



SAN RAFAEL

THE CITY WITH A MISSION

Community Development Department – Planning Division

Meeting Date: February 17, 2021

Agenda Item: 3

Case Numbers: GPA16-001 & P16-13

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REPORT TO DESIGN REVIEW BOARD

SUBJECT: Public Hearing on Draft Downtown San Rafael Precise Plan

The Design Review Board (DRB) will hold a public hearing on the Draft Downtown Precise Plan, including the Draft Form Based Code (FBC), on February 17. The purpose of the hearing is to update the DRB on the proposed Plan and FBC and provide an opportunity for comments from DRB members and the public. Case Nos.: GPA16-001 & P16-013.

SUMMARY

The City has prepared a “Precise Plan” for Downtown San Rafael concurrently with the General Plan Update. The Plan replaces “Our Vision of Downtown San Rafael” (1993) which has served as the guiding policy document for Downtown for the last 27 years. The Precise Plan provides a design vision for Downtown, direction on land use and building heights, and new standards and guidelines for historic preservation, transportation, affordable housing, and economic development. The Plan anticipates 2,200 housing units and approximately 2,000 additional jobs in Downtown San Rafael during the next 20 years.

The Downtown Precise Plan includes a Form Based Code (FBC), which will replace the current zoning regulations for Downtown San Rafael. While traditional zoning focuses on allowable land uses and densities, the FBC focuses on the physical form of new development. The FBC emphasizes context-sensitive design, compatibility of building scale and mass, pedestrian-orientation, and integration of private development with adjacent public spaces such as streets and sidewalks.

The intent of the February 17 agenda item is to brief Design Review Board (DRB) members on the Draft Plan and proposed FBC, provide an opportunity for comments and questions from the Board, and provide an opportunity for public comment. The City’s consultant will provide a presentation, followed by Board discussion.

BACKGROUND

Downtown San Rafael has been the focus of planning studies for the last three decades. In 1993, the City adopted “Our Vision of Downtown San Rafael.” The Vision included a land use plan that provided the framework for new zoning districts that remain in effect today. In 2009, Downtown was designated a Priority Development Area (PDA) by the City Council, recognizing its potential for sustainable, transit-oriented growth and making it eligible for planning grants and transportation investments.

Following the PDA designation, a number of studies and plans were completed, including the SMART Station Area Plan (2012), “Good Design Guidelines” recommendations (2017), and the Downtown Parking and Wayfinding Study (2018). There are also Downtown-focused recommendations in the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (2018), the Housing Element (2014), the Climate Change Action Plan (2019), and the Third Street Rehabilitation and Safety Studies (2019-20). Collectively, these plans and studies point to the need for a higher-level framework that updates the 1993 Plan and synthesizes policies for Downtown into a single, cohesive document.

During the early phases of the 2040 San Rafael General Plan Update, the City pursued and secured a \$500,000 grant through ABAG's One Bay Area Grant (OBAG) program to update the Downtown Plan. There were "economies of scale" associated with doing this work concurrently with General Plan 2040, including a combined EIR addressing the impacts of both projects and a coordinated public outreach effort.

The City determined that a "Precise Plan" was the best plan format for communicating an updated vision for Downtown. A Precise Plan is an accepted, multi-purpose planning tool used in many California cities to express policy recommendations and development standards for smaller areas within the jurisdiction. Like General Plan 2040, the Precise Plan has a 20-year planning horizon. Since it covers a smaller geographic area than the citywide Plan, its focus is more granular. The area covered by the Precise Plan is 265 acres, extending from the 2nd/ 4th Street intersection on the west to Montecito Plaza on the east, and from Mission Avenue on the north to First Street/ Albert Park on the south. Much of this area falls within the designated PDA (e.g., a one-half mile radius from the SMART Station). However, the Precise Plan includes the West End Village, which is outside the PDA.

In Fall 2018, the City selected Opticos Design, Inc. of Berkeley to develop the Precise Plan. Opticos is nationally known for its pioneering work on Form-Based Codes as well as planning for "missing middle" (moderate density/ moderate income) housing types in American cities. Work on the Precise Plan began in January 2019. The City Council expanded the scope of the General Plan 2040 Steering Committee to include vetting of the Precise Plan. Community input on the Plan was solicited through a three-day design charrette (May 8-11, 2019), three pop-up workshops on Fourth Street, presentations to the City Council, Planning Commission, and other Boards and Commissions, meetings with stakeholders, and various on-line community engagement programs.

Opticos completed an Administrative Draft of the Precise Plan in April 2020. Following further review of the Draft, revisions were made and a Public Review Draft was released in December 2020. The Planning Commission held public hearings on this Draft on January 12, January 26, and February 9, 2021. An EIR for the Precise Plan and the General Plan 2040 are currently in circulation, with comments being taken until March 9, 2021. Staff expects that the Planning Commission will forward the Draft Plan to the City Council in May 2021.

OVERVIEW OF THE DOWNTOWN PRECISE PLAN

The Draft Downtown Precise Plan provides the following functions:

- It is a policy document guiding a 20-year vision for Downtown.
- It is a regulatory document for reviewing and permitting future development and changes to existing buildings. It replaces many regulations and provisions of the San Rafael Municipal Code Title 14 – Zoning.
- It incorporates design guidelines, which are typically a separate document and an advisory tool.
- It incorporates specific recommendations for improvements to streets and public spaces.
- It creates a predictable development review process to facilitate project streamlining.
- It helps the City meet its future housing needs by providing substantial capacity for new residential development.

The Plan includes a Vision Summary, followed by eight chapters, followed by the Form Based Code and Appendix. The text below provides a high level summary of each chapter. Hyperlinks to each chapter are included:

[Vision Summary](#): This is a short overview of the Plan, explaining what the Precise Plan is and highlighting its key areas of focus.

Chapter 1: [Introduction and Community Engagement](#). This chapter explains the purpose of the Plan, its legal foundation, and its relationship to the General Plan and zoning regulations. Past plans for Downtown are described to provide the context for the document. The chapter also describes the community engagement program and highlights key milestones in the planning process.

Chapter 2: [Existing Conditions](#). This chapter provides background data on the Downtown Precise Plan area, including its location, demographics, and market conditions. It provides a historical timeline for Downtown, tracking its evolution over the last 200 years. Maps and narrative text describe the area's built form (building heights, lot sizes, frontages, community institutions, etc.). The chapter provides an overview of the circulation system, including traffic counts, commute data, and a summary of the bicycle, pedestrian, and transit networks. It includes an overview of natural hazards, including sea level rise and wildfire. The chapter culminates with six key challenges for Downtown and three key opportunities.

Chapter 3: [Design Principles and Guiding Policies](#). Chapter 3 lays out eight overarching principles to guide Downtown's future. These relate to Downtown's identity and sense of place, its transportation network, its civic spaces, its economy and business success, its historic resources, its resilience to climate change, and its opportunity to be a higher density mixed use district that provides new housing opportunities for persons of all incomes. A set of guiding policies is included under each principle.

Chapter 4: [Design Vision](#). The design vision includes two major sections. The first half of the chapter provides areawide guidance for land use, building height, transitions between uses, and public realm improvements. An illustrative diagram showing development footprints on potential opportunity sites also is included. While the diagram is hypothetical, it provides a useful tool for visualizing how Downtown might grow and change in the next 20 years. The second half of the chapter provides guidance for four subareas—Downtown Gateway, Downtown Core, West End Village, and Montecito Commercial area.

Key recommendations are summarized below:

- The framework for the Form-Based Zoning Code is provided, including four new zoning districts. These districts reflect different levels of development intensity, and a distinction between “Main Street” areas such as Fourth Street and “Neighborhood” areas such as Fifth Avenue. Building types are broadly classified as “house form” or “block form,” with different standards applying to each.
- A new height map is adopted for Downtown. The map identifies maximum “base heights” ranging from 30 to 70 feet, as well as potential height bonuses for projects incorporating affordable housing or providing community benefits. The bonuses range from 10 to 20 feet and vary by area. State law provides more generous bonuses for housing development near the SMART station if 100% of the units are affordable.
- Density and Floor Area Ratio (FAR) limits will no longer apply in Downtown. Development intensity is guided by the height map, setback and parking requirements, and the design standards of the Plan itself.
- The chapter emphasizes the importance of public space (including streets) to the quality and success of Downtown. Opportunities for specific improvements are highlighted, including a transit plaza adjacent to the SMART station, improvements to Fourth Street (especially between A Street and Court Street), enhancement of Downtown alleys, a West End Village pocket park (on Fourth St), a promenade along the Canal, and an “urban wetland” that facilitates sea level rise adaptation in the area south of Second Street near Francisco Boulevard West. More generally, the Plan encourages small pocket parks and urban plazas as components of new private development.

- For each of the four Downtown subareas, the Plan provides a summary of existing conditions, a statement of design intent, a description of the area's character and uses, a buildout estimate, a summary of public realm improvements (including streets and civic space), a summary of historic resources, and additional recommendations.
- In general, growth is concentrated in the Downtown Gateway and Downtown Core areas. New buildings in this area will typically range from four to eight stories, with lower scale development adjacent to historic resources. Lower scale development (generally three to four stories) is envisioned in the West End Village and Montecito commercial areas.
- The Plan recognizes uncertainties associated with relocation of the Bettini Transit Center. The three site options now under consideration are described, and potential outcomes related to each choice are discussed. The Plan provides the flexibility for any of these three sites to be selected but acknowledges that this decision may impact buildout capacity and future circulation needs.
- The Montecito Shopping Plaza is presumed to remain for the duration of the planning period. However, the Plan supports the idea of eventually redeveloping the shopping center as a mixed-use development. Such a development would feature ground floor commercial uses, upper floor housing, reconfigured streets and blocks, a waterfront promenade, and various design features responding to anticipated sea level rise.

Chapter 5: [Historic Resources](#). This chapter describes the history of Downtown San Rafael, identifies existing historic preservation regulations, and summarizes the findings of a 2019-20 field survey of Downtown historic resources. The field survey covered 572 properties within the Downtown Plan area boundaries—roughly 70 percent were determined to have no visible potential as historic resources. The remaining 159 properties were further evaluated, and about 100 were determined to meet eligibility criteria as historic resources. This includes structures that are already designated as historic landmarks, structures that were identified as potential historic resources in the City's 1977 and 1986 surveys, and approximately 35 structures that had not been previously identified as potentially historic. In addition, the survey identified two areas as eligible for consideration as historic "districts" under the California Environmental Quality Act. The Precise Plan itself does not create new historic districts but recommends modified development standards in the eligible areas to protect the integrity of historic resources.

Chapter 5 includes specific recommendations for strengthening the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance, including aligning designation criteria with State and federal standards. Incentives for historic preservation are described. The Plan recommends a more formalized process for evaluating applications for alterations to historic structures. While a Historic Preservation Commission is listed as an option, the Plan recognizes that other options--such as a standing committee or on-call architectural historian—are more feasible.

Procedures for altering or demolishing potential historic resources, based on Secretary of the Interior standards, are included in the chapter. This is followed by a series of flow charts indicating the level of review required for various projects, as well as standards for development on or adjacent to eligible historic resources. In many cases, exceptions to the standards may be considered based on the recommendations of a qualified architectural historian and a decision by the Planning Commission.

Chapter 6: [Transportation and Parking](#). Chapter 6 begins by recognizing the multi-modal nature of Downtown's circulation system--- in other words, its layered network of roads, transit, bicycle routes, sidewalks, paths, and crosswalks. A "modal priority" map is presented, identifying priority routes for pedestrians, bicycles, transit users, and motorists. Design standards for each street vary depending on the travel modes they support. The Plan provides a menu of improvements for each mode. It also proposes a number of specific projects, including:

- Pedestrian and bicycle path improvements along Tamalpais Avenue, connecting the Puerto Suello Hill path to the Mahon Creek path.
- Fourth Street streetscape improvements, including enhanced crosswalks, lighting, and signage. The possibility of redesigning parts of Fourth Street as a “shared street” for vehicles, pedestrians, and bicycles (including occasional closures for special events) is discussed.
- Alley improvements to Walter Lane, Julia Street, and Commercial Street.
- Pedestrian improvements along east-west streets under the Highway 101 viaduct.
- Safety improvements along Second and Third Streets, consistent with the Third Street improvement studies.
- Bicycle improvements consistent with the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan. The Precise Plan recognizes the possibility of east-west bike lanes on Fifth Avenue, but its focus is on improving bicycle safety along Fourth St., developing bike lanes on Second St. in the West End Village and along A St. in the Downtown Core, and improving First St. as a bicycle boulevard.
- Converting B Street from one-way to two-way traffic (C and D have already been converted).
- Operational improvements to US 101 on- and off-ramps.
- Realigning the Second/Fourth/Marquard intersection in the West End to improve safety and reduce pedestrian crossing lengths.
- Converting Francisco Boulevard West (south of Second Street) from two-way to one-way (southbound).
- Considering a Downtown shuttle connecting the transit station area to the West End Village and Montecito Commercial areas.
- Adjusting traffic signals to establish transit vehicle priority along key streets.

The Downtown Plan includes illustrative cross-sections to show how certain streets may be redesigned over time to more safely and efficiently accommodate all travel modes. Cross-sections are included for Fourth Street, Tamalpais Avenue, B Street, and D Street.

The Plan also includes recommendations for parking, wayfinding, curbside management, and trip reduction. The parking recommendations (include reduced and consolidated parking standards for residential and non-residential uses) are drawn from the Downtown Parking and Wayfinding Study and include expansion of the Downtown Parking District to E Street on the west and Hetherton on the east, additional shared parking agreements, new bikeshare opportunities, inclusion of public parking in new private development, using technology to improve space utilization and efficiency, encouraging mechanical parking, and using more flexible off-street parking standards in new development.

Chapter 7: [Affordable Housing and Anti-Displacement](#). This chapter recognizes potential opportunities for affordable housing in the Downtown area as well as the potential for new development to cause direct and indirect displacement of low-income residents. Chapter 7 provides a profile of existing housing resources and needs, a summary of development projects in the pipeline, an overview of City housing programs, and implementation strategies.

Affordable housing production strategies include incentives (such as allowing additional building height for projects with affordable housing), elimination of residential density standards, reduced parking requirements, and streamlined development review procedures. The Plan also identifies opportunities for land write-downs (particularly on municipal parking sites), grants, multi-family acquisition and rehabilitation programs, and community land trusts.

Anti-displacement strategies are focused on tenant protection. These include relocation assistance requirements, no net loss requirements for rental units, and preservation of existing affordable housing.

Chapter 8: [Implementation](#). The Implementation chapter includes tables identifying specific projects and improvements to be made following Plan adoption. These are generally categorized as street/transportation improvements and civic space improvements. Implementation is intended to be long-term, with projects carried out over a 20-year period. Potential financing strategies and funding sources are described, including grants, fees, and a potential Enhanced Infrastructure Financing District (EIFD).

The Implementation chapter also includes an Economic Development Strategy, including 30 potential actions that can be taken following Plan adoption to strengthen Downtown's economic position. These include such items as using City-owned sites for infill projects, building on the Cultural Arts District designation, promoting San Rafael as a visitor destination, improving outdoor dining options, encouraging parcel assembly, and providing technical assistance to local businesses. This chapter further reports out on a pro-forma analysis of three hypothetical Downtown developments.

A summary of actions related to historic preservation and affordable housing is also included in Chapter 8, reiterating recommendations in Chapters 5 and 7. The Chapter also includes an evaluation of Downtown infrastructure (water, sewer, drainage), a discussion of sea level rise adaptation, and provisions for Plan monitoring and enforcement.

Chapter 9: [Form-Based Code \(FBC\)](#) – The FBC is described in the next section of this report.

[Appendices](#) and **[Historic Resources Summary](#)**: A glossary and eight appendices accompany the Precise Plan. The appendices include background materials prepared over the course of the project, including the Downtown Profile Report and Downtown Options Report, a summary of community engagement activities, the Affordable Housing and Anti-Displacement Strategy Working Paper, pro-forma results, and background information on transportation and parking. The appendices also include a Historic Resources Summary that describes the field survey methodology and includes "Fact Sheets" and findings for 159 individual properties in Downtown San Rafael.

OVERVIEW OF THE FORM BASED CODE

Existing Context for Zoning in San Rafael

The City of San Rafael follows a conventional zoning model that has been in place since 1924. Like most zoning ordinances, the underlying intent is to separate land uses into "districts" to reduce the potential for conflicts and nuisances. Over the years, the ordinance has evolved to include building form regulations such as maximum building heights, maximum lot coverage and minimum building setbacks. However, many of these regulations are rooted in the goal of separating incompatible uses. This emphasis has contributed to the suburban form of the city, including its dependency on motor vehicles and lower densities. An emerging focus on compact, pedestrian-friendly development to address climate change and create more livable communities has caused a shift in how we view conventional zoning.

In the past, Downtown San Rafael's development has also been governed by a height map, a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) map, and by residential density standards that range from 15 units per acre to 62 units per acre, with allowances for density bonuses as prescribed by State law. FARs and density limits for

Downtown projects sometimes constrain development from reaching the allowable heights, resulting in relatively frequent requests for exceptions or Variances from the development standards. Moreover, the “use tables” indicating permitted and conditionally permitted uses are very prescriptive and may impair the flexibility needed to respond to market trends.

Form-Based Codes

Many cities around the country are shifting to a new type of zoning, known as a “form-based code” (FBC). The FBC shifts the focus to the physical design and form of the built environment. Such codes de-emphasize and often eliminate conventional zoning regulations such as prescribed use regulations (e.g., a hierarchical list of allowed land uses) in favor of regulatory standards for building form and design. The FBC combines certain elements of conventional zoning codes with design guidelines into a single regulatory document. This provides better and clearer direction to property owners, helps streamline project review, and can result in more well-designed buildings and public spaces.

The focus on the look and feel of the built environment is accomplished by prescribing massing and form in how buildings relate to one another. This relationship is accomplished through the establishment of various scales of block patterns and street types. Applicable building form standards differ by “place type” (also referred to as **transect** zones), which serve much like zoning districts. The Form-Based Codes Institute has standardized a list of six transects ranging from the natural environment to the urban core. The six transects are:

- Natural (T1)
- Rural (T2)
- Sub-Urban (T3)
- General Urban (T4)
- Urban Center (T5)
- Urban Core (T6)

Higher numbers designate progressively more urban environments. Based on its physical characteristics, Downtown San Rafael falls within the T4 and T5 transects.

During the last two decades, Form-Based Codes have become a legally viable alternative to conventional zoning (established through AB1268 legislation). Such codes work best in an urban, developed setting where: a) building form and mass is a priority; b) there is a mix of land uses that are not necessarily segregated; and c) there is a concentrated collection of building types, ages (historic structures) and architectural styles. Downtown San Rafael provides this setting, and the Downtown Precise Plan provides the best home for this code. Form-Based Codes have been widely established and successfully used in many cities/towns. The Town of Sonoma has adopted a form-based code for the entire town. However, form-based codes have more commonly been adopted for older, developed Downtown areas that have similar characteristics to Downtown San Rafael. The shared characteristics include a mix of land uses, a grid street pattern and a prominent pedestrian network. Examples include Central Petaluma, Downtown Benicia, and Downtown Redwood City.

The City has prepared informational videos on how Form-Based Codes work, and how and how Codes are typically organized. The videos are available at [this link](#).

Proposed Form Based Code for Downtown San Rafael

As noted above, the proposed FBC for Downtown San Rafael is Chapter 9 of the Downtown Precise Plan. The Code is organized into four major articles, summarized below.

Article 1: Introduction

The Introduction includes a “users guide” diagram and introduces the Code. It explains the purpose of the Code, its applicability, and its relationship to the General Plan 2040 and Downtown Precise Plan. It also identifies other provisions of the Municipal Code that apply to development in the Precise Plan boundary. Article 1 concludes with a table indicating the level of permitting required for different types of project types (renovation, new construction, etc).

Article 2: Form-Based Zones

This Article defines the different zoning districts and presents the major standards for each zone.

- Division 2.1 is a “preamble” that explains the concept of transects. All of Downtown is either in transect 4 (T4) or transect 5 (T5). The T4 zones include less intense areas such as the West End Village, while the T5 zones include the Downtown Core and areas near the transit center.
- Division 2.2 establishes the zones. The T4 and T5 designations are further modified based on whether their desired built form is associated with a traditional “Neighborhood” or a “Main Street.” The zones are further classified according to the maximum building height allowed with and without a height bonus. Thus a parcel in the “T4N 40/60” zone would have a neighborhood form, with a base height limit of 40 feet. Height bonuses in this zone are provided for projects with community benefits such as affordable housing, public parking, and public open space, up to a maximum building height of 60 feet. Some of the zones are further classified as “Open” (with an O suffix), indicating more flexibility in the uses that are permitted.
- The Regulating Plan is also included in this section. This is essentially the zoning map for Downtown, showing the geographic extent of the zones described above.
- Division 2.3 is the most substantial part of Article 2, as it establishes the standards for each of the zones. This section begins with an overview of the four primary zones (T-4 Neighborhood, T-4 Main Street, T-5 Neighborhood, and T-5 Main Street). The desired form of each zone is described and illustrated with a rendering. Buildings in each zone are described as being “house form” (i.e., their basic form resembles a house, with setbacks on all sides) or “block form” (i.e., the buildings are built to the sidewalk and are collectively arranged along the street to form a continuous façade that extends the length of the block).
 - The T-4 Neighborhood zone provides a walkable environment of small to medium size buildings (homes and mixed use buildings) and provides a transition in scale between Downtown and adjacent neighborhoods. It is the least intense zone and is mapped in locations such as Fifth Avenue in the West End Village and Mission Avenue along the northern edge of Downtown.
 - The T-4 Main Street zone provides a walkable, vibrant district of medium to large footprint mixed use buildings and housing choices, supporting neighborhood and community-serving ground floor activities such as shopping, dining, services, civic activities, and arts uses. It is mapped in locations such as 4th Street and B Street between 4th Street and 2nd Street.
 - The T-5 Neighborhood zone is comprised of larger footprint, higher intensity mixed use buildings, generally within a 5- or 10-minute walk of the transit center. This district has been mapped on locations such as the San Rafael Corporate Center and Montecito Plaza.
 - The T-5 Main Street zone is characterized by a walkable urban neighborhood with large, higher intensity mixed use buildings close to the transit center. Areas with this designation are limited to a relatively small area between Lincoln and Hetherton, generally within 500

feet of the SMART station. This zone is associated with a 70' base height and a 90' bonus height, which makes it the most intense of the four districts.

Division 2.3 presents a common set of standards for each of the four zones. These include maximum and minimum setbacks (i.e., distance of structure from the property line), maximum building length, and required civic space (which varies by building size). Each zone includes allowances standards for encroachments, indicating the extent to which canopies, balconies, and other building features may extend into the setback areas. Standards for building height are presented, including maximum height of the top floor plate as well as the roofline.

Buildings are generally required to “stepback” at a specified height in each zone (this is illustrated in the Code). For example, a 55' tall building in the T-4MS zone would be required to step back from the street by 10 feet above the third floor (35') to reduce the perceived height and mass of the building from the street and sidewalk. The Code also establishes a 14' ground floor height requirement on most properties, and includes standards for the depth of ground floor spaces (they must generally extend 30' back from the street within the building).

The Code lists the types of frontages, or building façades, that are acceptable in each District. For example, the T4N district allows projecting porches, stoops, terraces, shopfronts, and several other façade types; different standards may apply to the front of the building and the sides of the building.

Standards for properties adjacent to historic structures are also included for each district. These ensure that new development does not overwhelm adjacent historic buildings. The standards address aspects such as massing and the inclusion of “wings” that step down in height adjacent to the historic building. These standards would apply to all properties that adjoin one of the roughly 100 Downtown properties identified as having a historic resource.

Parking standards are included for each of the four districts. These standards are generally based on the number of bedrooms for residential uses, and square footage of floor space for non-residential uses. Various exemptions and exceptions are provided for properties in the Downtown Parking District, and slightly higher parking requirements apply in the West End Village. Standards for driveway location and width are included with the parking standards.

Section 2.3.070 of Article 2 includes the Use Table. This is a simplified version of the Use Tables that apply under existing zoning, but still provides a comprehensive list of possible Downtown uses. The Use Table indicates whether a particular use is permitted by right, not allowed at all, or requires an Administrative Use Permit, a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) issued by the Zoning Administrator, or CUP issued by the Planning Commission. Roughly 85 different uses are listed. As appropriate, the Use Table includes cross-references to other sections of the Municipal Code that pertain to specific uses.

Article 3: Supplemental Standards to the Downtown Zones

Three Divisions are included in this Article: Site Standards, Massing and Articulation Standards, and Façade Standards.

- Division 3.1 includes the Site Standards. These include requirements for screening of mechanical, roof-mounted and wall-mounted equipment, retaining walls, and courtyard areas, including maximum fence, wall, and vegetation height. Provisions for temporary fencing also are included. Division 3.1 also addresses landscaping standards, including requirements for landscape plans for new development.

Standards for parking design are included in this section. These standards do not address the number of spaces required (which is covered in Article 2), but rather attributes of parking location, provisions for shared parking, truck parking, and requirements for carshare and carpool spaces. Division 3.1 generally requires “unbundling” of residential parking from individual dwelling units (i.e., the spaces must be leased or sold separately from the dwelling unit). The design of parking areas also is addressed, including access requirements, landscaping and screening requirements, and the location of parking on a parcel.

The final section of Division 3.1 addresses block size. It includes requirements for interior pedestrian paseos on blocks that are more than 500 feet long or have a perimeter exceeding 2000 feet.

- Division 3.2 addresses Massing and Façade Standards. This section covers topics that are commonly included in Design Guidelines, but with measurable standards to ensure predictable outcomes. The concept of each building having a “top,” “middle,” and “bottom” (“tripartite”) is incorporated. Buildings composition, character, and symmetry is addressed through a variety of standards, including requirements for corner elements and window openings.

Division 3.2 provides further detail on historic resources. This includes guidelines for adding stories to a historic building, including stepbacks to maintain the building’s appearance from the street. It also includes limits on the maximum height permitted for buildings immediately adjacent to historic buildings (generally no more than 20 feet higher than the historic building), along with requirements to align setbacks of new buildings with those of adjacent historic buildings.

- Division 3.3 provides Frontage Standards. Frontages are the components of a building that provide the transition to the street and sidewalk. A menu of frontage types is provided, with illustrations, photos, and dimensional standards for each type. These standards address aspects such as finish level above sidewalk for stoops and doorways, maximum depth of a recessed entryway, width of pedestrian accessways, and the length and width of features such as porches and awnings. The standards also include dimensional requirements for storefront windows (glazing).

Article 4: Definitions

The final section of the Code includes definitions. Key terms used in the document are defined in Division 4.1. Division 4.2 includes diagrams explaining how dimensional measurements (such as building height) are calculated.

CORRESPONDENCE

No correspondence has been received on this agenda item. A number of letters were received by the Planning Commission in advance of their hearings on January 12, 26, and February 9; these may be accessed by visiting the web pages for those meetings at [this link](#).

ATTACHMENTS

While there are no attachments to this Staff report, the Draft Downtown Precise Plan is available for review online at www.sanrafael2040.org.