

Downtown Plan for Ross, California

We are pleased to provide this final Downtown Plan for Ross. The plan addresses comments from the Draft Plan presentation to the Special Joint Meeting of the Ross Town Council in February, 2009. We look forward to a formal presentation in July.

The Downtown Plan builds on the Town's strong existing character and beautiful landscape setting by proposing a series of improvements to streets, pedestrian and bicycle routes, parking, and open space areas, as described below. The primary goal is to establish strong, uninterrupted connections from Town Hall to Poplar Avenue. The plan accomplishes this by realigning roadways and parking to create space for generous sidewalks and crosswalks, expanded areas for outdoor seating, continuous street trees, and consistent lighting, seating, and other street furnishings.

These proposed changes will help to reduce bicycle-auto conflicts and provide for an attractive, low-speed driving experience favoring pedestrians. Even with significant new areas devoted to sidewalks and gathering spots, the final plan also increases total available parking by 10 spaces in close proximity to downtown businesses.

Key elements fall into five major areas as follows.

- A. Lagunitas Road/Sir Francis Drake Boulevard
 - Renovation of pedestrian-friendly sidewalks and intersection crossings to Marin Art & Garden Center.
 - Potential pedestrian bridge over Sir Francis Drake (proposed as possible future design competition).
 - Realignment of the Lagunitas Road/Sir Francis Drake intersection to eliminate "island" and drive-through, increase landscape area in front of Town Hall, discourage high-speed turning movements, and improve gateway to town.
 - Grading and landscape (including new street trees) to integrate new bridge into Town Hall and Ross Common sidewalk systems
 - Enhancement of garden/park area on south side of intersection, with new pedestrian access points.
 - Textured pavement on bridge proposed to slow traffic.
 - Extension of Station Park at southeast corner of Lagunitas/Ross Common intersection to improve aesthetics and crossing to the Commons.
- B. Poplar Avenue/Downtown
 - Extension of sidewalk café plaza at Café Marmalade, including special paving and temporary bollards to test feasibility.
 - Recommendations that street furnishing be selected as a cohesive, themed system including signage, lighting, banners, bike racks, trash receptacles on poles, and seating.

- New sidewalk seating at 7 Ross Common building/south entry to main parking lot (space provided by realignment of roadway).
- Increased sidewalk seating at Redwood Drive/grocery store (space provided by realignment of intersection).
- Improved lighting of public/private park area to encourage additional use for art trail, garden tours, and other programmed or informal activities.
- Improved pedestrian crossing at Redwood Drive connecting to expanded Ross Common sidewalks.
- New corner entry to the Commons at Redwood Drive, with seating to encourage informal gathering

C. Ross Common Realignment and Streetscape

- Realignment of Ross Common for continuous street tree planting and sidewalks, consistent centerline geometry, traffic calming, and increased bicycle safety by elimination of on-street diagonal parking.
- Continuous 8-foot wide concrete sidewalk on east/Post Office side extending from downtown to Lagunitas Road.
- Continuous 10-foot wide concrete promenade on west/Commons side extending from Redwood Drive to Lagunitas Road.
- Textured paving at widened pedestrian crossing from Post Office to Commons.
- Continuous street trees (planted in grates south of Post Office or in ground at Station Park) on east side; opportunities for benches, light poles with banners and/or trash receptacles.
- Increased sidewalk space along main parking lot with hedge, seating, and shade trees.
- Relocation of degraded curb on east/Post Office side to accommodate more efficient layout of main parking lot (Phase I); relocation of curb on west/Commons side to establish consistent centerline, narrow roadway and eliminate diagonal parking (Phase II).
- Overall reduction in parking along Ross Common (7 spaces in Phase II) compensated by increased capacity within main parking lot.

D. Main Parking Lot and Post Office Area

- Redesigned parking area for efficient double-loaded diagonal parking and continuous sidewalks in close proximity to downtown, providing a flexible space for occasional festivals, markets or other events.
- Increase in parking capacity within north and south lots from 44 spaces (existing) to 61 spaces (proposed).

- Use of pervious pavement for storm water treatment and aesthetics.
- Special paving to indicate pedestrian crossings.
- Improved bicycle and pedestrian circulation with signage and clear hierarchy of spaces, including continuous bike route along Corte Madera Creek and options for bike movement on/off Ross Common with flow of vehicular traffic.
- New covered bicycle parking and coffee kiosk at southern end of main parking lot (between creek and 7 Ross Common building).
- New overlook along creek.

E. Enhanced Park, Garden and Landscape Areas

- Landscape upgrades to the Commons including a new covered shelter at main crossing aligned with Post Office, new 10-foot wide promenade along Ross Common, restored paths within park, new corner entry/meeting spot at southeast corner (Redwood Drive portal), replacement of hedges, and preservation of existing trees.
- Landscape improvements to Station Park including seasonal planting (e.g., flowering cherry trees and/or species with bright fall color), new paths, hedge along parking, and groundcovers.

Total overall change in parking count (on-street and in parking lots):

Existing: 99 spaces

Proposed: 109 spaces