COMMUNITY DESIGN AND HISTORICAL PRESERVATION ELEMENT

COMMUNITY DESIGN AND HISTORICAL PRESERVATION ELEMENT

Section 4.1

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The goals and policies of the Community Design and Historic Preservation Element are intended to reinforce the identity and delicate beauty of Sausalito. The City's setting defines its special character; a community nestled into the wooded hillsides, bordered by Richardson Bay on one edge and by Wolfback Ridge and the lands of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area on the other. The scenic qualities of Sausalito are further exemplified by the garden atmosphere one experiences as one drives or walks through the hillside residential areas. Small landscaped parks, neighborhood greenbelts and gores are found throughout Sausalito. The ambiance of the City has evolved over time as it has developed into an urban village of the 1990's. The diversity in architectural style, which is in harmony with existing architectural style, is a major attribute of this evolution.

This element is aimed at assuring that as Sausalito continues to evolve, diversity of design continues to be harmonious with the existing character of the City through the preservation of historic buildings and a blending of new buildings which respect the existing scale and diverse architectural character of the community. It is also aimed at maintaining and enhancing the relationship between the City's natural features, the water and existing vegetation, and buildings located in this setting.

Section 4.2

OBJECTIVES, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

Community Design and Historical Preservation Element policies and programs are grouped to cover the following seven objectives:

1.0	*Scale and Architectural Harmony.*
2.0	*Integrate Structures with the Natural Environment and Protect Natural Features.*
3.0	*Balance View Protection with Property Rights.*
4.0	*Preserve the Character of Community Sub-Areas.*
5.0	*Enhance Public Improvements.*
6.0	*Address Community Design Concerns Through Appropriate Development Review Procedures.*
7.0	*Respect and Maintain the Exterior Integrity of Historic Structures and Sites.*

■ **Policy CD-1.1**

Sausalito Identity. Enhance Sausalito's architectural quality and diversity, general City characteristics, and historical legacy through careful design review.

> *Program CD-1.1.1*
> *Design Review Findings. Amend the zoning ordinance to set forth findings for approval for development projects which require DRB approval.*

■ **Policy CD-1.2**

Architectural Innovation. Encourage projects which promote architectural quality and innovative solutions rather than conformity to standard designs.

> *Program CD-1.2.1*
> *Design Findings of Approval. Establish findings for design approval that encourage design initiative.*

> *Program CD-1.2.2*
> *Design Guidelines. Prepare design guidelines that support positive, creative, and/or innovative design solutions for appropriate development.*

■ **Policy CD-1.3**

Neighborhood Compatibility. Provide that all new residential structures, all residential structures that are to be removed and replaced, and those structures that are to be significantly remodeled, are designed to complement their setting and the other buildings in the neighborhood.

> *Program CD-1.3.1*
> *Zoning Ordinance (Size and Mass). Revise the zoning ordinance to clarify the authority of the Design Review Board, and as applicable, the Historic Landmarks Board, in making findings of design compatibility related to size and mass of proposed structures. (See Policy LU-1.9)*

> *Program CD-1.3.2*
> *Land Use Policies. Refer to programs under Land Use Policies LU-1.8 through LU-1.11.*

■ **Policy CD-1.4**

Construction Near Historic Districts or Landmarks. Enhance the historic quality of established districts and landmark structures by encouraging new construction or alterations to existing structures in the general vicinity to demonstrate compatibility with them.

Program CD-1.4.1
Historic Character Compatibility. *Amend the zoning ordinance to require consideration of historic character compatibility as part of the design approval by the Design Review Board.*

■ **Policy CD-1.5**
Maximum Height Limit. Establish a maximum height limit for all structures in Sausalito while recognizing that height is not guaranteed where view preservation and scale is an issue.

Program CD-1.5.1
Zoning Ordinance (Height Limit). *Continue to permit the 32 foot maximum height limit for residential and commercial zones.*

Program CD-1.5.2
Zoning Ordinance (C-W Height Limit). *Consider amending the zoning ordinance to establish a reduced height limit for Central Waterfront commercial zone.*

Program CD-1.5.3
Zoning Ordinance (Height and Views). *Revise the zoning ordinance to clarify the authority of the Design Review Board, and as applicable, the Historic Landmarks Board, in making findings of compatibility related to height and view blockage (see Policies CD-3.1 and CD-3.2).*

■ **Policy CD-1.6**
Commercial, Industrial and Institutional Sites. Develop all commercial, industrial and institutional sites as visually attractive parts of the City.

Program CD-1.6.1
Non-Residential Design Criteria. *Prepare design guidelines for non-residential areas which consider type of building materials, location of utilities, screening of trash collection and loading areas, and appropriate landscaping of parking lots.*

Program CD-1.6.2
Sign Ordinance. *Review and modify the sign ordinance to establish size, location, and types of signs allowed for each commercial and industrial area.*

Program CD-1.6.3
Zoning Ordinance (Recycling Areas). *Assure compliance with State Law by amending the Zoning Ordinance to require the inclusion of adequate areas for the collection and loading of recyclable materials in all development projects.*

■ **Policy CD-1.7**
Landscaping. Emphasize the importance of landscaping to any design and the role of landscaping as a compliment to the streetscape and the neighborhood.

Program CD-1.7.1
Landscape Plans. *Continue to require landscape plans for new construction and major modification of existing structures and site improvements.*

Program CD-1.7.2
Water Conservation. *Continue to require that new landscaping plans be reviewed to assure compliance with the Water Conservation Ordinance. (See Policy EQ-3.12)*

> **Objective CD-2.0**
> **Integrate Structures with the Natural Environment and Protect Natural Features.** *Assure that all new or significantly remodeled structures be designed to respect existing land forms and natural site features and to maintain the balance between open space and buildings.*

■ **Policy CD-2.1**
Natural Features. Maintain and enhance natural site features and minimize disturbance to the natural terrain to the extent possible consistent with permitted densities.

Program CD-2.1.1
Tree Removal. *Require approval of removal of all significant trees and enforce penalties for tree removal without approval.*

Program CD-2.1.2
Design Review Considerations. *Consider how each proposed project integrates with its natural environment through the design review process.*

■ **Policy CD-2.2**
Steep Sloping Sites. Give special attention to addressing the special design considerations for proposed development on steeply sloped sites.

Program CD-2.2.1
Topography Study. *Conduct a study of available topographic materials to develop a slope survey of the City and assist in the definition of steep slopes.*

Program CD-2.2.2
Design Guidelines. *Develop illustrative design guidelines to provide general guidance for construction on steep slopes.*

> **Objective CD-3.0**
> **Balance View Protection with Property Rights.** *Provide view protection in a manner which considers property interests of all parties involved.*

Community Design and
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◼ Policy CD-3.1

Private Views. Locate and design new and significantly remodeled structures and landscape improvements so as to minimize the interference with primary views from structures on neighboring properties. Some minor loss of view may be consistent with this policy if necessary to protect a property right.

> *Program CD-3.1.1*
> **Design Review of Private View Impacts.** *Analyze project submittals for impacts on views from adjacent properties through Design Review.*

> *Program CD-3.1.2*
> **Fences.** *Continue to enforce zoning ordinance provisions which require that fence height consider view blockage on adjacent properties.*

> *Program CD-3.1.3*
> **Mechanical Equipment.** *Amend the zoning ordinance to include standards for the installation of mechanical equipment on Sausalito properties.*

◼ Policy CD-3.2

Public Views. Locate and design new and significantly remodeled structures and other private and public improvements with consideration for their impact on significant public views and view corridors.

> *Program CD-3.2.1*
> **Design Review of Public View Impacts.** *Through Design Review, analyze project submittals for new and significantly remodeled structures and landscaping for their impact on views from major public vantage points.*

> *Program CD-3.2.2*
> **Map of Public Views.** *Maintain a current map which identifies public view points most worthy of preservation.*

> *Program CD-3.2.3*
> **Silhouette.** *Refer to Program EQ-3.2.4.*

◼ Policy CD-3.3

Overhead Utilities. Enhance private and public views and public safety through the reduction or elimination of overhead utilities.

> *Program CD-3.3.1*
> **Utility Funding of Undergrounding Utilities.** *Continue to work with neighborhoods to facilitate local and utility company funding of the undergrounding of overhead utilities.*

Program CD-3.3.2
Citywide Assessment District. *Investigate funding alternatives for undergrounding overhead utilities including the establishment of a Citywide assessment district, or the combined use of public and private funds.*

Program CD-3.3.3
Undergrounding of Utilities. *Continue to enforce the Municipal Code requirements for undergrounding of utilities.*

Program CD-3.3.4
Work with Utility Companies. *Work with utility companies to find surface or subsurface alternatives to increasing pole heights, adding equipment and increasing the size and number of overhead wires.*

Program CD-3.3.5
Prioritize Undergrounding. *Investigate the possibility of prioritizing specific areas for utility undergrounding as funding becomes available.*

Program CD-3.3.6
Health and Safety. *Refer to Policy HS-2.4.*

Objective CD-4.0
Preserve the Character of Community Sub-Areas. *Promote the uniqueness of community sub-areas and assure that their attributes are enhanced.*

▇ Policy CD-4.1
Sub-Area Objectives. Describe general design objectives in various community sub-areas to assist in future planning.

Program CD-4.1.1
Sub-Area Guidelines. *Prepare design guidelines for various residential sub-areas to provide general guidance for development proposals, but that do not limit possible design solutions.*

Program CD-4.1.2
Historic Landmarks Board. *Receive HLB recommendations in defining neighborhood characteristics, compatibility and standards for determining excessive change.*

▇ Policy CD-4.2
Sub-Area Qualities. Maintain the uniqueness of community sub-areas and assure that sub-area attributes are protected and enhanced. Design policies by commercial sub-area are:

Downtown. Maintain and enhance the pedestrian oriented streetscape, promote design compatibility with historical structures, and recognize the needs of retailers in making design decisions.

Caledonia Street. Maintain and enhance the pedestrian streetscape and promote design compatibility with existing historical, commercial, and residential structures.

Central Waterfront (Napa Street to Spinnaker Point). Balance commercial structures with recreational facilities and open space (water/view) enjoyment, encourage enlargement and enhancement of Dunphy Park and expand public access to waterfront sites.

Downtown Waterfront (Spinnaker Point to Princess Street). Balance the open water views with public amenities, provide efficient and continuous pedestrian access along and to the water, investigate the enlargement and enhancement of the Vina Del Mar Park area.

Southern Waterfront (Princess Street to City Limits). Maintain a primarily open, unobstructed visual character of this area.

Marinship. Encourage the development of all industrial, commercial, and institutional sites to be as visually attractive as possible consistent with functionality.

> *Program CD-4.2.1*
> ***Commercial Sub-Areas Design Criteria.*** *Prepare design guidelines for public and private projects within the City's commercial sub-areas.*

Objective CD-5.0
Enhance Public Improvements. Ensure that public projects promote the beautification of the City and utility of publicly owned lands.

▓ **Policy CD-5.1**
Public Projects. Assure that community design considerations are carefully included in any decision involving public projects.

> *Program CD-5.1.1*
> ***Public Views.*** *Locate and design public improvements in order to minimize their impact on public vantage points and view corridors.*

> *Program CD-5.1.2*
> ***Encroachments.*** *Consider the balance between parking, traffic congestion, and right-of-way beautification when reviewing requests for encroachments for private benefit on public rights-of-way.*

Program CD-5.1.3
Landscaping. Maintain and enhance landscaping on major arteries, particularly at main City entrance and exit points.

Objective CD-6.0
Address Community Design Concerns Through Appropriate Development Review Procedures.
Ensure that community design concerns are addressed when development proposals are submitted for City approval by establishing design review procedures, criteria and requirements.

■ **Policy CD-6.1**
Design Review Basis. Recognize that achieving attractive design is as important as complying with zoning standards in attaining community development goals.

Program CD-6.1.1
Design Review Board. Continue to require design approval of major new construction, additions, alterations, and demolitions by the Design Review Board.

Program CD-6.1.2
Detail of Application Submittals. Require that application submittals address site layout, building scale, design and materials, signage, and landscape design in sufficient detail to assure compliance with community standards.

Program CD-6.1.3
Study Sessions. Establish a process for encouraging study sessions for major development applications to allow general design discussion by the DRB, and as applicable the HLB, at the earliest possible stage in the development of design solutions.

Program CD-6.1.4
Historic Data. Publicize that relevant historical data is available through the Historic Landmarks Board and the Sausalito Historical Society to developers/owners of registered historic landmarks, properties in historic districts and other properties designated as historically noteworthy.

Objective CD-7.0
Respect and Maintain the Exterior Integrity of Historic Structures and Sites. Respect and maintain the exterior integrity of structures and sites in the Historic District and of all officially designated or recognized historic structures and sites outside the district.

■ **Policy CD-7.1**
Historic Character. Continue the City's effort to retain and enhance its historical legacy in the review of proposed projects in historic districts and of individual structures and sites with historic significance as shown on General Plan map GP-9.

Program CD-7.1.1
Joint Review. Continue the City's policy to hold joint DRB and HLB meetings and combined decisions for projects involving historically significant structures and sites.

■ Policy CD-7.2
Historic Landmarks Board. Clarify the responsibilities and authority of the Historic Landmarks Board in design and construction activities impacting historic properties and sites.

Program CD-7.2.1
Historic Features. Continue HLB listing and documentation of Sausalito's historical features as an important reference source for new and significant remodel development proposals.

Program CD-7.2.2
Historic Property Ownership. Support the HLB in the publication of a compendium of the responsibilities and benefits of ownership of properties on the National Register of Historic Places, within historic districts, or otherwise designated as historically noteworthy.

Program CD-7.2.3
Publication. Consider a City supported preparation of a pictorial publication of significant Sausalito historical structures.

Program CD-7.2.4
Historic Identification. Continue to assign the responsibility for identification of historic districts, historic landmarks, and noteworthy structures to the HLB.

Program CD-7.2.5
HLB Research. Encourage the HLB to prepare materials on historic structures so that historical consideration can be given appropriate consideration in proposed projects on such structures.

Program CD-7.2.6
Period Structures. Facilitate the preservation of any period structure whether or not it is on the list of noteworthy structures by preparing advisory historic preservation guidelines for owners, architects, and contractors.

Program CD-7.2.7
HLB Guidelines. Recommend the general guidelines for the preservation, restoration, and rehabilitation of Sausalito's historic properties as incorporated in "The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Preservation and Guidelines for Applying the Standard.

■ Policy CD-7.3
Public Education. Educate and advocate for historic preservation among residents of and visitors to Sausalito.

Program CD-7.3.1
Sausalito Historical Society Education Programs. Cooperate with the Sausalito Historical Society to provide educational programs.

Program CD-7.3.2
Sausalito Historical Museum. Cooperate with the Sausalito Historical Society in a citywide search for a new and permanent facility to house the Sausalito Historical Museum.

COMMUNITY DESIGN AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION BACKGROUND

The Community Design and Historic Preservation Element is not mandated by State General Planning law. It is included in the General Plan because of the local importance of the issue of community appearance and livability. The background section describes the City's design and historic preservation goals and proposed methods to achieve those goals. A major factor in achieving the desired appearance is promoting the existing character and scale of development in Sausalito.

▥ Design Review Approach

The Zoning Ordinance establishes standards for the general location of a structure on a site and the maximum size of that structure. City design policies recognize that these standards by themselves do not assure quality design. In response to this, the Plan calls for the establishment of findings of approval for development projects which require Design Review Board (DRB) authorization and/or Historic Landmarks Board review. It is the intention of these findings to establish bases for DRB and HLB decisions and/or recommendations.

In addition to establishing findings, the Plan calls for the development of general design guidelines. The intention of the guidelines is to provide general design suggestions for proposed development which allow for individual design initiative. Therefore, new development proponents should use the guidelines to assist them in realizing what the City desires when preparing a proposed plan. For example, one of the concerns expressed by the public has been the occurrence of unbroken tall construction of walls in new development. It is anticipated that the design guidelines will provide suggestions as to how to minimize the aesthetic impact that this construction feature may have on the surrounding area.

▥ Diversity and Compatibility

As defined in Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, diversity is defined as having the quality of being distinct in kind and having variety in form. Compatibility is defined as having the capability of being in harmonious or agreeable combination with another or others. It is the intent of this Element that diversity and compatibility are not singular terms. Rather, this Element anticipates that new designs can be proposed which are harmonious with the established character of the surrounding area.

As the City has developed over time, architects have proposed unique designs and designs which match neighboring structures. Therefore, the character of the City's design has evolved slowly without major shifts in community or neighborhood character. Both architectural diversity and compatibility can be observed in the future as anticipated by the policies in this Element. Specifically, the intent of this Element is that diverse design proposals may, and should, be considered. However, those designs should also be considerate of the established character of a given neighborhood. The result will be the continued evolution of the City's character.

■ Design Goals

Size and location of structures are important factors in considering new development proposals. The majority of development anticipated in Sausalito will be remodeling of, and additions to, existing structures. There will also be in-fill development of the remaining vacant parcels, but there will be few cases of major development on large pieces of vacant land. Since Sausalito is a nearly built out community, new development will have an impact on surrounding properties. It is the goal of this Plan to further minimize potential impact by continuing to place maximum bulk entitlements on new development. The Plan also calls for new development to be considerate to surrounding properties when it comes to design compatibility. It is the intent of the design policies to encourage a level of quality, compatibility, and diversity in new designs that will help maintain and promote Sausalito's identity.

Besides promoting the concept of compatibility, there are several other important design issues that are promoted by the General Plan. These additional issues are just as important to assuring quality design and maintenance of the quality that makes Sausalito such a beautiful place to live. These issues include, but are not limited to, views, privacy, sun, landscaping, topography, and scale.

■ Natural Features

Another important aspect of quality design is when a structure is designed to be a part of the parcel rather than redesigning the parcel to be a part of the structure. Since Sausalito is a hillside community, the majority of residential development that takes place in the City will be on steeply sloping sites. As a result, excavation and grading will be necessary to accommodate development.

It has been the experience of the City to see new structures which "bunker" into hillsides. The result of this style of development is massive excavation and large retaining walls. Another characteristic of development on steep slopes is the appearance of "looming" structures. This is frequently due to structures projecting out from the slope of the site and is further accented by the use of unbroken walls that extend from the lowest point of the slope up to the lowest point of habitation of the structure. It is the goal of this Plan to balance these two development characteristics by encouraging new development to integrate a site's topography with the design of any project proposal.

While recognizing that the issue and potential impacts associated with slope is important in the steeply sloping residential areas, the Plan also recognizes that further study of the issue is needed. Therefore, the Plan calls for the review of the available topographic materials to develop a slope survey of the City. Once the survey is completed, the City can begin to define what constitutes a steep slope. Once a definition is agreed upon, the City will develop a general set of guidelines which will provide suggestions for possible design solutions to minimize the apparent scale of structure and minimize the amount of excavation.

▓ Tree Preservation

The removal or alteration of trees to accommodate new development has become an important factor in the review of a proposed design. Trees create shade and privacy and enhance the general appearance of Sausalito. They can also result in the blockage of views. Consideration of the trade-off between location of structures and preservation of trees is one of the responsibilities of the Design Review Board.

The City has prepared a tree preservation ordinance which provides protective measures for certain types of trees while encouraging the removal of others. It also establishes mechanisms for dispute resolution where disagreement between property owners concerning the benefit of maintaining existing trees.

▓ Views

It is important that views be considered when reviewing development applications and implementing the provisions of this Element. View corridors from streets and paths, special vantage points, and views from private properties all play an important role.

Defining criteria for the preservation of views from private property is one of the most difficult of the design issues facing Sausalito. A treasured amenity of properties in Sausalito is spectacular views of the waterfront, the open waters of the Bay and land masses beyond. The policies in the Plan recognize both the importance of maintaining views and the obligations of residents and owners to use their property in a manner deemed appropriate in the Land Use Element of the Plan, and consistent with more specific restrictions of the zoning ordinance. The policies of the General Plan recognize the need to resolve view conflicts on a case-by-case basis.

▓ Community Sub-Areas - Neighborhoods

While Sausalito has a unique identity as a City, Sausalito is comprised of many different sub-areas and neighborhoods which have unique characteristics of their own. The General Plan has identified eight (8) large neighborhoods in the Land Use and Growth Management Element.

These neighborhoods are Old Town, The Hill, New Town, Monte Mar Vista/Toyon Terraces, Spring Street Valley, Nevada Street Valley, Wolfback Ridge, and the Marinship. The descriptions of each neighborhood in the Land Use and Growth Management Element Background section are general in nature. This is due to the fact that there is no clear boundary separating each area.

This Element does not propose to promote design policies for each of the generally described neighborhoods. This cannot be done for the simple fact that each neighborhood area consists of several sub-areas or neighborhoods which are also unique. Using New Town as an example, there are at least three distinct neighborhoods within the New Town neighborhood area. These three distinct neighborhoods are the Glen, the Central Waterfront, and Caledonia. It is for these sub-areas of the generally described neighborhoods that the Plan proposes to develop general design guidelines. These neighborhood sub-area guidelines are intended to describe the characteristics and qualities that are to be promoted.

Although the Plan does not propose any definition of potential residential sub-areas, this Element does identify the attributes of several commercial sub-areas that should be promoted. The descriptions of each of these six (6) commercial sub-areas are general in nature, but list the unique characteristics of each sub-area. It is envisioned that the descriptions of the unique qualities of each residential sub-area will be prepared.

■ Design Review Board

Sausalito has very few vacant building sites. Development in the City will occur on in-fill sites in already developed areas. This fact elevates the importance of good design but also adds to the potential for controversy surrounding design issues. The issues that generate controversy are the need to provide new development that is compatible with existing development, to preserve existing important natural features, and to protect and enhance views. The appointment of a Design Review Board (DRB), the members of which are residents of Sausalito, some with professional design backgrounds, provides the forum for the discussion of design issues.

■ Historic Landmarks Board

The Historic Landmarks Board has review authority over proposals for new development and existing structure modification proposals in historic districts and for historic landmarks. The HLB advises owners of such properties as to the benefits and responsibilities of historic property ownership and, additionally, advises the City Council and Planning Commission concerning the identification and designation of historic resources in Sausalito.

■ Historic Preservation

An important defining characteristic of Sausalito is the age range of its buildings. About half of the City's buildings were constructed before 1950, some as early as the late 1800's. Policies which respect the existence of these structures serve as a reminder to all of the City's rich and colorful history. There is a keen recognition in the community of the importance of preserving these links with the past. In response to this community recognition, the City adopted Ordinance 901 in June 1976 which established the Historical Landmarks Board and the procedure by which areas or structures could be designated as historic landmarks. It also provided for official recognition of other historically noteworthy structures which did not qualify for landmark status.

Since 1976, six (6) structures have been given local landmark status and one (1) Historic District has been designated. The City has also designated many structures and sites throughout the City as Noteworthy Structures and Sites. The City designated Downtown Historic District has been placed on the eligibility list of the National Register of Historic Places. The original Casa Madrona Hotel at 156 Bulkley Avenue, the Sausalito Woman's Club at 120 Central Avenue, and the Griswold House at 639 Main Street have been placed on the National List of Historic Places.

Table 4-1
Sausalito's Historic Resources *(see map GP-9)*

SAUSALITO HISTORICAL LANDMARKS

1.	221 Bridgeway	Castle by the Sea
2.	Santa Rosa & San Carlos Avenues	Christ Episcopal Church
3.	76 Cazneau Avenue	Madrona Cottage
4.	Second & Main Streets	NWPRR Freight Depot
5.	168 Harrison Avenue	The Bungalow/Tanglewood
6.	625 Locust Road	Elderberry Cottage

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

A.	639 Main Street	Griswold House
B.	156 Bulkley Avenue	Casa Madrona
C.	Central & San Carlos Avenues	Sausalito Woman's Club

NOTEWORTHY STRUCTURES AND SITES

A current list of the designated Noteworthy Structures and Sites, as prepared by the Historic Landmarks Board, is available at the Community Development Department and the Sausalito Historical Society room at City Hall.
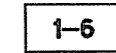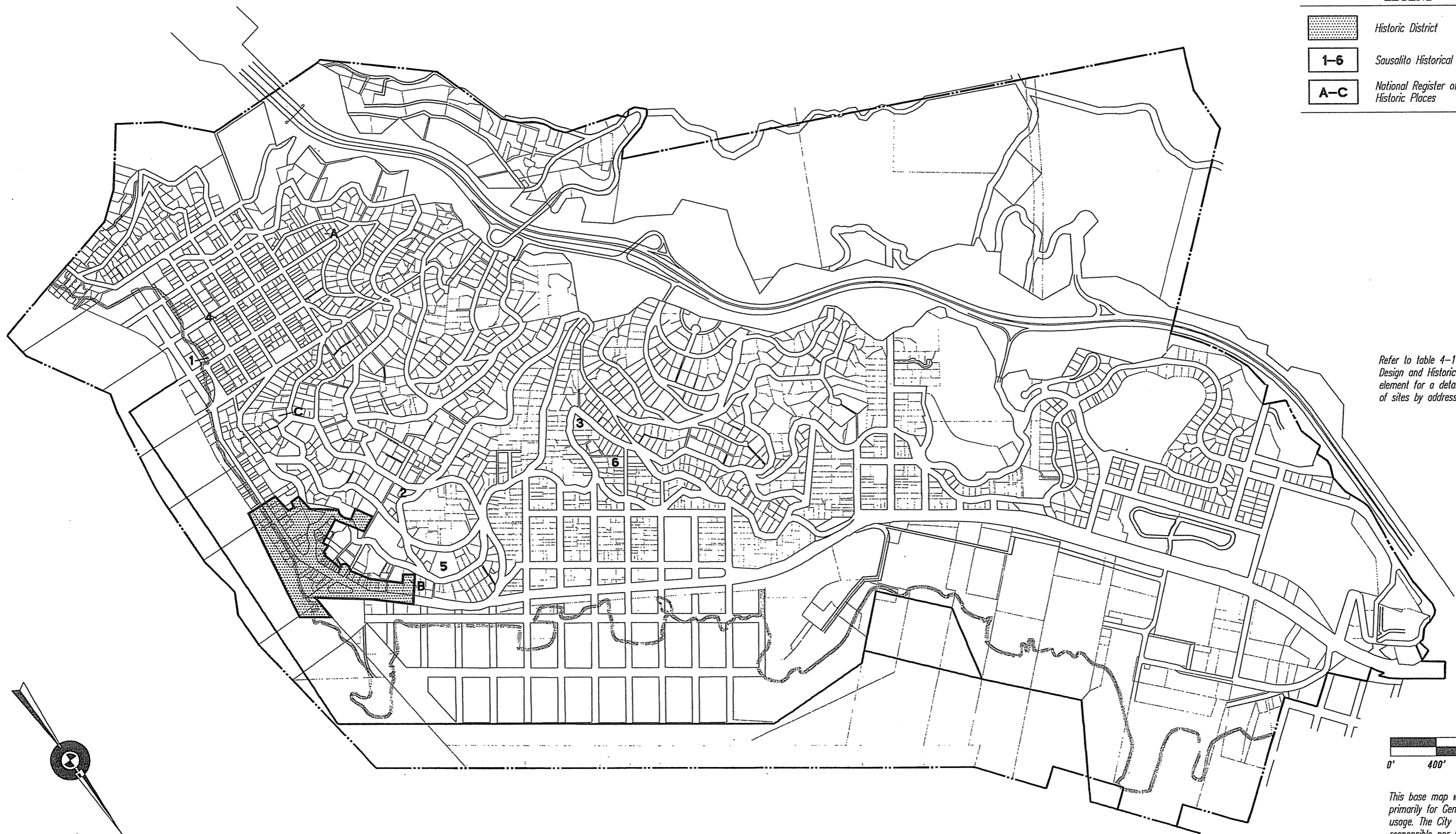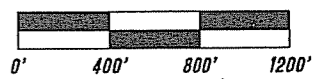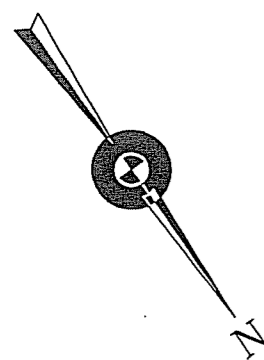
LEGEND

Historic District

1-6 Sausalito Historical Landmark
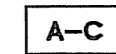
A-C National Register of Historic Places

Refer to table 4-1 in Community Design and Historic Preservation element for a detailed listing of sites by address.

0' 400' 800' 1200'

This base map was developed primarily for General Planning usage. The City of Sausalito is not responsible nor liable for use of this map beyond its intended purpose.

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