



CITY OF LARKSPUR

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**City of Larkspur
Notice of Preparation of a Program Environmental Impact Report
And Notice of a Public Scoping Meeting
City of Larkspur General Plan Update**

Date: December 21, 2020

To: State Clearinghouse, Responsible Agencies, Trustee Agencies, and Other Interested Agencies, Parties, and Organizations

From: City of Larkspur, Planning Division

Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Programmatic Environmental Impact Report for the City of Larkspur General Plan Update and Notice of Public Scoping Meeting

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT the City of Larkspur (lead agency) will prepare a Program Environmental Impact report (EIR) for the proposed City of Larkspur General Plan Update (proposed project). The Program EIR will address the environmental impacts associated with the adoption and implementation of the City of Larkspur General Plan Update. This Notice of Preparation (NOP) is being distributed to applicable responsible agencies, trustee agencies, and interested agencies, parties, and organizations as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). Interested agencies are requested to comment on the scope and content of the significant environmental issues, mitigation measures (if needed), and reasonable alternatives to be explored in the Program EIR. Information regarding the project description, project location, public outreach process, and topics to be addressed in the Program EIR are provided below.

PROJECT-RELATED DOCUMENTS: The City of Larkspur's existing General Plan documents, and materials related to the General Plan Update and Program EIR are available at: Cityoflarkspur.org/generalplanupdate

30-DAY NOP COMMENT PERIOD: The City of Larkspur is soliciting comments from responsible agencies, trustee agencies, public agencies, organizations, and members of the public regarding the scope and content of the Program EIR, and the environmental issues and alternatives to be addressed in the Program EIR. In accordance with the time limits established by CEQA, the NOP public review period will begin on **January 4th, 2020**, and end on **February 4, 2021**. Please provide your written/typed comments (including name, affiliation, telephone number, and contact information) to the address shown below by **5:00 p.m., February 4, 2021**. To be placed on the notification list for this project, or need additional information, please contact:

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PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING: The City of Larkspur will hold a Scoping Meeting to: (1) inform the public and interested agencies about the proposed project; and (2) solicit public comment on the scope of the environmental issues to be addressed in the Program EIR, as well as the range of alternatives to be evaluated. The scoping meeting will be a remote, on-line meeting that can be accessed via the internet on January 7, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

The access link to the Scoping Meeting is:
<https://zoom.us/j/91668739217?pwd=T2haSTdRT0ZkMktBRUthRXJ6QW0xQT09>
Call-In Number: +1 669 900 9128
Passcode: 274367
Webinar ID: 916 6873 9217

Additional instructions on how to access the meeting can be found on website at www.cityoflarkspur.org/generalplanupdate

GENERAL PLAN UPDATE PROJECT BACKGROUND: In 2010, a Draft General Plan Update began under the direction of a General Plan Update Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) appointed by the City Council. The CAC consisted of 15 community members appointed by the City Council, and six appointed members representing City boards and commissions and the Marin Commission on Aging. The CAC was tasked with identifying important community issues, providing input on General Plan policies, and encouraging community involvement in the General Plan Update. This process produced a draft document in 2011 that was set aside while the City completed the Larkspur SMART Station Area Plan, a planning document for the Larkspur Landing area that could have informed the final General Plan Update. Ultimately, the City Council chose not to adopt the Station Area Plan. Following that decision, it was necessary for the City to focus on several other key planning processes, most notably updating and obtaining recertification of the City's Housing Element Update before returning to the General Plan Update. In 2017, The City Council appointed a General Plan Update Steering Committee (GPUSC) comprised of two Councilmembers and two Planning Commissioners to assist staff in finalizing the draft plan, including evaluation of policies on recent developments, studies, and/or state mandates not previously considered by the CAC. The GPUSC met 13 times between February of 2018 and October of 2020. The current Draft General Plan Update (the project) was authorized by the City Council to undergo CEQA review on October 21, 2020.

PROJECT LOCATION: The City of Larkspur is located in the eastern urban corridor of Marin County, approximately 12 miles north of San Francisco. The Larkspur Planning Area (see Figure 1-1) includes the City of Larkspur, portions of the unincorporated community of Greenbrae, and the San Quentin Peninsula. The Larkspur Planning Area is bordered on the north by the City of San Rafael; on the south by the Town of Corte Madera; on the east by the Town of Corte Madera, the San Francisco Bay, and

unincorporated lands in the County; and on the west by the unincorporated communities of Kentfield, Kent Woodlands, the King Mountain Open Space Preserve, and the Corte Madera Ridge (see Figure 1-2). The City portion of the Planning Area encompasses approximately four square miles, and the unincorporated portion comprises approximately 1.13 square miles.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The City of Larkspur General Plan Update (proposed project) is a focused effort to refine the Objectives, Policies, and Programs within the existing General Plan to help guide and shape the community over the next 20 years. The Larkspur General Plan Update seeks to preserve Larkspur's small-town character, public open space, and natural resources, while reducing the impacts of sea level rise, climate change, and other natural hazards. The purpose of the proposed project is to bring the General Plan up-to-date and to reflect current laws and regulations.

The State requires that the General Plan contain seven mandatory elements: Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Conservation, Open Space, Noise, and Safety. The Larkspur General Plan Update will include all of the State-mandated elements except for the Housing Element. The City's 2015-2023 Housing Element was adopted by the City on May 20, 2015. The City will initiate a new update of the Housing Element starting in 2021. The remaining required elements are included in the plan chapters summarized below:

The Land Use Chapter describes the physical, economic, and population growth and development of the City. It establishes the goals, programs, and policies for development and growth regulation within the City's Planning Area. It includes standards and guidelines for land use development and controls to maintain the historic character and diversity of the community while allowing development to meet local and regional requirements.

The Circulation Chapter addresses all transit styles and includes the goals, policies, and programs that guide the development and maintenance for a safe and efficient transportation system. This chapter emphasizes public transit, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and parking and transportation management programs.

The Health and Safety Chapter describes the natural and human activity-related hazards that exist in the City and presents guiding policies to protect people and property from natural or man-made hazards, prepare disaster plans, and prevent exposure to unacceptable noise levels. This chapter addresses geologic, seismic, flood, and fire hazards, as well as hazards created by human activity such as hazardous materials and waste and incidents that call for emergency response. In addition, this element provides measures to control and abate noise and to protect citizens from excessive noise exposure.

The Natural Environment and Resources Chapter provides the framework to conserve existing natural resources, provide public access to natural resources, and preserve open space. This chapter addresses protection of Larkspur's native vegetation, wildlife habitat, sensitive natural communities, and conservation of open space, improvement to water and air quality, as well as conservation of water, energy, and reduction of solid waste. Recreation policies are included in this chapter to preserve and enhance current and future recreation opportunities.

The Community Character Chapter intends to maintain and strengthen the City's community identity, attractive and livable environment, and preserve its unique and

valuable historic and archaeological resources. The chapter develops a consistent, implementable set of goals, policies, and programs for Larkspur's distinct neighborhoods, natural and built environments, historic resources, cultural and tribal cultural resources, and community identity.

The Community Facilities and Services Chapter provides information about public facilities and their related level of available services and provides policies to guide their development in the future.

The Sustainability Chapter includes those actions the City will take, and encourage its residents to take, to reduce energy use, GHG emissions and other waste products of urban living, and actions to adapt to the varied effects of climate change, including sea level rise, increased flooding, and increased risk of wildfires. This chapter addresses the importance of sustainability principles to the City's future and provides a guide to where sustainability issues are addressed in the other chapters of the General Plan. Policies in other chapters that are particularly pertinent to sustainability are marked with an icon to denote their role in promoting sustainability in Larkspur.

The General Plan Land Use Map, attached as Figure 3-1, identifies land use designations for land within the City of Larkspur.

PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT ANALYSIS: The City of Larkspur, as the lead agency under CEQA, will prepare a Program EIR for the Larkspur General Plan Update in accordance with CEQA, implementing the CEQA Guidelines, relevant case law, and City procedures. The Larkspur General Plan Update is considered a "project" under CEQA and is therefore subject to CEQA review. As a policy document, the General Plan provides guidance and sets standards for several areas of mandatory environmental review for later "projects" that would be undertaken by local government and the private sector.

The Program EIR will evaluate potential environmental impacts associated with adoption and implementation of the Larkspur General Plan Update. The Program EIR will disclose potential impacts of the General Plan Update, propose mitigation measures to avoid and/or reduce impacts deemed potentially significant, identify reasonable alternatives, and compare the environmental impacts of the alternatives to the proposed project's impacts. Pursuant to Section 15063(a) of the CEQA Guidelines, no Initial Study will be prepared. The Program EIR will evaluate the full range of environmental issues contemplated under CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines, as described below:

Aesthetics—This section will analyze potential impacts to aesthetics, including scenic vistas, scenic resources, visual character and quality, and light and glare within the City.

Air Quality—An air quality analysis will be prepared in accordance Bay Area Air Quality Management District requirements. A discussion of the General Plan Update's contribution to regional air quality impacts will be included.

Biological Resources—This section will address direct and indirect impacts to regulated waterways and wetlands, sensitive habitats and mature native trees, sensitive plants and wildlife, and wildlife movement corridors.

Cultural Resource and Tribal Cultural Resources—The Program EIR will examine potential adverse impacts the project would have on historical resources (or eligible historical resources), archaeological resources, and tribal cultural resources.

Energy—This section will include a discussion of the potential energy consumption

and/or impacts from implementation of the General Plan Update, with an emphasis on avoiding or reducing inefficient, wasteful, or unnecessary consumption of energy.

Geology, Seismicity, and Mineral Resources—This section will analyze potential geological, seismic, and mineral resource impacts from implementation of the General Plan Update.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions—The Program EIR will evaluate GHG emissions at a plan level, pursuant to guidance provided by BAAQMD. This will include 1) Identification of greenhouse gas emission thresholds and 2) greenhouse gas emissions analysis.

Hazards and Hazardous Materials—This section will discuss potential exposure to toxic substances resulting from activities within the Planning Area. Natural hazards will also be evaluated given proposed policies and the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Hydrology and Water Quality—The Program EIR will analyze impacts of the General Plan Update on flooding drainage patterns, and water quality within the City. Large portions of the city are at risk of flooding due to the city's topography and projected sea level rise (SLR). The effects of SLR and City and regional response to mitigate the impacts from SLR will be thoroughly described.

Land Use and Planning—This section will summarize the City's land use characteristics, including the overall land use pattern, and determine the potential environmental effects of the proposed General Plan Update related to Land Use and Planning. The Draft General Plan contains few land use designation changes. However, these changes and their impacts on overall land use in the city will be assessed.

Noise—This section will analyze short-term construction-related impacts and long-term operational noise impacts on sensitive receptors.

Population and Housing—This section will examine existing and future development potential, and growth impacts within the City.

Public Services— This section will analyze impacts on public services, including police, fire, and schools, from implementation of the General Plan Update.

Recreation— This section will analyze the potential impacts on recreational and open space resources from implementation of the General Plan Update.

Traffic and Circulation— This section will analyze the General Plan Update's impacts on the circulation system, including vehicle miles traveled, safe routes to school, Complete Streets, and all modes of transit.

Utilities—This section will analyze the potential impacts associated with water supply, wastewater services, and other utilities and service systems.

Wildfire—This section will analyze the potential impacts from wildfire risks, including adopted emergency and evacuation plans, infrastructure, and land and drainage stability. As a substantial portion of the City is within the Wildland-Urban Interface and a high fire hazard severity zone, particular attention will be paid to exposure to wildfire and adequacy of plan policies to address this hazard.

Cumulative Impacts—The Program EIR will also discuss the cumulative impacts of the project in combination with other closely related past, present, and reasonably foreseeable probable future projects in the vicinity.

Project Alternatives—The Program EIR will describe and evaluate the comparative

merits of a range of alternatives to the project that could reasonably accomplish most of the basic project objectives and could avoid or substantially lessen one or more of the significant impacts. The Program EIR will also analyze the “No Project Alternative” and will identify the environmentally superior alternative. The Program EIR will briefly describe and explain any alternatives that were eliminated from detailed consideration. The alternatives to be analyzed will be developed during the environmental review process and will consider input received during the public scoping process.

PURPOSE OF THIS NOTICE: In accordance CEQA Guidelines (14 California Code of Regulations [CCR] §15082, the City has prepared this NOP to inform agencies and interested parties that a Program EIR will be prepared for the City of Larkspur’s General Plan Update. The purpose of an NOP is to provide sufficient information about the General Plan Update to allow agencies and interested parties the opportunity to provide a meaningful response related to the scope and content of the Program EIR, including mitigation measures that should be considered and alternatives that should be addressed (CEQA Guidelines 14 CCR § 15082[b]).

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS: Following completion of the 30-day NOP public review period, the City will incorporate relevant information into the Draft Program EIR, including results of public scoping and technical studies. Subsequently, the Draft Program EIR will be circulated for public review and comment for a 45-day public review period. The City requests that any potential Responsible or Trustee Agency responding to this notice do so in a manner consistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15082(b). All parties that have submitted their names and email or mailing addresses will be notified throughout the CEQA review process.

A copy of the NOP can be found on the City’s General Plan Update website at Cityoflarkspur.org/generalplanupdate and on file at the City of Larkspur City Hall, Planning Division, 400 Magnolia Avenue, Larkspur, CA 94939. If you wish to be placed on the mailing list or need additional information, please contact Neal Toft, Planning and Building Director, City of Larkspur, at 415.927.6713 or at ntoft@cityoflarkspur.org

Figure 1-1 Regional Location

General Plan
City of Larkspur

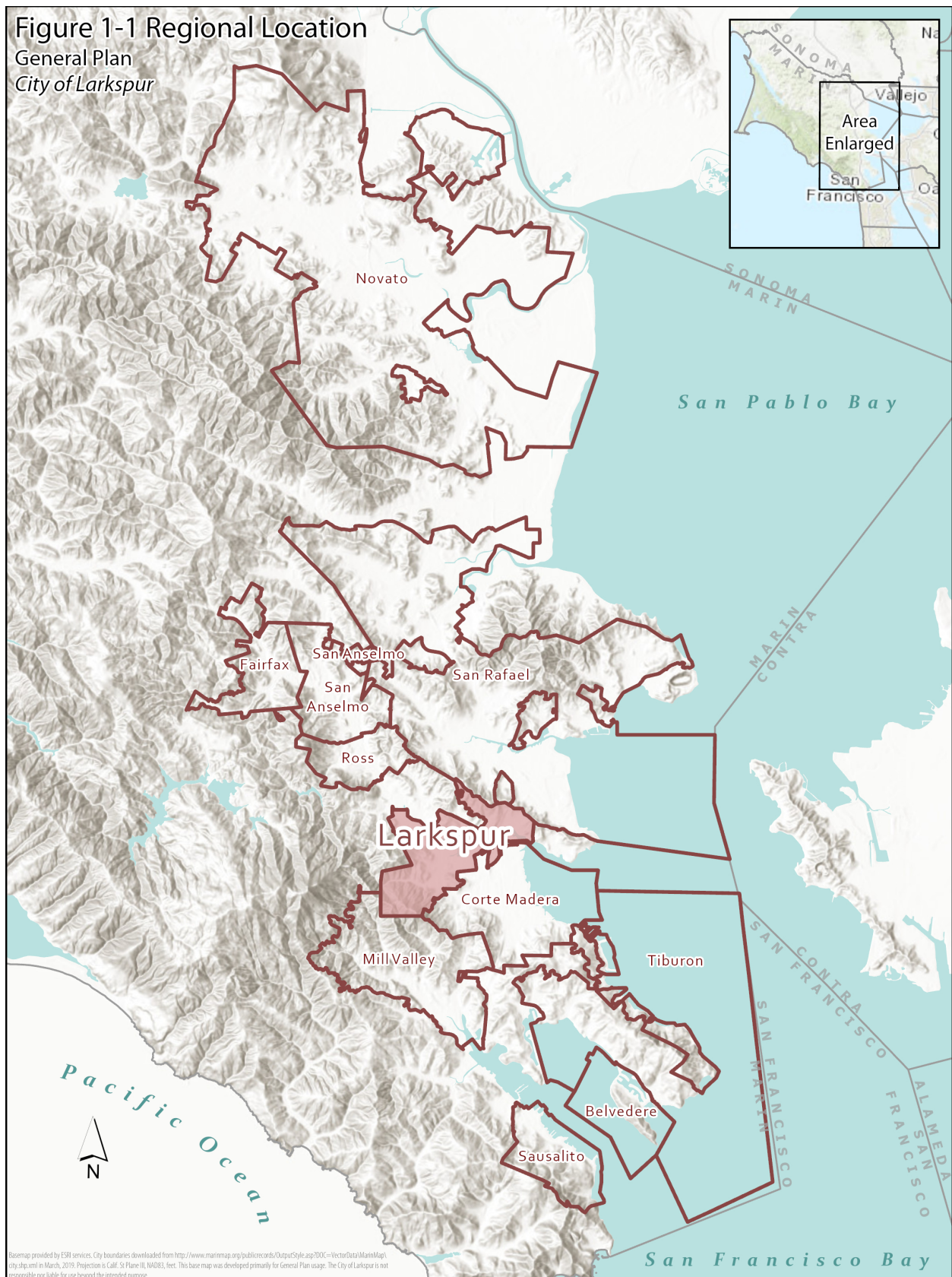


Figure 1-2 Larkspur Planning Area
General Plan
City of Larkspur

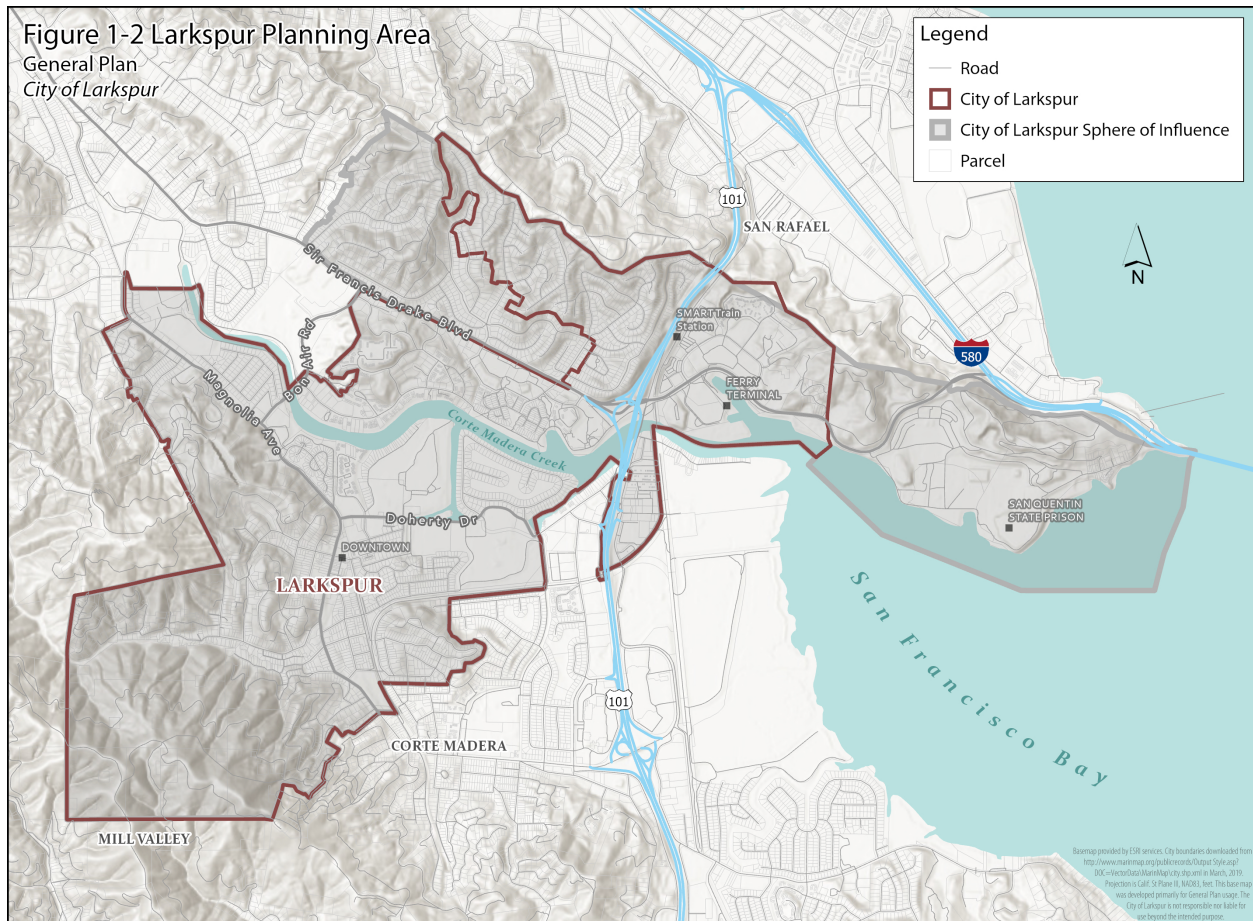


Figure 3-1 Land Use
General Plan
City of Larkspur

