

Commitment to Our Future

Part VII



Goal 11

Implementing the Ross General Plan

Planning in Ross does not begin and end with the General Plan. The Ross General Plan recognizes that the process of change is dynamic and unpredictable and that a continuing process for monitoring the General Plan, and the assumptions upon which it is based, is necessary. The General Plan sets out our road map, but it is the ongoing commitment of time and resources that will achieve our vision of Ross in the year 2025. All of the actions identified in the General Plan require further study, new ordinances, special funding, or public review. The details relating to each action will be evaluated at the time they are undertaken.

OUR VISION OF ROSS IN YEAR 2025

The General Plan is a strategic document that identifies commitments to action and implementation goals. It is a blueprint for the adoption of ordinances and for establishing Town Council and staff work priorities.

The planning and permitting process is transparent, understandable and objective. Decisions are based on staff and design review recommendations, familiarity with the General Plan and sound judgment. Applicants for variances or use permits are assisted by staff and the Town's Advisory Design Review Committee (ADR), and are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the process for obtaining variances and permits. The process is simplified and efficient.

Criteria to Define Action/Implementation Priorities

There are many actions the Town should undertake to implement the Ross General Plan. However, not all actions can be undertaken immediately as there are community needs, staffing availability and financial resources to consider. The following factors have been used for grouping General Plan implementation actions into priority categories.

First-Level Criteria (Near-Term or Urgent Need and Benefit)

- (1) Does the action address an immediate health or safety concern?
- (2) Is the action a legal requirement that must be fulfilled?
- (3) Does the action respond to a pressing development issue?
- (4) What is the financial impact on the Town?
- (5) Is the action a special project that has already been started?
- (6) Is the action already an ongoing normal responsibility of the Town?
- (7) Does the time-frame for the action require it to be implemented before another program action can be taken?



Downtown Ross Commercial Building

Second-Level Criteria (Medium-Term Benefit)

- (8) Does the action respond to a longer-term planning need?
- (9) Will the action result in a longer-term aesthetic improvement?
- (10) Is the action necessary to keep the General Plan current?

To ensure that the Plan remains up-to-date and reflective of current town policy and consistent with State law implementation of the General Plan will be reviewed biennially by the Town Council concurrently with the budget so that any modifications can be made. This portion of the General Plan will be evaluated as part of the General Plan's review.

Near-Term Actions (1-3 Years) Not In Order of Priority

1.A Establish a Tree Committee. Establish a Tree Committee to develop recommendations for trees, landscaping and maintenance in the public right-of-way.

3.A Establish Advisory Design Review (ADR). Develop a process for incorporating design review of development proposals utilizing an advisory group of local volunteer design professionals to provide technical assistance to staff.

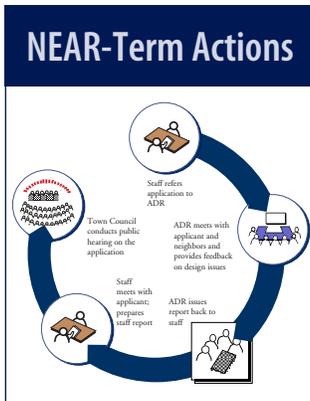
3.B Require Design Review for Larger Landscape Projects. Require design review for large landscape projects that include significant hardscape, retaining walls, vegetation modifications, modification of topography, additional impervious surfaces, alterations of drainage patterns and other site modifications that could affect the visual and/or physical character of the site and neighborhood. Ensure that larger landscape projects include water efficient plant materials and efficient irrigation design.

3.C Pursue Undergrounding of Utilities. Undertake a program to underground utilities in Town neighborhoods if an investigation shows resident financial support for such action or if alternative viable funding mechanisms can be developed.

3.D Develop Detailed Design Guidelines and Requirements. Prepare design guidelines to be used in the design review process. Guidelines may include, but would not be limited to: (1) definition of what is subject to design review; (2) criteria to be used in design review, including contextual criteria; (3) criteria for exceptions to standards; (4) recommendations for fire-resistant design and materials. and (5) submittal and presentation requirements. A refinement of the design review process based on sub-areas in Ross may also occur. A preliminary mapping of sub-areas is shown in Figure 5 located in Appendix A. ADR should be involved in this process.

5.A Prepare Water System (Pressure) Master Plan. Coordinate with the Marin Municipal Water District (MMWD) to evaluate water pressure and water lines to ensure adequate fire protection. Identify locations where improvements are needed and adopt requirements and funding mechanisms in coordination with MMWD to implement these improvements.

5.B Implement Ross Valley Emergency Preparedness. Initiate discussions with other Ross Valley jurisdictions to consider opportunities to jointly respond to emergencies such as flood, fire, earthquake or other emergency situations. Cost savings and coordination opportunities could include the creation of a



Town staff disaster planning coordinator, formation of a disaster preparedness committee reporting to Town staff (resident volunteers, Town official), sharing of resources and development of outreach programs to residents and businesses to provide training and information about disaster preparedness.

6.A Participate in Ross Valley Flood Protection and Watershed Program. Work with other Ross Valley jurisdictions to address a watershed-wide approach to drainage, warning systems, emergency response, and flood insurance programs.

7.A Prepare Pedestrian and Bicycle Master Plan. Encourage pedestrian and bicycle travel in Ross by developing a safe bicycle and pedestrian route system, including requirements for providing bicycle racks at commercial projects and public facilities. The master plan will be coordinated with the Safe Routes to Schools program and will also consider methods to assure protection of pathways and the entire walkway system in Ross. The map in Appendix A (Figure 11, Pedestrian/Bicycle System in Ross) shows the current bicycle and pedestrian system.

7.B Pursue Funding for Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements. Investigate and apply to programs which could provide funding for pedestrian and bicycle improvements, including grants through the Transportation Authority of Marin (TAM) and state and federal sources.

8.A Prepare a Downtown Area Plan. Develop a plan for the Downtown area as a “Special Planning Area” (see Land Use Plan) to include the Downtown commercial area, parking area through the post office to Lagunitas Avenue, and Ross Common. The plan would include: (1) street design improvements; (2) parking; (3) potential uses, including opportunities for limited housing; (4) design guidelines; (5) pedestrian and bicycle access — including access to Frederick Allen Park and Kentfield Rehabilitation Hospital; and, (6) outdoor gathering areas.

8.C Develop New Sign Ordinance for the Downtown. In coordination with Advisory Design Review, develop a new sign ordinance for the downtown to provide greater flexibility in sign design and Town approval.

9.A Study and Implement Town Hall Remodel. Evaluate options for remodeling Town Hall for police, fire, administrative staff and meeting space.

9.B Consider Fire Service Consolidation. Study opportunities to consolidate fire protection services with other Ross Valley jurisdictions and agencies.

NEAR-Term Actions



9.C Review Fees. Conduct a periodic review of fees to assure cost recovery for services provided by the Town.

9.D Post General Plan Information on the Town Website. Provide an interactive general plan format by posting the Ross General Plan on the Town’s website and providing links to make it easy to navigate for users.

9.E Establish a List of Town Specialists. Identify specialists in fields such as hydrology, archaeology, historic preservation, cultural places, etc. (similar to the Town Arborist position) who can provide technical review and recommendations, as needed by Town staff, for development proposals.

9.F Monitor General Plan Implementation. Conduct a biennial, publicly noticed meeting to review and update the section of the Ross General Plan entitled “Priorities for Implementing the Ross General Plan.” Program priorities will be reflected in the Town’s budgeting and capital improvement programming decisions.

9.G Provide Information to All Residents. Maintain, publicize and distribute information on a variety of topics related to community health, safety and environmental protection. This information includes, but is not limited to, disaster planning material, an inventory of hazardous materials and substances used by the Town and ways for residents to dispose of hazardous materials, drought tolerant landscaping, contact information, schedules of fees, etc. Strive to create electronic access to the community by using “Information by Email” as appropriate, and other means.

9.H Establish Town Development Review Protocol. Establish Town protocol (procedures and responsibilities) for Town Council, committees, technical specialists and consultants, applicants, neighbors, and Town staff in the development review process and formulation of town policies, procedures and enforcement. Ensure compliance with state and local laws and regulations.

Implement Scheduled Housing Element Programs (see Housing Element)

Update the Housing Element (By June, 2009)

NEAR-Term Actions

TOWN OF ROSS GENERAL PLAN

Draft Ross General Plan Ready for Review!

Now is the time to be noticed!

Special ROSS TOWN COUNCIL Meeting
for the
TOWN OF ROSS DRAFT GENERAL PLAN (2007 — 2025)
Monday, April 16, 2007
at 6:30 pm
at
Town Hall

The Town of Ross is excited to announce the completion and availability of the draft Town of Ross General Plan 2007-2025. A meeting committee comprised of town Board members and a Town Council member worked with Town staff and various citizens, including local architects and landscape architects, to develop this plan. The process also included extensive opportunities for public participation to reflect the best current ideas and a future vision for Ross.

This general plan will replace the Town's current general plan, which was adopted in 1988. A general plan typically has a 20-30 year lifespan.

The plan proposes many new ideas, including:

- Establish **RSDR (Rural Advisory Design Review)** comprised of an advisory group of local volunteer design professionals to provide design review assistance to staff.
- Prepare a **Plan for the Department Area** to address street design, parking, general use, design guidelines, professional review, and plans for parking.
- Require **Design Review of Landscape Projects** that include structures that result after the usual architectural character of a site or neighborhood.

The draft plan is available online at www.ross-town.org. A hard and color copy of the plan may also be obtained from the Town Administration office at Ross Town Hall.

The Town Council will hold a special meeting on Monday, April 16, 2007 at 6:30 pm, in Town Hall to discuss and get public input on the proposed plan. Community members and all interested parties are invited to join us in this discussion. We look forward to seeing you there!

Thank!

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Medium-Term Actions (3-8 Years) Not In Order of Priority

1.B Create a Landscape Master Plan for Public Areas. Develop a Landscape Master Plan for entryways, streets, parks and other public areas of Ross. The plan may include: (1) clarification of responsibility for selecting, maintaining and irrigating Town trees; (2) an approved planting list; (3) a requirement for homeowners to plant and maintain certain types of trees from an approved list; (4) a replacement policy for trees when trees are removed; and, (5) guidance for issues such as tree lanes and waterways.

2.A Establish “Green Building” Requirements. Establish specific development regulations that require buildings and substantial remodels to be built using “green” building techniques, including recycling of building materials where possible, and to conform to an industry approved certification or rating such as Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Building Rating System, developed by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), or Build it Green, which is a professional non-profit membership organization whose mission is to promote healthy, energy and resource-efficient buildings in California.

2.B Review Pesticide and Herbicide Requirements. Review current Town standards to ensure the prudent use of pesticides and herbicides. Implement an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program that uses a variety of methods to control pests. The program would also include actions to identify and eliminate conditions that may attract and support pests.

2.C Adopt Woodsmoke or Biomass Smoke Ordinance. Adopt a Woodsmoke Ordinance to reduce particulate emissions from wood or biomass burning appliances, including fireplaces, that do not meet EPA standards of emission. The purposes of the ordinance will be to either require or encourage the removal of existing wood or biomass burning appliances that do not meet standards of emission, and to implement requirements at the time of major remodel projects.

2.D Consider Secondhand Smoke Ordinance. Study and consider enactment of a Secondhand Smoke Ordinance in Ross.

2.E Consider Solar Access Ordinance. Study and consider enactment of a Solar Access Ordinance to encourage use of solar design for Ross development.

4.A Conduct Study to Identify Historic Resources. Identify potential districts and significant properties that may be eligible for National Register or California Historic Resources status, or which may have local significance or distinction.

MEDIUM-Term Actions





4.B Adopt Historic Resources Regulations. Adopt guidelines, regulations and requirements to protect historic resources, including buildings, accessory structures, kiosks, gates, bridges, etc. Incorporate historic review into ADR design guidelines and consider the development of findings as part of the Town record for disclosure at resale, indicating that the home or site carries special significance to the town and therefore has special requirements for future renovation or alteration.

4.C Map Archaeologically Sensitive Areas. Consult with the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, the Northwest Information Center of the California Historical Resources Information System, and other resources to develop a map of potentially sensitive archaeological areas that can be used to identify locations where an archaeological inventory may be necessary prior to approval of development activity.

6.B Develop Rules Regarding Site Runoff. Develop guidelines that limit the coverage of impervious surfaces, that require the use of permeable surfaces, that implement other regulations to effectively channel and minimize site runoff, and that allow water to percolate into the ground.

6.C Develop Regional Land Use Regulation. Work with other Ross Valley jurisdictions to explore and adopt land use regulations to minimize additional runoff, or reduce runoff, within the Ross Valley watershed.

8.B Modify Downtown Commercial Zoning. Revise commercial zoning in the Downtown to prohibit offices in storefront locations, to encourage mixed use housing, and to encourage uses that are local-serving and would contribute to the vitality of downtown.

8.D Investigate Enforcement Methods. Review enforcement needs as part of the development of design guidelines and other programs intended to refine Town practices for application review and approval.