

## 4 DOWNTOWN ELEMENT

In incorporated Tiburon's 40-year history, perhaps no area has changed more than Downtown. At the time of incorporation, Downtown Tiburon was much different than it is today. What today is the Point Tiburon commercial and residential area was once a bustling railroad yard.

During the 1980s, the former railroad yard was converted into a mixed-use development, made up of approximately 23,000 square feet of commercial space, 155 condominium dwelling units, and a 240-car pay-parking lot.

More recently, the Downtown has evolved into more of the Town's civic center, with the construction of the Town Hall and Library at the entrance to Downtown. The Library has been so successful that there are plans to expand the facility.



*The Belvedere-Tiburon Library is a new Downtown destination.*

Some of the development which lines Tiburon Boulevard is now nearly obsolete for modern uses. For example, the Town has two free-standing banks whose floor-area exceeds the needs of the modern bank branch. The Town anticipates redevelopment of these and other properties, and the Downtown Element is intended to take advantage of these opportunities to extend the pedestrian-friendly environment that exists along Main Street and Ark Row.

### 4.1 DOWNTOWN PLANNING AREAS

Downtown Tiburon is a mixture of commercial, residential, government, park, open space, and recreational uses. Downtown can be divided into five areas, each with a distinct character and development pattern: Upper Tiburon Boulevard, Lower Tiburon Boulevard, Main Street, Ark Row, and Point Tiburon (see Diagram 4.1-1).

## Upper Tiburon Boulevard

Upper Tiburon Boulevard, the principal vehicular entrance to Downtown, is a commercial street that consists of an office complex, the Tiburon Town Hall/Belvedere-Tiburon Public Library/Zelinsky Park/Railroad Marsh complex; the Boardwalk shopping center; Bell Market; two banks; a delicatessen; and surface parking lots. All of the commercial buildings in the Upper Tiburon Boulevard area (except for the two-story Belvedere-Tiburon Office Park) are single story. Tiburon Town Hall is a partial two-story structure, and the Library, while single-story in function, has the height of a two-story structure. Upper Tiburon Boulevard is considered underdeveloped and is the portion of Downtown where change is most likely to occur over the planning period.

## Lower Tiburon Boulevard

Lower Tiburon Boulevard is comprised of those properties between the delicatessen (Shark's Deli) and Main Street on the south side of Tiburon Boulevard; and the Tiburon Lodge, Fire Station, and the dry cleaners on the north side of Tiburon Boulevard. These properties, which have a mix of one- and two-story buildings, are developed at a higher intensity than those in Upper Tiburon Boulevard and are considered fully developed. They include office buildings and a few retail and service establishments, and small restaurants.

## Main Street



*Main Street is the focal point for many visitors to Downtown.*

Main Street, consisting mostly of intensely developed properties with older buildings, has many small shops, several restaurants, a hotel, a yacht club, a three-screen movie theatre, and a few residential units, and is the focal point for many visitors to Downtown Tiburon. The relative proportions of the street, sidewalks, and building facades create a comfortable environment dominated by pedestrians. Major

infrastructure improvements, such as the Main Street Reconstruction Project completed in 2000, and the Ferry Access Improvement Project completed in 2002, demonstrate the level of commitment to this area by the Town, property owners and businesses.

## **Ark Row**

Ark Row, also known as Upper Main Street, is an interesting collection of former houseboats, former summer cottages, and newer buildings (that resemble older buildings) which are occupied by galleries, small shops, offices, and an occasional residence. Ark Row has mature street trees and is bounded on one side by a hillside (the north slope of Corinthian Island) which gives the street a small, intimate feel that is distinct from the rest of the commercial area. The north side of Ark Row fronts on the Main Street Parking Lot, a centrally located public pay-parking lot with capacity for approximately 200 cars.

## **Point Tiburon**

Point Tiburon, a redevelopment project constructed in the mid-1980s on the 38-acre former Northwestern Pacific Railroad Yard, consists of approximately 23,000 square feet of commercial and office space in Point Tiburon Plaza, a 240-car public pay-parking lot, and 155 condominium dwelling units.

The residential component of Point Tiburon forms three distinct complexes; the 34-unit Marsh Condominiums; the 54-unit Lagoon Condominiums; and the 67-unit Bayside Condominiums.

The Point Tiburon area also contains a man-made open-water "lagoon", a large public park (Shoreline Park) containing a Railroad/Ferry Museum (Donahue Building), and a small public park with tennis courts (Teather Park).



*The Ferry Plaza blends with the Shoreline Park to provide a magnificent waterfront setting. Angel Island is in the background.*

## 4.2 AN OPPORTUNITY FOR DOWNTOWN

*Tiburon 2020* is being adopted at an opportune time for Downtown. Many factors have converged to make this the best time in 20 years to affect positive change in Downtown.

First, Downtown has at least five properties which are underutilized. These properties are either surface parking lots, or are occupied by buildings that were built to serve a different use in a different era. Market forces are likely to lead to new development of these properties.

Second, there is a critical need for new affordable housing throughout the Bay Area and Marin County, and Tiburon is no exception. Tiburon has a very limited land supply with which to accommodate new affordable housing. Underdeveloped sites Downtown are flat, have urban infrastructure, and are close to services and transportation.

Third, new improvement projects, including the Main Street Reconstruction Project and the Ferry Access Improvement Project, have improved the pedestrian environment at the Ferry Terminal and Main Street.

Finally, the new Town Hall and Library, and two new buildings on Main Street, have shown that new development can be positive for Downtown. The success of Friday Nights on Main, which debuted in the fall of 2004, demonstrates that there is interest in making Downtown a center of community activity.

## 4.3 DOWNTOWN GOALS

- DT-A:** To preserve and enhance the historical attributes and small-town village character of Downtown that exists on Main Street and Ark Row.
- DT-B:** To enhance Downtown's role as the commercial and service center of Tiburon while promoting new resident-serving and visitor-serving uses and facilities.
- DT-C:** To encourage greater pedestrian activity and enjoyment of life in Downtown while respecting surrounding residential uses.

**DT-D:** To improve and enhance pedestrian and vehicular connectivity throughout Downtown.

**DT-E:** To support and encourage mixed-use development in Downtown, especially in order to provide affordable housing opportunities.

**DT-F:** To enhance Downtown's public facilities and amenities for the benefit of all users.

**DT-G:** To facilitate convenient parking to serve all uses.

#### **4.4 DOWNTOWN LAND USE**

Decisions on the type and intensity of land uses play a major role in achieving a more pedestrian-friendly, resident-serving Downtown. Downtown Land Use Policies address preferred uses, such as commercial/residential mixed-use and a drug store, as well as identifying which uses are incompatible with the objectives for Downtown, such as drive-through restaurants and new first floor offices. Downtown Land Use Policies also provide guidance on the appropriate intensity for new development.

### **Land Use Policies**

#### **General Policies**

**DT-1:** The Town shall promote a clean, well-maintained Downtown area that serves the commercial, service, and passive recreation needs of the community and is an aesthetically pleasing, friendly, and desirable destination.

**DT-2:** Resident-serving land uses shall be encouraged throughout Downtown.

**DT-3:** The Town shall actively promote the economic vitality of its Downtown.



*The Waters Edge Hotel is a relatively new establishment which provides lodging on Main Street.*

**DT-4:** Mixed-use, such as commercial/residential, shall be encouraged in the commercial areas of Downtown Tiburon, especially in the areas designated with the Affordable Housing Overlay.

**DT-5:** The quality of residential neighborhoods within and adjacent to Downtown shall be preserved with regard to unreasonable noise, traffic, visual and other impacts, with the understanding that such impacts are generated to a greater extent in Downtown commercial areas than in exclusively residential areas.

**DT-6:** To preserve and enhance the unique character of Downtown Tiburon, Downtown buildings may be rebuilt or reconstructed to the same FAR as exists, provided that the resulting building



*32 Main Street is listed on the Town's Local Historic Inventory of Buildings in Downtown*

substantially conforms to the guidelines of the *Downtown Tiburon Design Handbook*.

**DT-7:** The Town of Tiburon shall encourage preservation of its inventory of significant historic buildings and resources in

Downtown, through implementation of the California State Historic Building Code and the *Downtown Tiburon Design Handbook*.

**DT-8:** Minor floor area additions to properties exceeding FAR limits may be approved without the need for a General Plan or Zoning Ordinance amendment. Minor floor area additions are those that do not add demand for parking as defined in the Parking and Loading section of the Zoning Ordinance, and do not increase traffic generation. A finding must be made that there will be no material adverse effects from the granting of the minor floor area addition.

**DT-9:** Transfers of Intensity A transfer of intensity between commercially-designated Downtown properties (NC and VC districts) may be permitted subject to discretionary review (conditional use permit) by the Town, without requiring General Plan or Zoning Ordinance amendments.

**DT-10:** Drive-through restaurants shall not be permitted and restaurants that primarily offer fast food and/or take-out service shall be discouraged in Downtown Tiburon. This policy does not prohibit beverage or specialty food providers, including, but not limited to, coffee and tea-houses, juice bars, and ice cream/frozen yogurt shops.

**DT-11:** Maintain Shoreline Park's historic Donahue Building (currently the Railroad/Ferry Museum) as a public use.

#### **Neighborhood Commercial District Policies**

**DT-12:** The Neighborhood Commercial land use designation shall permit primarily resident-serving commercial and residential uses. The maximum allowable intensity for lands designated Neighborhood Commercial is an FAR of 0.37, except where a Transfer of Intensity is approved consistent with Policy DT-9.

**DT-13:** In order to encourage pedestrian use and enjoyment of the street, the Town shall discourage commercial office uses from occupying street-fronting ground floor space suitable for retail and restaurants in new or redeveloped buildings in the Upper Tiburon Boulevard area.

**DT-14:** Affordable Housing Overlay In the Affordable Housing Overlay, residential uses that are not subject to commercial FAR limitations may be developed as part of mixed-use projects if a minimum of 60 percent of the units are reserved for moderate, low, and/or very-low income households. The residential density for these properties must be within a range from 12.9 units per acre to 15.3 units per acre (a yield of 17.4 units per acre to 20.7 units per acre after applying the state-mandated density bonus). The maximum allowable commercial development intensity for lands designated with an Affordable Housing Overlay is an FAR of 0.31. The Town will not permit new commercial development of properties designated with the

Affordable Housing Overlay to an intensity that would prevent the achievement of the minimum housing density for that site.

#### **Village Commercial District Policies**

- DT-15:** The Village Commercial land use designation (Main Street/ Ark Row) may be comprised of tourist-oriented and resident-oriented uses, as well as residential uses. The maximum allowable intensity for lands designated Village Commercial is an FAR of 0.28, except in accordance with Policy DT-7 or where a Transfer of Intensity is approved consistent with Policy DT-9.
- DT-16:** In order to encourage pedestrian use and enjoyment of Main Street, the Town shall discourage commercial office uses from occupying ground floor space suitable for retail and restaurants on Main Street and Ark Row.

#### **Implementing Programs for Land Use**

- DT-a:** The Tiburon Zoning Ordinance shall be revised to be consistent with the goals and policies of this Element and to implement the guidelines of the *Downtown Tiburon Design Handbook*.
- DT-b:** Adopt a property maintenance ordinance for Downtown that will require that public and private improvements (including signs) be kept in good repair.
- DT-c:** Fulfill the Tiburon Redevelopment Agency requirements for construction of very-low income housing units through creation of additional units in the Downtown.

### **4.5 DOWNTOWN DESIGN**

Good, consistent design helps to establish a sense of place. Main Street and Ark Row have a strong identity as a small-town village.

In May 2002, the Town Council adopted the *Downtown Tiburon Design Handbook*. The *Design Handbook* contains design concepts and guidelines for revitalization and new construction of buildings, storefronts, and streetscapes within Downtown Tiburon. The *Downtown Tiburon Design Handbook* is incorporated by reference into *Tiburon 2020*.

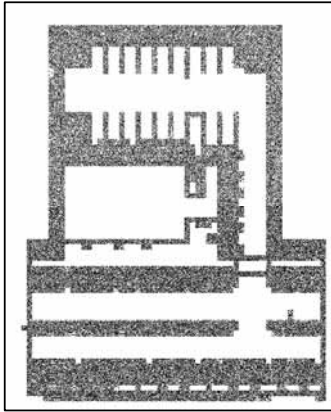
Downtown Design policies and programs are intended to reinforce and amplify the objectives of the *Design Handbook* in further developing Downtown's strong sense of place.

## Design Policies

- DT-17:** Throughout Downtown New buildings or alterations to existing buildings in the Downtown should substantially adhere to the guidelines set forth in the *Downtown Tiburon Design Handbook*.
- DT-18:** Throughout Downtown Street furniture and street lighting shall be high quality and consistent with the guidelines established in the *Site Furnishings Supplement to the Downtown Tiburon Design Handbook*, and shall be installed only in locations that will enhance use and enjoyment of sidewalks, parks, pedestrian corridors, plazas and other public areas.
- DT-19:** Throughout Downtown Character defining elements of buildings listed on the Town's Inventory of Local Historical Buildings (Resolution No. 07-2001 as amended) shall be retained, preserved, and restored wherever feasible.
- DT-20:** Throughout Downtown Encourage public art in those locations in Downtown where it is appropriate.
- DT-21:** Main Street New construction and remodeling of buildings shall be architecturally compatible with, and contribute to, the village character of Main Street, the principal features of which are described in the *Downtown Tiburon Design Handbook*.
- DT-22:** Main Street New construction and remodeling shall respect both the well-defined streetscape of Main Street and the street's maritime environment.
- DT-23:** Ark Row Public and private improvements (including signs) shall be compatible with and not compromise Ark Row's historic resources and its unique character.
- DT-24:** Ark Row The historic arks, cottages, and other resources of Ark Row shall be retained and rehabilitated consistent with recommended actions provided in applicable sections of *The*

*Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation & Illustrated Guidelines for Rehabilitating Historic Buildings.*

- DT-25:** Tiburon Boulevard New buildings shall observe a setback of 25 to 30 feet from the curb, with entrances visible to the motorist and welcoming to the pedestrian, to create an engaging, pedestrian-friendly environment.



*New buildings at the sidewalk will support pedestrian activity.*

Where possible, frontage improvements including wider sidewalks and street trees on both sides of the street should be installed consistent with the *Downtown Tiburon Design Handbook*.

- DT-26:** Tiburon Boulevard Retail storefronts and active outdoor spaces for community gathering, such as sidewalk cafes, are strongly encouraged, in order to make strolling along Tiburon Boulevard a stimulating and enjoyable activity.

- DT-27:** Tiburon Boulevard The visual presence and location of on-site parking spaces are to be made secondary to building storefronts, entrances, and street orientation. Locating parking behind buildings will be required wherever possible.

- DT-28:** Tiburon Boulevard A mix of two- and three-story buildings is encouraged for new construction.

- DT-29:** Point Tiburon The prevailing design theme and sign program established at the Point Tiburon Plaza should be retained to ensure a harmonious and consistent appearance within this commercial center.

## **Implementing Programs for Design**

- DT-d:** Over the long-term, implement installation of streetscape improvements to Tiburon Boulevard's public right-of-way as described in the *Downtown Tiburon Design Handbook*. These improvements may include, but are not limited to, widening

sidewalks to a minimum of eight feet; providing a landscaped planter strip between sidewalks and streets on both sides of Tiburon Boulevard; installing new street trees in these planter strips; and replanting the existing median strip with lower-growing vegetation.

- DT-e:* Facilitate the long-term future improvement of the four corner properties at the intersection of Tiburon Boulevard and Beach Road and adjacent sites.
- DT-f:* The Town shall adopt a street furniture/outdoor seating plan for Main Street, with possible future extension of the plan to other areas of Downtown.
- DT-g:* The Town shall adopt a resolution designating the former Northwestern Pacific Railroad Yard palm tree as a protected tree.
- DT-h:* Consider installation of a Downtown Tiburon entry sign/planter area at an appropriate location.
- DT-i:* Consider adoption of a public art ordinance and establishment of a community program to encourage public art where appropriate.

#### **4.6 DOWNTOWN CIRCULATION & PARKING**

Parking has been identified as one of the challenges that must be adequately addressed for Downtown to be successful. Surveys of parking lot use demonstrate that there is enough parking currently in Downtown to serve the existing uses. However, parking is not evenly distributed throughout Downtown, meaning that people often have to walk to their desired destination. Additionally, most of the parking is not free.

Circulation and parking policies and programs aim to identify opportunities to improve the movement of people by car, bicycle, or on foot.

##### **Circulation & Parking Policies**

- DT-30:* Identify and remedy congestion points to pedestrian and bicycle circulation in Downtown, such as near the Juanita

Lane/Tiburon Boulevard intersection and at the Mar West Street/Tiburon Boulevard intersection.

- DT-31:* Pedestrian access to waterfront activity shall be encouraged.
- DT-32:* When changes in property use and construction of major additions or substantial redesign of new buildings allow, the Town should pursue the opportunity to provide increased pedestrian access to the waterfront along Main Street.
- DT-33:* New parking facilities in Downtown Tiburon shall be located behind buildings and adequately landscaped in order to reduce their visual impact, primarily from Tiburon Boulevard. Structure parking should be low-key and not prominently visible.
- DT-34:* The Town will support ferry service providers and encourage the use of ferries to reduce visitor vehicle traffic and parking demand in its Downtown.

### **Implementing Programs for Circulation & Parking**

- DT-j:* The Town shall install signs or kiosks where appropriate to indicate the location of off-street parking within walking distance of Downtown Tiburon.
- DT-k:* For the Main Street Parking Lot, designate and enhance pedestrian walkways, stairways, lanes and intersection points through signage, pavement markings or other methods, and enhance or replace existing parking lot landscaping along Juanita Lane. The Town and property owner should study alternative vehicular entry and/or exit points for this parking lot.
- DT-l:* Pave and improve the Tiburon Boulevard pay parking lot located at 1525 Tiburon Boulevard. If feasible, designate bus parking spaces in this lot, with signage prohibiting the idling of buses.
- DT-m:* The Town, along with Downtown property owners and merchants, shall periodically review the relationship between Downtown businesses and the time limit regulations of on-

street parking and study changes to the current public street parking regulations to best serve Downtown merchants and their patrons.

- DT-n:* The Town shall explore the desirability and feasibility of a public parking structure in Downtown.
- DT-o:* With the owners of Downtown private parking lots, the Town shall examine the feasibility of instituting a preferential parking program for residents.
- DT-p:* Install a traffic signal at Mar West Street and Tiburon Boulevard as soon as permission from Caltrans can be secured.
- DT-q:* Reduce the bicycle/vehicular conflict at the Mar West Street/Tiburon Boulevard intersection. Study the installation of a delineated left-turn bicycle lane from westbound Tiburon Boulevard to the multi-use path entrance at this location, as well as other options. Such improvements may (but need not) occur in conjunction with signalization of the intersection.
- DT-r:* Relieve the pedestrian congestion points near the intersection of Juanita Lane and Tiburon Boulevard through physical changes and improved enforcement of the public right-of-way.
- DT-s:* Install a paved pedestrian pathway or similar suitable improvement along Mar West Street from Tiburon Boulevard to the Tiburon Peninsula Club, and install a pathway connecting Teather Park to Judge Field.
- DT-t:* Actively monitor the San Francisco Bay Area Water Transit Authority process in order to promote ferry use.

#### **4.7 DOWNTOWN PUBLIC FACILITIES**

In 2000, the Town completed the Main Street Reconstruction Project and in 2002 completed the Ferry Access Improvement Project. Both projects demonstrate the commitment to Downtown by the Town, property owners, and businesses.

## **Public Facilities Policies**

- DT-35:* Support an appropriate expansion of the Belvedere-Tiburon Public Library adjacent to Zelinsky Park.
- DT-36:* Maintain Railroad Marsh as a functional flood control system and enhance its habitat value.
- DT-37:* Closely regulate and limit use of Shoreline Park for public events, with any events generally focused at Ferry Plaza.

## **Implementing Programs for Public Facilities**

- DT-u:* Facilitate expansion of the Belvedere-Tiburon Public Library by employing streamlined permit review processes typically used for major public projects.
- DT-v:* Implement recommendations of the Railroad Marsh Maintenance Plan prepared by Wetlands Research Associates.
- DT-w:* Consider the installation of a small public restroom facility in or near Shoreline Park.