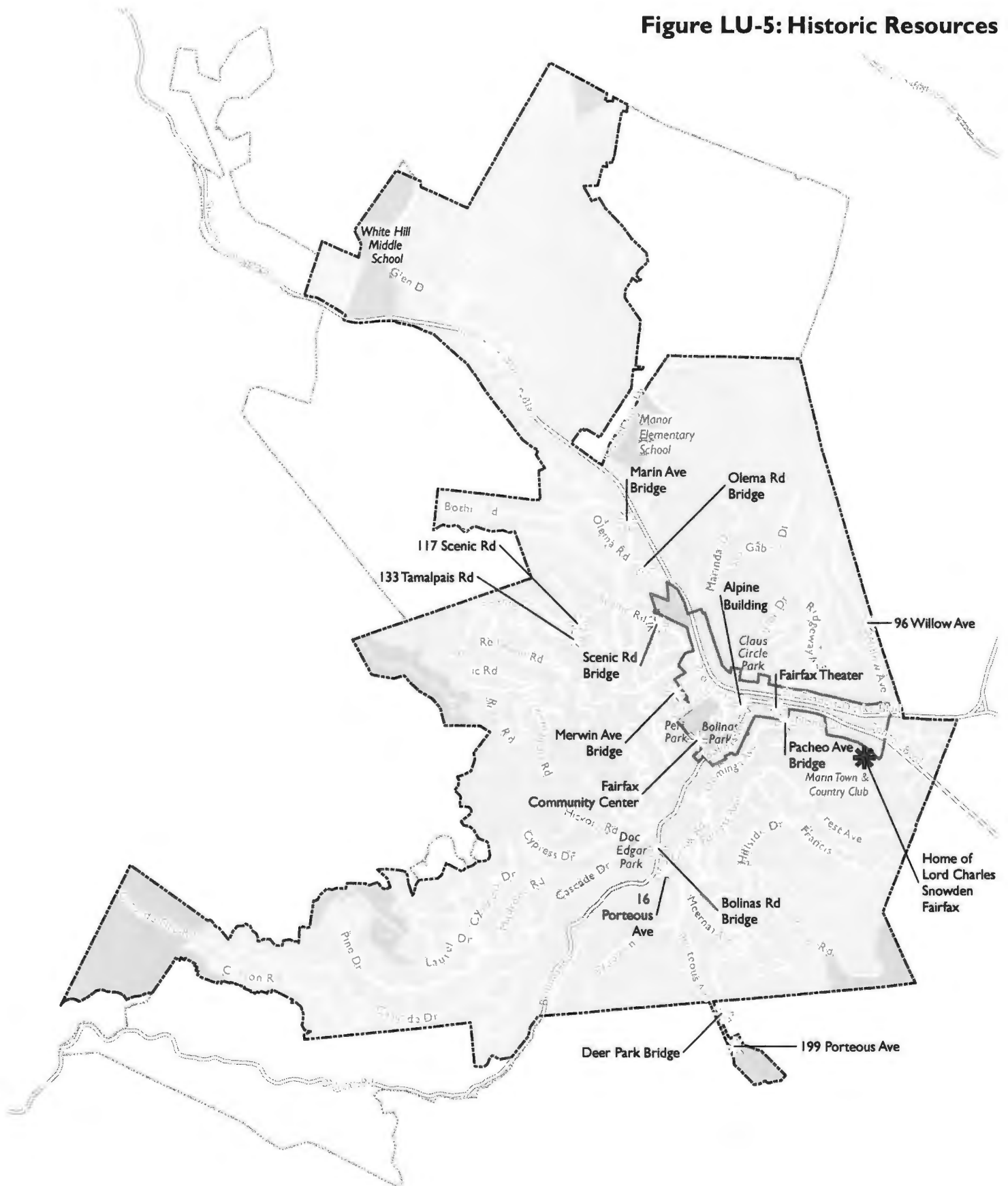
**GOALS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS**

**LU-1:                Preserve and protect the natural and open space resources that define Fairfax and contribute to local sense of place.**

---

- LU-1.1      Preserve the natural, scenic, and open space resources surrounding Fairfax through collaboration in regional and cross-jurisdictional conservation initiatives. (Policy LU-1.1.1, modified)
  
- LU-1.2      Continue to use zoning and development standards to protect existing scenic resources and prevent development on unurbanized open space adjacent to ridgetops. [NEW]
  - LU-1.2.1    Limit development on hillside and ridgeline parcels to preserve and enhance the scenic qualities of the Town. [Objective LU-1.2]
  - LU-1.2.2    No roads or streets shall be permitted to traverse a ridge, except as deemed necessary for emergency access and egress. [Policy LU-1.2.4]
  
- LU-1.3      Encourage open space preservation through easements, land dedications, and land use and zoning designations with the objective of connecting conservation areas, protecting biodiversity, accommodating wildlife movement, and sustaining ecosystems. (NEW)
  - LU-1.3.1    Identify opportunities for new parks and public open spaces in existing neighborhoods where feasible. [Policy LU-1.1.2, modified]
  - LU-1.3.2    Evaluate opportunities to redesignate Town-owned VLDR parcels as OS or PR where the parcels are adjacent to designated open space lands and do not have access to the sewer system. The evaluation and any subsequent rezoning shall consider the Housing Accountability Act, the Surplus Lands Act, and other applicable laws and regulations. [NEW]

**Figure LU-5: Historic Resources**





**Table LU-I Historic and Potentially Historic Resources**

Primary #	Resource Name	Res Type	Evaluation Info	Construction Year(s)	Evaluation Code	Evaluation Description
P-21-001124	Bolinas Road Bridge	Structure	7R, , 4930-0004-0000	1925	Not Evaluated, or Needs Re-evaluation for National (NR) or California (CR) Registers	Identified in Reconnaissance Level Survey or in an Area of Potential Effect (APE): Not evaluated.
P-21-001125	Deer Park Bridge	Structure	7N, , 4930-0005-0000	1929	Not Evaluated, or Needs Re-evaluation for National (NR) or California (CR) Registers	Needs to be reevaluated - formerly coded as may become NR eligible with specific conditions.
P-21-001126	Marin Avenue Bridge	Structure	7R, , 4930-0006-0000	1925	Not Evaluated, or Needs Re-evaluation for National (NR) or California (CR) Registers	Identified in Reconnaissance Level Survey or in an Area of Potential Effect (APE): Not evaluated.
P-21-001128	Merwin Avenue Bridge	Structure	7R, , 4930-0008-0000	1920	Not Evaluated, or Needs Re-evaluation for National (NR) or California (CR) Registers	Identified in Reconnaissance Level Survey or in an Area of Potential Effect (APE): Not evaluated
P-21-001129	Olema Road Bridge	Structure	7R, , 4930-0009-0000	1925	Not Evaluated, or Needs Re-evaluation for National (NR) or California (CR) Registers	Identified in Reconnaissance Level Survey or in an Area of Potential Effect (APE): Not evaluated
P-21-001130	Pacheco Avenue Bridge	Structure	7R, , 4930-0010-0000	1920	Not Evaluated, or Needs Re-evaluation for National (NR) or California (CR) Registers	Identified in Reconnaissance Level Survey or in an Area of Potential Effect (APE): Not evaluated
P-21-001131	Scenic Road Bridge	Structure	7R, , 4930-0011-0000	1925	Not Evaluated, or Needs Re-evaluation for National (NR) or California (CR) Registers	Identified in Reconnaissance Level Survey or in an Area of Potential Effect (APE): Not evaluated
P-21-001124	Bolinas Road Bridge	Structure	7R, , 4930-0004-0000	1925	Not Evaluated, or Needs Re-evaluation for National (NR) or California (CR) Registers	Identified in Reconnaissance Level Survey or in an Area of Potential Effect (APE): Not evaluated.
P-21-001125	Deer Park Bridge	Structure	7N, , 4930-0005-0000	1929	Not Evaluated, or Needs Re-evaluation for National (NR) or California (CR) Registers	Needs to be reevaluated - formerly coded as may become NR eligible with specific conditions.

**Table LU-I Historic and Potentially Historic Resources**

Primary #	Resource Name	Res Type	Evaluation Info	Construction Year(s)	Evaluation Code	Evaluation Description
21-001122	Alpine Building	Building	7R, , 4930-0002-0000	1921	Not Evaluated, or Needs Re-evaluation for National (NR) or California (CR) Registers	Identified in Reconnaissance Level Survey or in an Area of Potential Effect (APE): Not evaluated
21-002470	Fairfax Youth Center	Building	6Y, 10/05/1988, HUD880829T		Not Eligible for or Removed from Listing or Designation as Specified	Determined ineligible for NR by consensus through Section 106 process – Not evaluated for CR or local listing
21-002277	16 Porteus Ave	Building	6Y, 01/14/2019, HUD_2019_0114_002   6Y, 03/24/1994, HUD940218M	1927	Not Eligible for or Removed from Listing or Designation as Specified	Determined ineligible for NR by consensus through Section 106 process – Not evaluated for CR or local listing
21-001849	Children's Center and Acquisition Building	Building	6Y, 10/20/1987, HUD870922ZZ		Not Eligible for or Removed from Listing or Designation as Specified	Determined ineligible for NR by consensus through Section 106 process – Not evaluated for CR or local listing
	117 Scenic Rd	Building	6Y, 12/23/2021, HUD_2021_1210_001	1928	Not Eligible for or Removed from Listing or Designation as Specified	Determined ineligible for NR by consensus through Section 106 process – Not evaluated for CR or local listing
	133 Tamalpais Rd	Building	6Y, 08/17/2015,	1962	Not Eligible for or Removed from Listing or Designation as Specified	Determined ineligible for NR by consensus through Section 106 process – Not evaluated for CR or local listing
	96 Willow Ave	Building	6Y, 12/12/2019, HUD_2019_1206_006	1949	Not Eligible for or Removed from Listing or Designation as Specified	Determined ineligible for NR by consensus through Section 106 process – Not evaluated for CR or local listing

Source: California Historic Resources Information System (CHRIS), 2023.

**LU-2: Promote a compact urban footprint and sustainable development pattern. [GOAL LU-5, modified]**

---

- LU-2.1 Preserve and enhance Fairfax's village-like quality and the features that contribute to it.
- LU-2.1.1 Coordinate with Marin County Community Development Agency for review of development proposals in the unincorporated portions of the Town's Planning Area. [Program LU-6.1.2.1]
- LU-2.2 Prioritize infill development and foster a resource-efficient development pattern that supports efficient delivery of public services and infrastructure, conserves open space lands surrounding the Town, and helps reduce vehicle trips. [Policy LU-5.1.1, expanded]
- LU-2.2.1 Use development agreements, impact fees, benefit districts, and other mechanisms to ensure the provision of adequate infrastructure to serve new development. [NEW]
- LU-2.2.2 In the event of a successful ballot initiative to rezone the Marin Town and Country Club site, explore avenues available to fund and finance planning and investments needed to support realization of a community-wide vision for the future of the site. [NEW]
- LU-2.3 Focus new multifamily residential and mixed use development in the Town Center area so as to support the vitality of existing businesses, optimize the use of utility infrastructure, promote walkability, and reduce vehicle trip frequency, length, and associated emissions. [NEW]
- LU-2.4 Promote a wider range of housing types in residential neighborhoods, including single-family homes, accessory dwelling units, junior accessory dwelling units, tiny homes, and small-scale clustered residential development, so as to encourage a mix of housing types at varying rents and sales prices. [NEW]
- LU-2.5 Permit new development and extension of urban services in a manner that preserves natural and cultural resources within the Planning Area. [Objective LU-5.1, modified]
- LU-2.6 Consider providing additional density on PDD sites identified in the Housing Element for projects that propose smaller scale, low impact clustered hillside development that helps the Town meet its regional housing needs allocation (RHNA) obligations while preserving large areas of open space onsite. [NEW]
- LU-2.7 Encourage the use of innovative and cost-effective building materials, site design practices, and energy and water conservation measures to conserve resources and reduce the cost of residential development. [NEW]

**LU-3: Strengthen the role of Town Center area as the commercial and cultural focal point of community life.**

---

- LU-3.1 Maintain and enhance the village-like ambiance of Town Center Area while integrating new housing and businesses to strengthen the vitality of the area. [Policy LU-7.1.1, modified]
- LU-3.1.1 Adopt and implement a Town Center Area Plan with the following objectives:
- Integrate a vibrant mix of retail, restaurant, entertainment, commercial and residential uses;
  - Enhance walkability and build pedestrian and bicycle connections to and within the Town Center Area;
  - Foster opportunities for people to meet and gather, including through the incorporation of plazas, green spaces, paseos, terraces, and outdoor dining spaces; and
  - Build a distinctive visual presence for the Town Center Area as viewed by passersby on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard and strengthen sense of place with gateway design features, branded amenities, landscaping and greenery.
- LU-3.2 Work with the Fairfax Chamber of Commerce, local businesses, and other community groups to sponsor a program of regular and special events downtown that cater a broad range of interests and contribute to the sense of community. [NEW]
- LU-3.3 Foster a vibrant mix of uses and activities within the Town Center [NEW]
- LU-3.3.1 Continue to cultivate a mix of daytime and evening uses throughout the Town Center Area, including restaurants, shops, entertainment, professional offices, and housing to encourage activity throughout the day. [NEW]
- LU-3.3.2 Foster mixed use development and the co-location of residential and commercial uses within site distance of one another to promote day and evening vitality. [NEW]
- LU-3.4 Recognize that a diversity of architectural styles contributes to Fairfax's charm and promote a variety of building types, styles, and features within the Town Center Area, consistent with its village-like qualities. [Policy LU-7.1.2, modified]
- LU-3.5 Require site designs that create an active street frontage and screen parking from the frontages of major thoroughfares. [NEW]

- LU-3.6 Prioritize implementation of public realm and streetscape improvements downtown, including curb extensions and accent paving at pedestrian crossings; new street furniture; and directional signage to parking areas. [NEW]
- LU-3.7 Encourage high standards of property maintenance and rapid abatement of conditions contributing to blight. [NEW]
- LU-3.8 Integrate public art and community gathering spaces such as multi-purpose plazas, green spaces, and paseos throughout the Town Center Area. [NEW]

**LU-4: Foster human-centered design and sense of community.**

---

- LU-4.1 Preserve and enhance Fairfax's village-like qualities and sense of community while allowing and encouraging appropriate infill development. (Objective LU-7.1, modified)
  - LU-4.1.1 Promote context-sensitive design throughout the Town, based on objective standards for height, bulk, scale, landscaping, parking, setbacks, streetscapes, and other aspects of development. [NEW]
  - LU-4.1.2 Use development standards to ensure smooth transitions between neighborhoods and districts that border one another so that they maintain their unique qualities while being compatible with one another. [NEW]
- LU-4.2 To the extent feasible natural features including the existing grade, mature trees, and vegetation shall be preserved with development or redevelopment. (Policy LU-7.2.2, modified)
- LU-4.3 Allow for home-based businesses in residential neighborhoods to the extent that businesses will not substantially impact neighborhood quality of life, vehicular circulation, or parking patterns. [Policy LU-7.2.4, modified]
  - LU-4.3.1 Update the Town Code to facilitate the establishment of home-based businesses compatible with neighborhood quality of life.

**LU-5: Preserve and restore historic resources that enhance sense of place.**

---

- LU-5.1 Foster the preservation, restoration, and compatible reuse of historically significant structures and sites in Fairfax. [NEW]
  - LU-5.1.1 Develop review procedures for projects that could potentially affect designated historic resources. [NEW]
  - LU-5.1.2 Conduct a survey of potentially historic buildings and sites in Fairfax and maintain an inventory of buildings, features, important eras, and sites of local, regional, and national significance. [Policy LU-9.1.1, modified]

- LU-5.2 Provide information on incentives for the restoration or adaptive reuse of historic properties, landmarks, and districts to property owners and the public. [NEW]
- LU-5.3 Partner with the Fairfax Historical Society, local businesses, and community groups to establish interpretive programs, such as walking/audio tours or “story poles;” permanent displays and signage; informational pamphlets; banners; and special events celebrating local history. [NEW]

# — M E M O R A N D U M —

## EXHIBIT C

---

To: Jeffrey Beiswenger, Town of Fairfax  
From: Andrew Hill, Principal and Clare Kucera, Associate  
Re: Environmental Review of General Plan Land Use, Town Center, and Safety Elements  
Date: December 17, 2024

---

Dear Jeff:

On December 13, 2023 the Fairfax Town Council adopted the 2023-31 Housing Element and certified an accompanying Environmental Impact Report (EIR) (State Clearinghouse #2022080624) in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Subsequently, the Town of Fairfax has prepared an update to the Land Use, Town Center, and Safety Elements of the General Plan for consistency with the 2023-31 Housing Element and State Law. This memo has been prepared to demonstrate that the modifications made to the Land Use, Town Center, and Safety Elements would not result in either new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects, and further, that there are no changes in circumstance or new information that would change the findings of the previously certified EIR. This memo serves as an addendum to the 2023-31 Housing Element EIR.

### BACKGROUND

Pursuant to CEQA Section 15162, "when an EIR has been certified ... for a project, no subsequent EIR shall be prepared for that project unless the lead agency determines, on the basis of substantial evidence in the light of the whole record, one or more of the following:

- Substantial changes are proposed as part of the proposed update that would result in new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects;
- Substantial changes have occurred with respect to circumstances under which the proposed update is undertaken (i.e., a significant change in the existing or future condition) that would result in new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects; and/or
- New information of substantial importance, which was not known and could not have been known with the exercise of reasonable diligence at the time the previous EIR was certified as complete or the negative declaration was adopted, shows any of the following:
  - The project will have one or more significant effects not discussed in the previous EIR or negative declaration;
  - Significant effects previously examined will be substantially more severe than shown in the previous EIR;
  - Mitigation measures or alternatives previously found not to be feasible would in fact be feasible, and would substantially reduce one or more significant

## — M E M O R A N D U M —

- effects of the project but the project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative; or
- Mitigation measures or alternatives which are considerably different from those analyzed in the previous EIR would substantially reduce one or more significant effects on the environment, but the project proponents decline to adopt the mitigation measure or alternative.

Accordingly, the primary purpose of this evaluation is to determine, on the basis of substantial evidence, if one or more of the above listed conditions are met.

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The Fairfax General Plan, adopted in 2012, includes eight elements that correspond to the legal requirements for the General Plan in force at the time of adoption. This includes the legally mandated Land Use and Safety Elements, as well as an optional Town Center Element. Government Code 65300.5 requires that the General Plan "comprise an integrated, internally consistent and compatible statement of policies," and because the 2023-31 Housing Element involved certain changes to land use and zoning standards as required for the Town to accommodate its assessed share of the regional housing need, corresponding amendments to the Land Use and Town Center Elements are required to maintain consistency within the General Plan. Additionally, since adoption in 2012, new requirements for the Safety Element have been enacted under State law, including requirements to address community wildfire risk (Gov. Code Section 65302.(g)(3)), emergency evacuation capacity (Gov. Code Sections, 65302.(g)(4), 65302.(g)(5), and 65302.15), and the effects of climate change 65302.(g)(4)(A) through (C). Therefore, the project involves a series of updates to the Land Use, Town Center, and Safety Elements to satisfy these requirements, summarized as follows:

#### *[Land Use Element]*

The Element has been reorganized around a streamlined set of goals to remove duplication and simplify the policy framework. Former Goal LU-4 and related policies regarding wildfire prevention and preparedness were relocated to the Safety Element, where they more clearly address the legal requirements established in State law. A set of land use designations that describe the range of permitted uses, densities, and development intensities in each designation shown on the 2012 General Plan Land Use map has been added, as required pursuant to Government Code 65302(a). Additionally, policies and programs to promote downtown vibrancy and infill development and to preserve historic and scenic resources in the community were added.

#### *[Town Center Element]*

The 2012 Town Center Element incorporates goals and policies to guide the preparation of a future Town Center Plan and to articulate desired land uses and urban design features for the area. These policies objectives have been retained and incorporated into the Land Use Element under a new goal. New Program LU-3.1.1 calls for the adoption of a Town Center Plan to maintain and enhance the village-like ambiance of Town Center Area while integrating new housing and businesses to strengthen the vitality of the area, consistent with Program 1-A of the 2023-31 Housing Element. Additionally, existing policies and programs



## — M E M O R A N D U M —

establish height and use restrictions that conflict with the Housing Element and State law have been revised, including TC-2.1.1.3, which calls for an ordinance limiting building heights to no more than existing; TC-2.1.2, which limits building heights to two stories and does not permit ground floor residential uses; and TC-2.1.2.1, which limits building heights to 28.5 feet or two stories throughout the Town Center Area.

### *[Safety Element]*

The Element was reorganized to consolidate closely related goals; integrate and augment former Goal LU-4 and related policies and programs addressing wildfire; and introduce new goals and policies to address the new requirements for emergency evacuation capacity and the effects of climate change. Maps in the Element have been updated with the latest publicly available data from State and federal sources and information on natural hazard risk and occurrence in the community from the Town's Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) has been integrated. New policies and programs added to the Element seek to:

- Promote and incentivize seismic safety retrofits of existing buildings;
- Prioritize capital improvements for slope stabilization and repair of bridges and roadways;
- Require mitigation for flood hazards, stormwater management, home hardening, and defensible space in new development;
- Strengthen coordination among neighboring jurisdictions and agencies in the Ross Valley for emergency preparedness and evacuation capacity; and
- Raise public awareness of natural and humanmade hazards and bolster community preparedness and response.

### **ANALYSIS**

Overall, the proposed amendments to the Land Use, Town Center, and Safety Elements of the General Plan streamline the organization of the document, eliminate conflicts with the 2023-31 Housing Element, and ensure compliance with applicable State Law. The reorganization, consolidation, and clarification of goals described above is an administrative change that would have no impact on environmental resources in the Town or the surrounding area, as are the updates to mapping and information made using the latest available data from publicly available government sources. The land use designations added to the Land Use Element establish permitted uses and include standards for density and development intensity that match the related standards in the various adopted zoning districts which they implement. As such, these land use designations do not increase development capacity within the Town of Fairfax above the amount envisioned in the 2023-31 Housing Element or analyzed in the related EIR. No changes have been made to the General Plan Land Use Map as amended through 2023, and as such, adoption of the proposed Land Use Element would not permit new or different uses in areas where they are not currently permitted. Therefore, adoption of the new land use designations would not result in new or substantially more adverse impacts than previously analyzed in the Housing Element EIR. Further, the following new policies and programs addressing the scenic and historic resources that help define the qualities of the community would help to preserve and protect important visual and historic resources, and would also not result in new or more adverse impacts to these resources:

## — M E M O R A N D U M —

- LU-1.3 Encourage open space preservation through easements, land dedications, and land use and zoning designations with the objective of connecting conservation areas, protecting biodiversity, accommodating wildlife movement, and sustaining ecosystems.
- LU-1.3.2 Evaluate opportunities to redesignate Town-owned VLDR parcels as OS or PR where the parcels are adjacent to designated open space lands and do not have access to the sewer system. The evaluation and any subsequent rezoning shall consider the Housing Accountability Act, the Surplus Lands Act, and other applicable laws and regulations.
- LU-3.3.2 Foster mixed use development and the co-location of residential and commercial uses within site distance of one another to promote day and evening vitality.
- LU-4.1.1 Promote context-sensitive design throughout the Town, based on objective standards for height, bulk, scale, landscaping, parking, setbacks, streetscapes, and other aspects of development.

Revision of Town Center Element Policy TC-2.1.2 and Programs TC-2.1.1.3 and TC-2.1.2.1 regarding building heights and ground floor uses would result in higher building heights than under the 2012 General Plan; however, these revisions are consistent with those adopted into the Town Zoning Code with adoption of the 2023-31 Housing Element in January 2024 and related impacts were analyzed and found to be less than significant in the Housing Element EIR. As such, the revisions to Town Center Element Policy TC-2.1.2 and Programs TC-2.1.1.3 and TC-2.1.2.1 would not result in new or substantially more adverse impacts than previously analyzed in the Housing Element EIR.

Finally, new goals and policies added to the Safety Element to address natural hazard risk, emergency preparedness and response, and the effects of climate change would have a beneficial impact and would help to reduce impacts related to geologic and seismic hazards; hydrology and flooding; wildfire; and emergency evacuation over those analyzed and mitigated in the Housing Element EIR. They would not result in new or substantially more adverse impacts than previously analyzed. Examples include:

- S-1.1 Require that new development be designed and sited to minimize risks from seismic events, including ground shaking, liquefaction, and landslides.
- S-1.3 Require geotechnical studies for new development in areas where sewers are not available to ensure that the surrounding soil can support alternative wastewater disposal systems.
- S-1.4 Ensure that structures intended for human occupancy are designed and constructed to retain their structural integrity when subjected to seismic activity, in accordance with the California Building Code.
- S-1.6 Require project applicants to minimize grading in hillside areas and mitigate erosion risk by revegetation or other acceptable methods. Permit grading operations only in areas scheduled for immediate construction or paving.
- S-1.7.1 Periodically review the risk of increased flooding hazards due to climate change and develop strategies to adapt to changing flood hazard conditions, including those related to monitoring, emergency preparedness, vegetation management, and

## — M E M O R A N D U M —

development policies, and ensure that the Town's hazard information is up-to-date regarding climate trends.

- S-1.8.1 Pursue funding individually and in collaboration with the Marin County Flood Control and Water Conservation to finance improvements to storm drainage and flood control facilities in Fairfax.
- S-1.13.1 Use Measure C funding from the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority to reduce wildfire hazards and achieve measurable fuel reduction in Fairfax.
- S-1.15.1 Promote the availability of Wildfire Risk Home Evaluations from the Ross Valley Fire Department and home hardening and defensible space grants from the Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority in Townwide email newsletters and at public contact events.
- S-2.1 Consider climate impacts, risk, and uncertainty in designing and evaluating capital improvement projects and adjust infrastructure design standards and project locations to address asset- and site-specific vulnerabilities.
- S-2.1.1 Complete the bridge repair and roadway stabilization projects identified in the Capital Improvement Program, pursuing grant funding as needed to support project completion.
- S-2.4 Partner with utility providers, regional agencies, and neighboring jurisdictions to assess the vulnerability of energy infrastructure and identify improvements that increase resilience of local energy infrastructure.
- S-2.8.2 Coordinate with the Ross Valley Fire Department to promote and facilitate formation of Firewise community groups throughout Fairfax and for the establishment of Neighborhood Response Groups, targeting neighborhoods and areas that face the greatest evacuation challenges (Figures S-8 and S-9) as a priority.
- S-3.2 Maintain mutual aid agreements and communication links with the County of Marin and other surrounding jurisdictions that allow for supplemental aid from other police and fire personnel in the event of emergencies.
- S-3.3 To facilitate the orderly evacuation of residential areas, maintain minimum standards for roadway design, maintenance, and vegetation management.
- S-3.3.1 Pursue funding to facilitate structural retrofits, roadway improvements, and abatement of vegetative hazards in existing residential neighborhoods without two points of emergency ingress/egress.
- S-3.4 Require new residential subdivisions to have at least two ingress and egress routes that account for existing and proposed traffic evacuation volumes at buildout.
- S-3.8 Provide information on and build community awareness of major evacuation routes and notification systems used for emergency alerts to residents and businesses in Fairfax.
- S-3.8.1 Study the feasibility of deploying dynamic message signs, roadway sensors, and other Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) tools to disseminate real-time traffic conditions, alternative routes, and delays to drivers, enhancing situational awareness and decision-making.

## — M E M O R A N D U M —

### **CONCLUSION**

Therefore, overall, the proposed amendments to the Land Use, Town Center, and Safety Elements of the General Plan would not result in new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects. Further, in the relatively short period of time - twelve months - that has elapsed since certification of the Housing Element EIR, there have been no new development projects in Fairfax, no new or revised local regulations, and no new or revised State law that would substantially change the cumulative circumstances or the background information on which the previously certified EIR was based. As such, none of the conditions identified in CEQA section 1562 requiring the preparation of a subsequent or supplemental EIR have occurred and an addendum to the previously certified Housing Element EIR is appropriate.