



# TOWN OF FAIRFAX

## STAFF REPORT

### December 12, 2016

**TO:** Mayor and Town Council

**FROM:** Garrett Toy, Town Manager *GT*

**SUBJECT:** Receive report on the Town Center Workshop #2 and discuss/consider next steps

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#### CONTINUED FROM NOVEMBER COUNCIL MEETING

#### RECOMMENDATION

Receive report prepared by Taecker Planning & Design on Town Center Workshop #2 and discuss/consider next steps in the process and direct staff as appropriate.

#### BACKGROUND

In April of 2016 the Town Council approved a "Work Program" for the creation of a "Town Center Plan" as called for in the Town Center Element of the 2010 – 2030 General Plan. The Work Program envisioned a series of three workshops.

The first of the three workshops was held on Tuesday, June 14, 2016 and was well attended by the public. Workshop #1 focused on the review of (1) the Town's existing General Plan Policies relative to the creation of a Town Center Plan (TCP), (2) existing plans (e.g., the Parkade conceptual plan), and (3) previously proposed projects (e.g., the Bolinas Road Sidewalk Improvement proposal). At the meeting, staff memorialized the participants' comments on an "issues and opportunities" list.

At its July 2016 meeting, the Council considered a staff report on the preparation for Workshop #2. Workshop #2 was intended to distill the list of "issues and opportunities" that came out of Workshop #1 into possible options for addressing the "problems" and capitalize on opportunities for improving the town center area. This second Workshop was intended to be where the creative thinking (e.g., "brainstorming") with stakeholders would take place. As a result of limited staff resources as well as the need to facilitate more community input, the Town brought in *Taecker Planning & Design* and *Craig Communications* to help prepare for and facilitate Workshop #2.

Workshop #2 was held on Saturday, October 1, 2016, from 9:00 am until 1:30 pm at the Women's Club. It was slated to begin with an overview by Matt Taecker followed by a "color coded" Post-It exercise for attendees to assign preferences to the design elements and circulation features displayed on the walls, ending with break-out group discussions at the tables where maps and materials had been prepared for participants. However, after Matt Taecker's presentation on design options and before the "color coded" note exercise, the workshop was somewhat "usurped" by some attendees and morphed into a more typical Council meeting format with the Mayor providing an opportunity for attendees to comment one by one - similar to "open time" at Council meetings.

Interestingly, many attendees continued the "color coding" exercise while others shared their thoughts via the open mic in the main hall. One group of attendees even took the initiative and conducted their own group table exercise in the kitchen area of the Women's Club. The

individual speaker comments at the open mic were recorded on a flip chart by Matt Taecker. After all those who wanted to speak did, approximately 60 attendees remained and participated in the table exercises. This exercise started at approximately noon and finished at 1:30pm. The table exercises were well received as opponents and proponents for developing a Town Center Plan intermixed and engaged in civil and thoughtful discourse at the tables. At the end of the exercise, each group briefly reported the main outcomes from their break-out groups.

## DISCUSSION

Overall, Workshop #2 offered insight into community attitudes and preferences. It attracted approximately 115 registered community members, who participated at a high rate during the first half of the Workshop, even though some participants objected to the workshop and Town Center planning process generally. For some options, responses from participants indicated clear majorities either in favor or against. Still other items attracted a mixed response and may merit further exploration. Some items attracted little interest. While not in the manner we expected, we did receive many comments and useful guidance from attendees on a variety of topics.

Workshop #2's results offer useful guidance by determining items where there were clear objections, as well as items where there appears to be support. After Workshop #2, the Town Council at its October 5, 2016 meeting, in an effort to alleviate community concerns, stated that it would **NOT** further explore the closure of Bolinas Road, would not further explore making Bolinas Road one way, and would not be interested in eliminating parking on one-side of Bolinas Road.

The next step in the process is to discuss and consider the summary report (Report) prepared by Taecker Planning & Design on Town Center Workshop #2. Matt Taecker will make a brief presentation on his report which includes circulation and design concepts that build on Workshop #2's public comments.

The key questions for the Council to consider are:

- *Should concepts be further defined and explored based on the results of Workshop #2?*
- *If so, which of those concepts?*
  - *Parkade*
  - *Circulation Options (e.g., Elise/Bank/Sir Francis Drake)*
  - *Minor Design Elements*
  - *Others*
- *Should another community workshop be scheduled to gain a sense of community preferences toward the above concepts?*
  - *It should be noted that this will require the additional services of Taecker Planning and Design to prepare concepts/materials and conduct Community Workshop #3.*

## ON-LINE FORUM RESULTS

The on-line forum topic regarding Bolinas Rd. closed on October 21<sup>st</sup>. We received 554 responses of which 314 were registered responses. Registered responses allow the Town to determine if a respondent lives in town and that they only voted once. Of the 314 responses, 36 respondents were identified as living outside the Town limits.

The overall results of the on-line forum mirror the general comments received at Workshop #2. The report is attached. The individual comments from respondents can be read by going to [www.townoffairfax.org](http://www.townoffairfax.org) and clicking on the on-line forum topic and then selecting "responses."

It should be noted that if you remove the unregistered responses, the overall percentages with regard to the responses did not significantly change. For example, approximately 78.8% and 76.4% of ALL respondents did not want to further explore the concept of closing Bolinas or making it a one-way street, respectively. In comparison, approximately 78.5% and 75.3% of the REGISTERED respondents did not want to further explore the concept of closing Bolinas or making it a one-way street, respectively.

With regard to improvements on the existing Bolinas Rd., the top two vote getters were repairing existing sidewalks (approx. 65%) and enhancing crosswalk safety (approx. 44%). Approximately 46% of the respondents indicated their selections would not change if it resulted in the loss of parking spaces. Approximately 37% respondents indicated they would change their selections if parking was lost. That being said, repairing existing sidewalks and enhancing sidewalk safety remained the top two vote getters, but the other improvements such as parklets and street trees received significantly less support with "None (leave as is)" being the 3rd highest selected item.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

Workshop costs are included in the FY16-17 Planning Division budget.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Summary Report
2. On-line forum summary report