



February 26, 2024

Mr. Kevin McDonnell
Mayor, City of Petaluma
11 English Street
Petaluma, CA 94952

RE: Completion of the SMART Pathway through the City of Petaluma

Dear Mayor McDonnell,

We are WTB-TAM, a Community-Based Organization with a 31-year track record building best practices for sustainable transportation in Marin and Sonoma Counties, as well as other locations. We write to you today to let you know about an opportunity to communicate directly with SMART General Manager Eddy Cumins on the topic of completing the SMART Pathway through the City of Petaluma.

The opportunity is the SMART 2024 Strategic Plan public workshop this Wednesday February 28, 2024 at 6:00 pm. This is the third of four Strategic Plan public workshops SMART is holding this Spring and is specifically on the topic of the SMART Pathway. The workshop will be held on Zoom. Participants should pre-register for the workshop by clicking on the link under February 28 at the following website: www.sonomamarintrain.org/Strategic-Plan.

WTB-TAM has been intimately involved with the SMART Pathway project since before the SMART District was even formed. WTB-TAM originated the idea to build the pathway along the SMART railroad. We helped SMART develop the original engineering design and methodology for the pathway alignment along the railroad (see **Exhibit A**).

Following the failure of Measure R, SMART's original 2006 enabling legislation, we helped SMART develop a winning strategy for the follow-up legislation Measure Q, which voters in Marin and Sonoma Counties approved in 2008 (see **Exhibit B**). The key difference between the 2006's failed Measure R and 2008's successful Measure Q was that Measure R promised only to build Class II bike lanes along the SMART route, whereas Measure Q promised the voters that SMART would design and construct a Class I multi-use pathway parallel to the SMART railroad the entire 71-mile railroad route between Larkspur and Cloverdale.

With Class II bike lanes, bicyclists must ride in the street next to vehicular traffic, with nothing but a stripe of white paint to separate them from cars. Many would-be bicyclists feel uncomfortable riding on Class II bike lanes, especially on busy arterial streets with high speeds and volumes of cars. Class I multi-use paths, in contrast, offer bicyclists and pedestrians a fully separated path of travel that is physically removed from the street and from vehicular traffic. Research from the League of American Bicyclists, PeopleforBikes, and Portland State University tells us that only Class I multi-use paths have the ability to "move the needle" and shift trips from cars to bicycles, which is what cities like Petaluma need in order to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and meet their climate action goals.



In Measure Q, SMART promised to build a Class I multi-use path parallel to the SMART railroad through the City of Petaluma. The 2009 *SMART Strategic Plan* reiterated this promise (see **Exhibit C**). SMART later underwent a change of leadership, leading to the promise of a Class I multi-use path parallel to the SMART railroad being stricken from the 2014 *SMART Strategic Plan*. That 2014 *Strategic Plan* (see **Exhibit D**) and the subsequent 2019 *Strategic Plan* (see **Exhibit E**) both show the SMART Pathway in the City of Petaluma taking the form of Class II bike lanes along South Petaluma Boulevard. This is in direct violation of the language approved by voters in 2008's Measure Q.

Today, SMART once again is under new leadership with General Manager Eddy Cumins. The upcoming 2024 *SMART Strategic Plan* is an opportunity for SMART to correct the mistakes of the past, to restore the original vision for a Class I multi-use path parallel to the SMART railroad for the entire 71 miles between Larkspur and Cloverdale, and to fulfill the promise that SMART made to voters when they approved Measure Q in 2008.

This fulfillment of SMART's original promise is especially important in the next few years as Measure Q's 2029 sunset date approaches. SMART must return to the voters of Marin and Sonoma Counties prior to 2029 (likely in either 2026 or 2028) with a new sales tax to keep SMART funded after 2029.

SMART has made enormous investments in building out both the railroad and pathway systems, including ongoing work to build a new train station in north Petaluma and extensions to Windsor and Healdsburg. All of this progress hangs in a delicate balance. If voters do not approve the new sales tax measure, SMART will be forced to cease operations in 2029 and the new Petaluma North station would be for naught. If this happens, it would be the first case in over 100 years of a public railroad in the United States being forced to shut down operations.

The 2024 Strategic Plan Workshop on Pathways this Wednesday, February 28, 2024, is an opportunity for both citizens, voters, and decision-makers to communicate directly with SMART General Manager Eddy Cumins and let him know that completion of the SMART Pathway as originally promised in 2008's Measure Q is vital to the passage of SMART's upcoming sales tax extension, and thus vital to the continued operation and existence of SMART as an entity and public transportation provider in Marin and Sonoma Counties.

We recommend that you, as well as City Manager Peggy Flynn and representatives of Petaluma's Pedestrian & Bicycle Advisory Committee (PBAC) attend the workshop on February 28, 2024, and emphasize the following points:

- The City of Petaluma asks SMART to fulfill its promise to the voters to build a Class I multi-use path along the entire 71-mile length of the SMART railroad between Larkspur and Cloverdale, including through the City of Petaluma.
- The current alignment of the SMART Pathway through the City of Petaluma consisting of Class II bike lanes on South Petaluma Boulevard, as shown by SMART on its Pathway map and in the 2014 and 2019 Strategic Plans, is incorrect and insufficient.



- The SMART Pathway through the City of Petaluma must be a Class I multi-use path (or a Class IV cycle track with adjacent sidewalk, which is functionally equivalent to a Class I multi-use path).

We understand that the exact alignment of the SMART Pathway through the City of Petaluma is open to some interpretation. In some places, it may make sense for the SMART Pathway to deviate slightly from the railroad right-of-way and locate closer to Petaluma for a better, more beautiful pathway experience.

We have attached to a map and overview of the potential alignment of the SMART Pathway in Petaluma based on previous and existing plans on the books (see **Exhibit F**). Please advise if our understanding of the alignment aligns with yours and City staff's understanding of where the SMART pathway alignment should be. The alignment that we mapped in **Exhibit F** is based on prior planning work as laid out in the 1996 *Petaluma River Access and Enhancement Plan* (see **Exhibit G**), the 2003 *Central Petaluma Specific Plan* (see **Exhibit H**), the 2013 *Petaluma SMART Station Area Plan* (see **Exhibit J**), and the 2008 *Petaluma Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan* (see **Exhibit K**).

Thank you for your consideration, and please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions or comments. WTB-TAM President Patrick Seidler can be reached at pseidler@wtb.com or 415-827-6120. WTB-TAM Director of Planning Matthew Hartzell can be reached at mhartzell@wtb.com or 415-860-6635.

We hope to “see” you at the workshop on Wednesday.

Patrick Seidler
President, WTB-TAM

Matthew Hartzell
Director of Planning, WTB-TAM

CC: Peggy Flynn
City Manager, City of Petaluma

LIST OF ATTACHED EXHIBITS

Exhibit A – SMART Preliminary Engineering Design (2003)
Exhibit B – Measure Q (2008)
Exhibit C – SMART Strategic Plan (2009)
Exhibit D - SMART Strategic Plan (2014)
Exhibit E - SMART Strategic Plan (2019)
Exhibit F – Map and Overview of Potential SMART Pathway Alignment in Petaluma (2024)
Exhibit G – Petaluma River Access and Enhancement Plan (1996)
Exhibit H – Central Petaluma Specific Plan (2003)
Exhibit J – Petaluma SMART Station Area Plan (2013)

LIST OF ATTACHED EXHIBITS

- Exhibit A** SMART Preliminary Engineering Design (2003)
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- Exhibit G** Petaluma River Access and Enhancement Plan (1996)
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- Exhibit J** Petaluma SMART Station Area Plan (2013)
- Exhibit K** Petaluma Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (2008)



Exhibit A SMART Preliminary Engineering Design (2003)

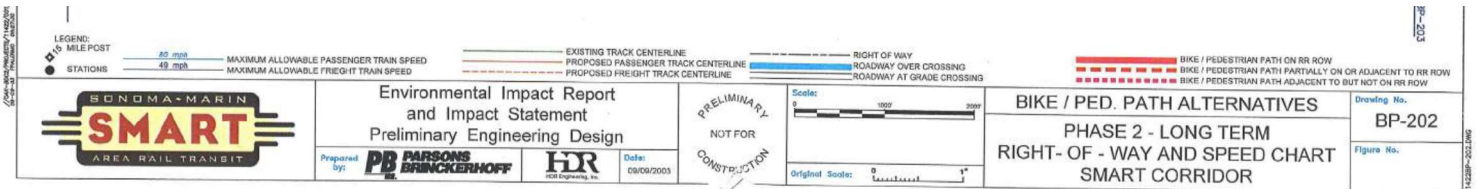
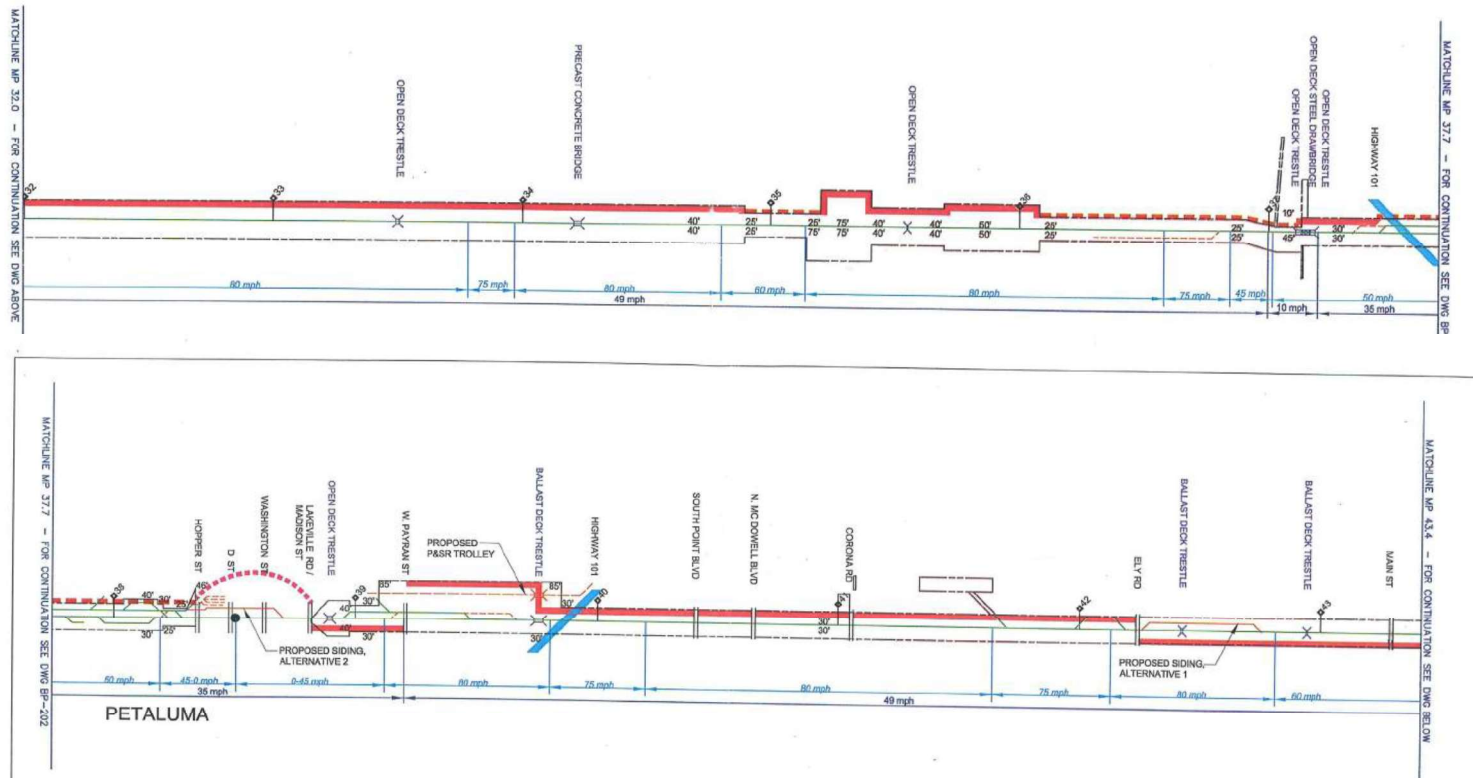


Exhibit B Measure Q (2008)

SONOMA-MARIN AREA RAIL TRANSIT DISTRICT MEASURE Q

Q MEASURE Q: To relieve traffic, fight global warming and increase transportation options, shall Sonoma-Marina Area Rail Transit District be authorized to provide two-way passenger train service every 30 minutes during weekday rush hours, weekend service, a bicycle/pedestrian pathway linking the stations, and connections to ferry/bus service, by levying a ¼-cent sales tax for 20 years, with an annual spending cap, independent audits/oversight, and all funds supporting these environmentally responsible transportation alternatives in Marin and Sonoma Counties?	YES
	NO

COUNTY COUNSEL'S IMPARTIAL ANALYSIS OF MEASURE Q

The Sonoma-Marina Area Rail Transit District ("SMART") is a rail district created by the Legislature in 2003 to evaluate, plan, and implement passenger rail and associated rail transit facilities and services from Cloverdale in Sonoma County to a ferry terminal in Marin County that connects to San Francisco. The geographic area of the district includes all of Sonoma and Marin counties.

The District is authorized, with the approval of the voters, to propose a special tax to implement this service. The District has adopted an ordinance proposing a quarter-cent transactions and use tax (\$0.0025 on every \$1 spent), to be imposed on retail sales in Sonoma and Marin Counties, beginning April 1, 2009. Proceeds of the tax would provide funding for the design, construction, implementation, operation, financing, maintenance and management of the rail system and a bicycle/pedestrian pathway from Cloverdale in Sonoma County to Larkspur in Marin County. An Expenditure Plan for the tax revenues is incorporated into the proposed sales tax ordinance. The revenue from the tax can only be spent on project elements listed in the Expenditure Plan, including but not limited to:

1. Weekday and weekend passenger rail service.
- * 2. A parallel bicycle/pedestrian pathway.
3. Fourteen rail stations from Cloverdale to Larkspur (9 in Sonoma County, 5 in Marin County).
4. Rehabilitation and upgrading of the existing Northwestern Pacific Railroad (NWP) corridor from Cloverdale to Larkspur, including new passenger train passing sidings.
5. A maintenance facility in either Cloverdale or Windsor.
6. Shuttle service at selected rail stations.

The tax would be collected in the same manner as sales tax is currently collected, would begin on April 1, 2009, and would continue in effect for twenty (20) years.

The District is empowered under state law to issue bonds to fund all or part of the construction of the project, so that work can begin sooner. The bonds would be repaid over time from the tax revenue collected. The ordinance also establishes an appropriations (spending) limit for SMART. The ordinance must be approved by two-thirds of the voters voting on the question in order for the special tax to go into effect.

s/PATRICK K. FAULKNER s/STEVEN WOODSIDE
Marin County Counsel Sonoma County Counsel

EXCERPTS OF MEASURE Q

ORDINANCE NO. 2008-01

AN ORDINANCE OF THE SONOMA-MARIN AREA RAIL TRANSIT DISTRICT IMPOSING A RETAIL TRANSACTIONS AND USE TAX TO BE ADMINISTERED BY THE STATE BOARD OF EQUALIZATION; ADOPTING AN EXPENDITURE PLAN; AND ESTABLISHING AN ANNUAL APPROPRIATIONS LIMIT FOR THE SONOMA-MARIN AREA RAIL TRANSIT DISTRICT.

BACKGROUND FINDINGS:

The Sonoma-Marina Area Rail Transit District (SMART) was created to provide a passenger rail system along the Northwestern Pacific Railroad within Sonoma and Marin Counties. The entire 75-mile corridor is publicly owned and can be used to provide passenger rail service. SMART will provide passenger rail service and a bicycle/pedestrian pathway to 14 rail stations in Sonoma and Marin Counties. SMART is committed to providing service with the most environmentally clean passenger rail vehicle possible.

SMART requires this measure in order to provide matching revenues to existing state and federal transportation grants, to bond for the construction of the project, and to provide funding for the on-going operation and maintenance of the project.

Section 1. TITLE. This ordinance shall be known as the Sonoma-Marina Passenger Rail Act. The Sonoma-Marina Area Rail Transit District hereinafter shall be called "District." This ordinance shall be applicable in the incorporated and unincorporated territory of the Counties of Sonoma and Marin, which shall be referred to herein as "District."

Pathway parallel to railroad right-of-way

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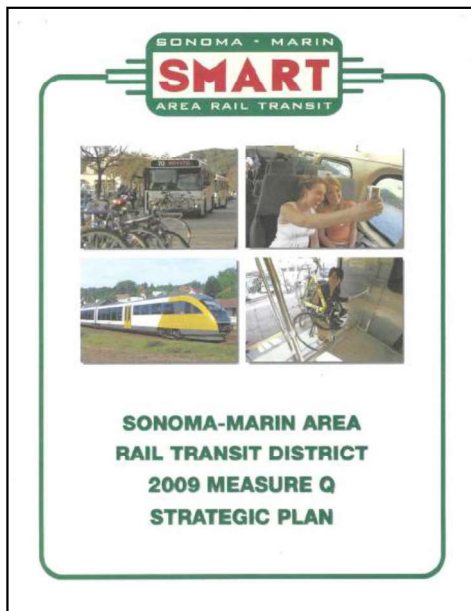
Section 3. PURPOSE. This ordinance is adopted to achieve the following, among other purposes, and directs that the provisions hereof be interpreted in order to accomplish those purposes:

A. To provide funding for the design, construction, implementation, operation, financing, maintenance and management of a passenger rail system and a bicycle/pedestrian pathway connecting the 14 rail stations from Cloverdale to Larkspur. *

B. To impose a retail transactions and use tax in accordance with the provisions of Part 1.6 (commencing with Section 7251) of Division 2 of the Revenue and Taxation Code and Section 105115 of the Public Utilities Code which authorizes the District to adopt this tax ordinance which shall be operative if a two-thirds majority of the electors voting on the measure vote to approve the imposition of the tax at an election called for that purpose.

* * *

Exhibit C SMART Strategic Plan (2009)



STRATEGIC PLAN OVERVIEW

The Strategic Plan is to serve as a guide for the construction and operation of a passenger train system and ancillary bicycle/pedestrian pathway along the existing, publicly owned Northwestern Pacific Railroad (NWP) right-of-way. The SMART project is to extend from Cloverdale in Sonoma County to Larkspur in Marin County.

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**Pathway along the
the entire length of
the railroad
right-of-way**

Measure Q revenues will be used to provide funding for the design, construction, implementation operation, financing, maintenance and management of passenger rail service and a bicycle/pedestrian pathway from Cloverdale in Sonoma County to a ferry terminal in Larkspur in Marin County that connects to San Francisco. The revenue from the tax can only be spent on project elements listed in the Expenditure Plan, including:

1. Weekday and weekend passenger rail service.
2. A parallel bicycle/pedestrian pathway.
3. Fourteen rail stations from Cloverdale to Larkspur (9 in Sonoma County, 5 in Marin County).
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- pages 6-7

1.3 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1.3.1. Project Description

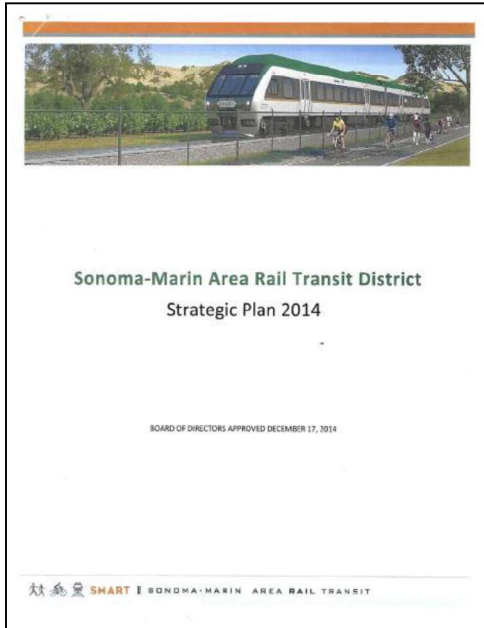
The project includes a bicycle and pedestrian trail parallel to the entire length of the railroad between Cloverdale and Larkspur.

1.3.2 Project Components: Capital Improvements

E. Providing for a Bicycle/ Pedestrian Pathway: SMART will provide a bicycle/pedestrian pathway along the SMART rail corridor linking the 14 train stations and on-going annual maintenance of the pathway.

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Exhibit D SMART Strategic Plan (2014)



On an ongoing basis, the District continues to plan for additional pathway segments that provide critical access to SMART stations, have high potential use, provide critical access across geographic and physical barriers, or bridge gaps between existing pathway segments. In a number of cases, those segments are a cooperative effort with our partners in the region, such as the recently completed section in Santa Rosa from 8th Street to College Avenue. Similarly, the Cal Park Hill Tunnel was completed and opened in 2011 in conjunction with the County of Marin and has facilitated bicycle and pedestrian trips between San Rafael and Larkspur. Future pathway segments funded for construction through grants and Measure Q include Guerneville to College in Santa Rosa and Golf Course Drive to East Cotati Avenue in Rohnert Park and Cotati.

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FUTURE PHASES

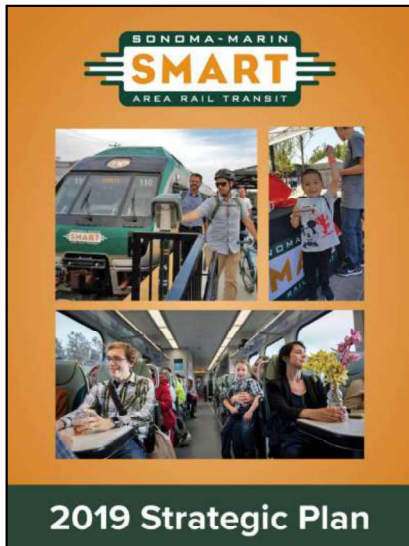
SMART remains committed to completing the entire 70-mile corridor from Cloverdale in Sonoma County to Larkspur in Marin County. Just as the District aggressively pursued outside funding to close the gap for Phase 1, and has consistently expanded the elements that will be delivered in that first phase, SMART will continue to seek funding partners to address the remaining project elements. While the current financial plan includes only those grants that have already been awarded, and reflects conservative projections for growth in sales tax revenues, those and other sources could generate additional revenues that could be applied to extensions of both the rail project and the pathway. As funding is identified, additional elements will be added to the project. The major project elements and estimated costs include (in alphabetical order, amounts approximate):

Likewise, pathway funding opportunities may be based on considerations other than geographic extensions to existing pathways. SMART's anticipated 2014 completion of federal environmental clearance ("NEPA") on the Pathway will enable SMART to apply for federal funding to construct segments between Marin Civic Center and Guerneville Road. This process has also enabled significant progress to be made with permit agencies towards an understanding of Pathway construction permitting requirements. Moving forward, SMART continues to apply multiple criteria for prioritizing SMART Pathway segments for completion. The Sonoma County Transportation Authority (SCTA) programmed Measure M sales tax funds for NEPA clearance and final design of SMART Pathway in Sonoma to be "ready to go" when construction funding is available. The San Francisco Bay Trail also

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Exhibit E SMART Strategic Plan (2019)



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the approval of the sales tax, SMART has been working on a new transit alternative to sitting on the sidelines. The SMART Strategic Plan is to assist the District and its policy-making Board in the decisions needed to preserve the progress that has been made to date and secure the transportation alternative well into the future. SMART's ¼ cent sales tax has produced \$289 million in revenues for SMART through Fiscal Year 2018. This revenue stream has allowed SMART to both build and operate the current rail transit system that runs from San Rafael in Marin to Airport Boulevard in Sonoma, and then to go on to seek additional funding for four additional rail cars, extensions to Larkspur and Windsor, and additional pathway extensions beyond our current built system. As envisioned in the findings for Measure Q, SMART leveraged the sales tax received to bring in over \$323 million for building and operating the system-- effectively doubling the sales tax income. This has resulted in \$600 million of direct investment in the transportation infrastructure of the two Counties, with more to come.

Additional pathway extensions beyond current built system

- page 1

While extension of the current sales tax was always planned and necessary for continued operations, the year in which SMART asked voters for that extension had been a difficult one. The District had been on a path forward in which SMART asks voters in March 2018 to extend the current sales tax to fund a SMART transit alternative and extend the current sales tax to allow the District the time needed to restructure its debt and put more annual funding to operations. Preliminary estimates would allow annual debt service to be reduced from \$18 million to \$6 million. This would not only make the current rail and pathway operations sustainable; it would also provide the revenue needed to operate future rail extensions to Healdsburg and Cloverdale and future pathway expansion should outside construction funding become available. In the coming years, SMART will continue its very successful efforts to seek out regional federal and state funds to extend beyond the current system. Without an extension of the sales tax, SMART will embark on cost cutting measures in order to bring costs down to anticipated revenue levels.

Future pathway expansion

- page 6

Completion of pathway projects connecting SMART stations

3. **Provide for Capital Investment:** Completion of all projects currently underway, and additionally:
 - Completion of the Windsor Extension project
 - Completion of the Healdsburg project
 - Completion of the Cloverdale project
 - Completion of pathway projects connecting our stations
 - Completion of the second station in Petaluma
 - Purchase of additional train sets
 - Double tracking where feasible

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Exhibit F Map and Overview of Potential SMART Pathway Alignment in Petaluma (2024)

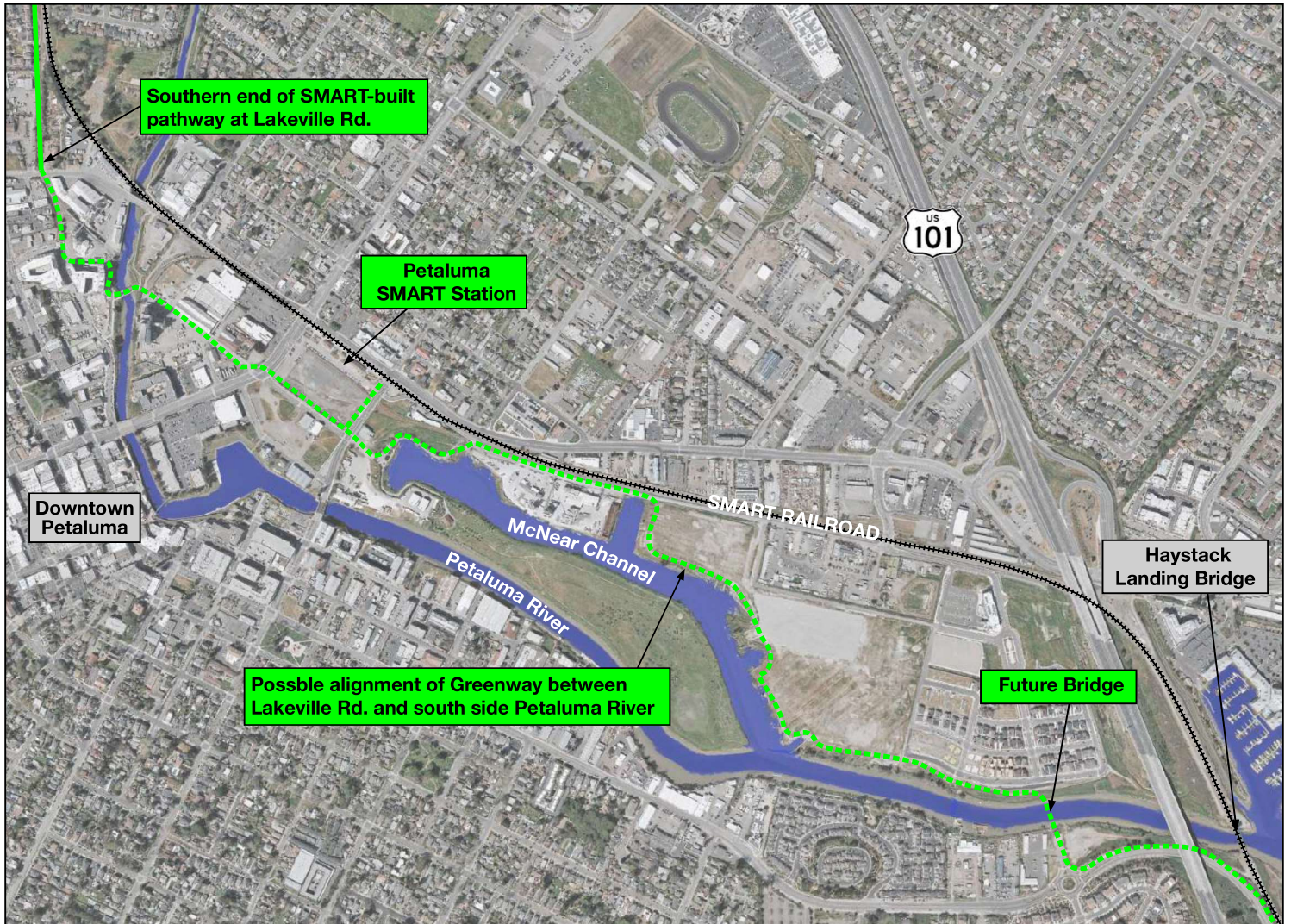


Exhibit F Map and Overview of Potential SMART Pathway Alignment in Petaluma (2024)



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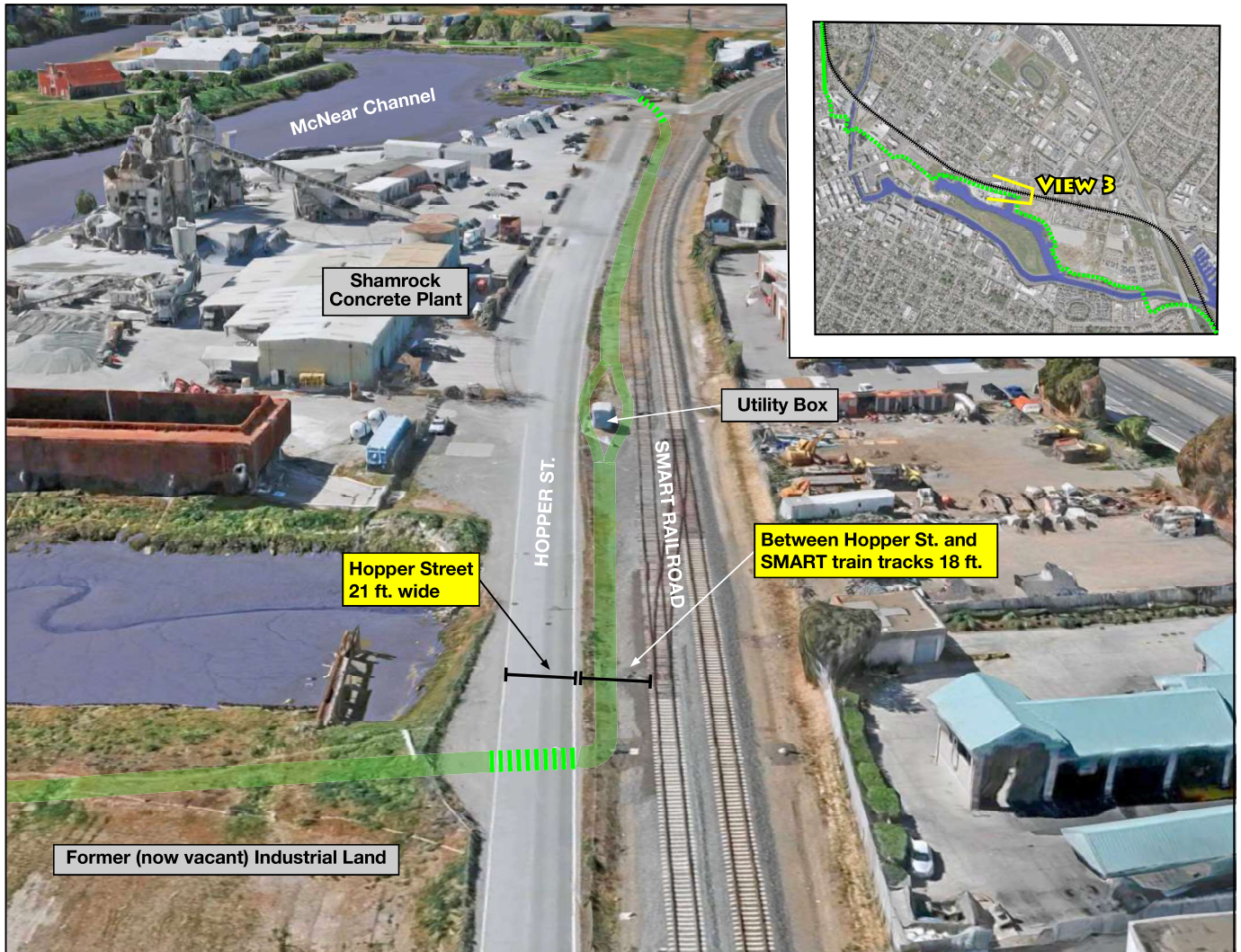


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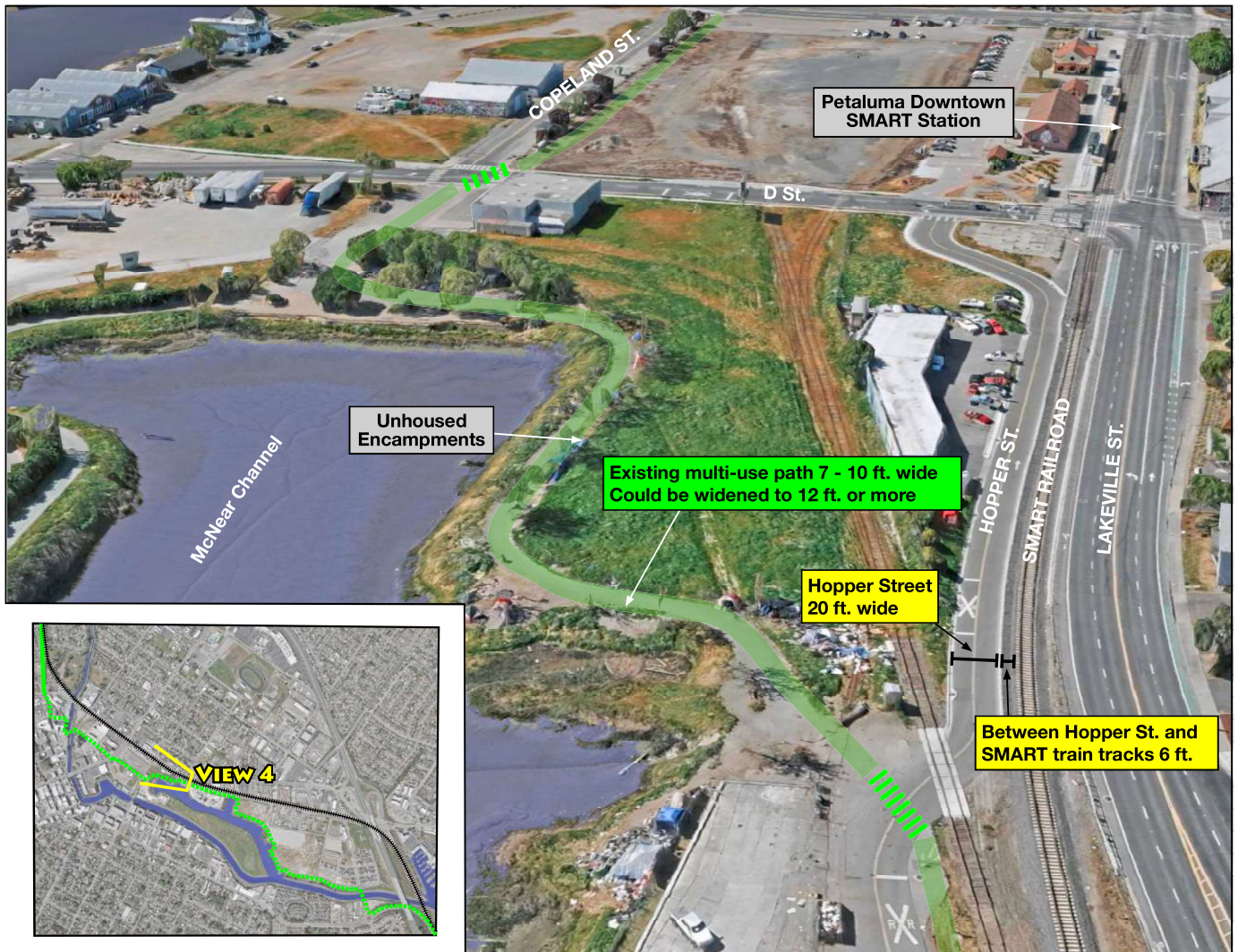


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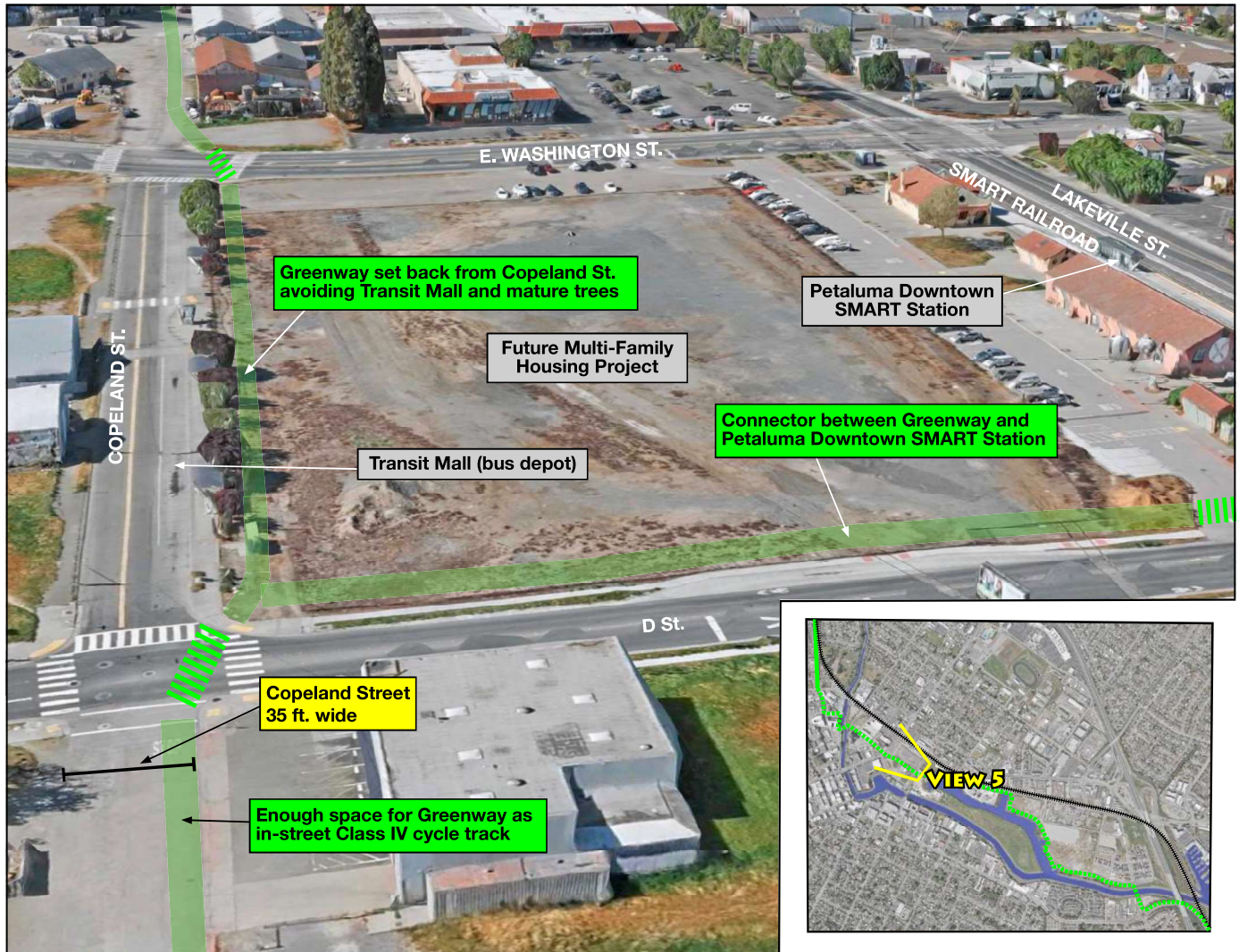


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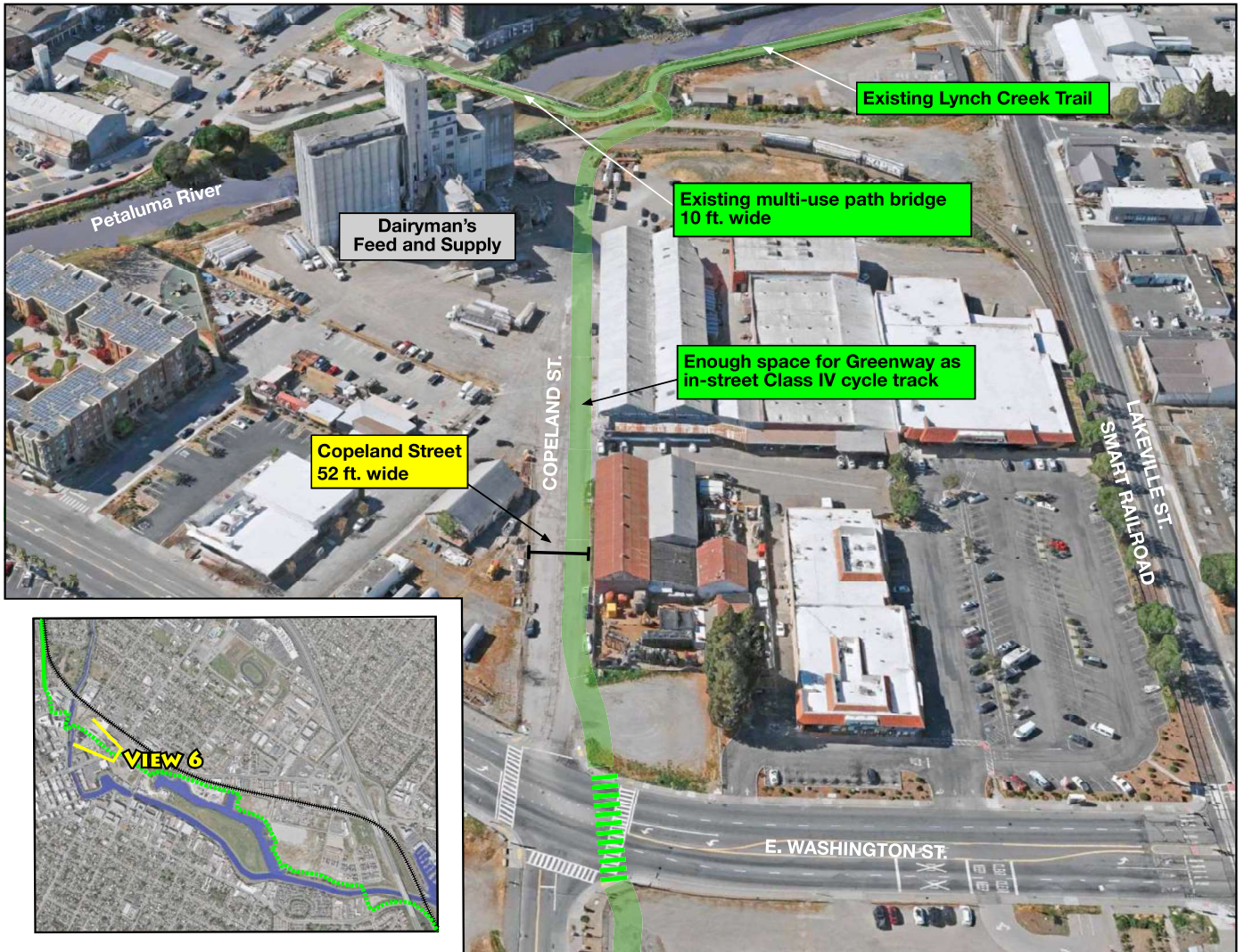
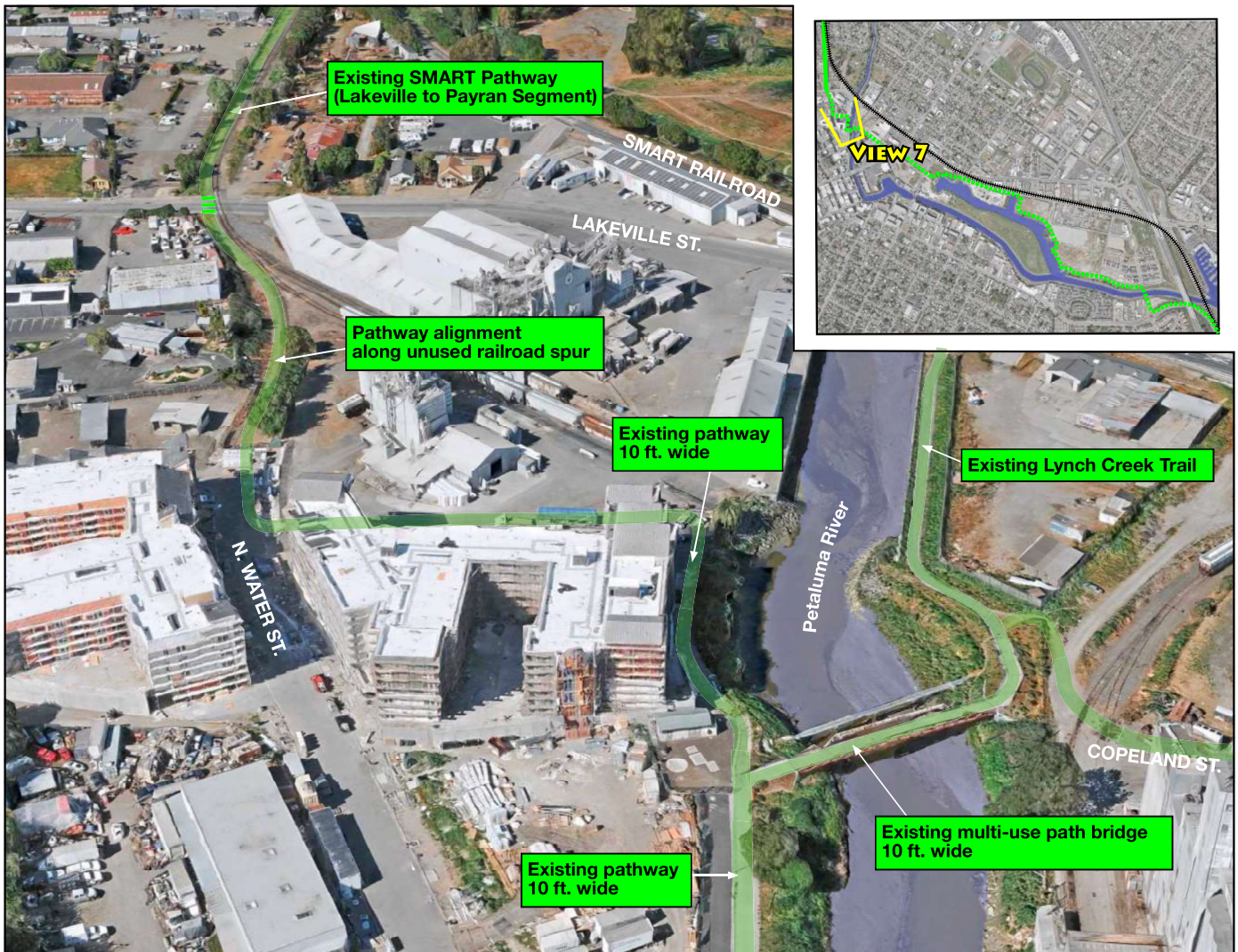


Exhibit F Map and Overview of Potential SMART Pathway Alignment in Petaluma (2024)



AREA PLAN

Adopted May, 1996

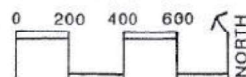
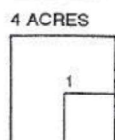
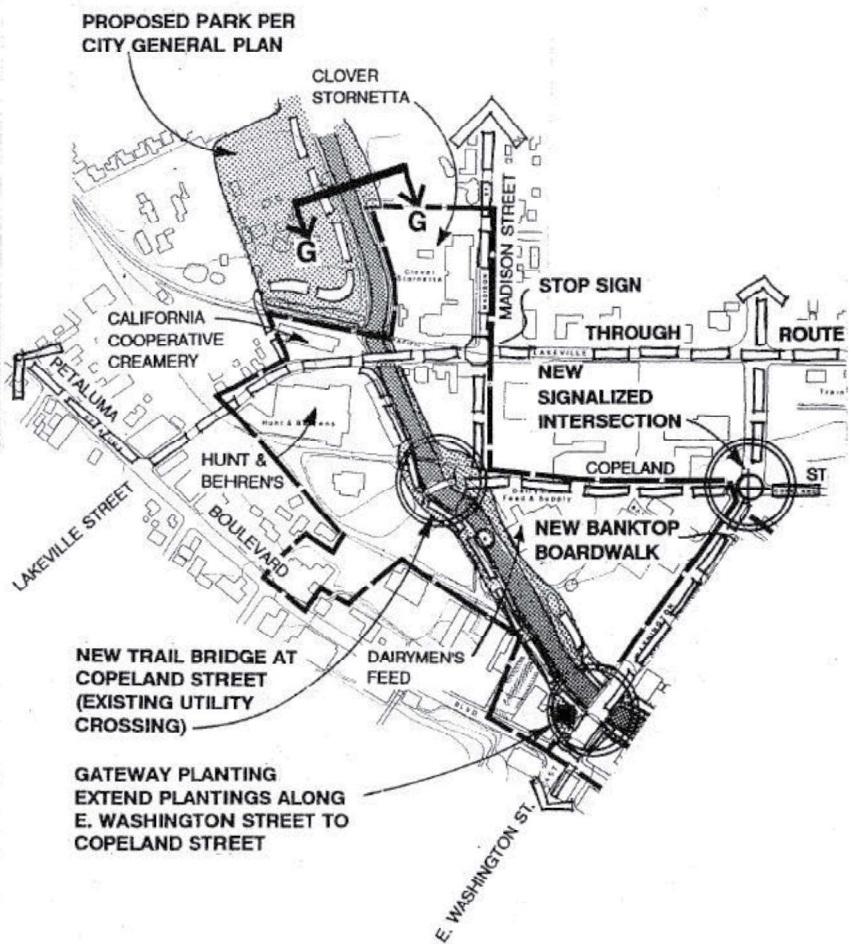
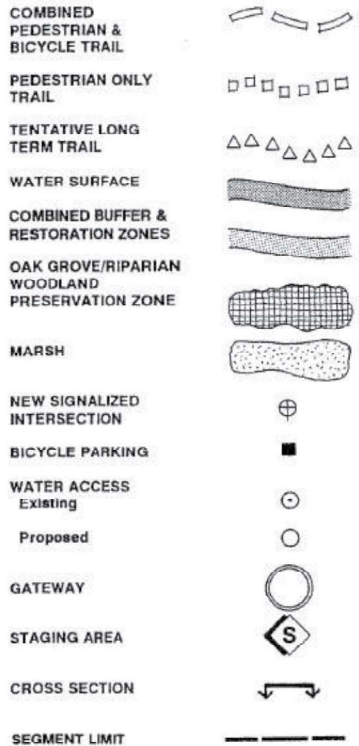


PETALUMA RIVER ACCESS AND ENHANCEMENT PLAN

Exhibit G Petaluma River Access and Enhancement Plan (1996)

3.5 Lakeville Industrial Segment Goals, Objectives, Policies, and Programs

Petaluma River Access and Enhancement Plan



**RIVER GREENWAY & ACCESS PLAN:
Lakeville Industrial Segment
(RR Bridge to E. Washington St.)**

Exhibit G Petaluma River Access and Enhancement Plan (1996)

3.6 Downtown Segment Goals, Objectives, Policies, and Programs

Petaluma River Access and Enhancement Plan

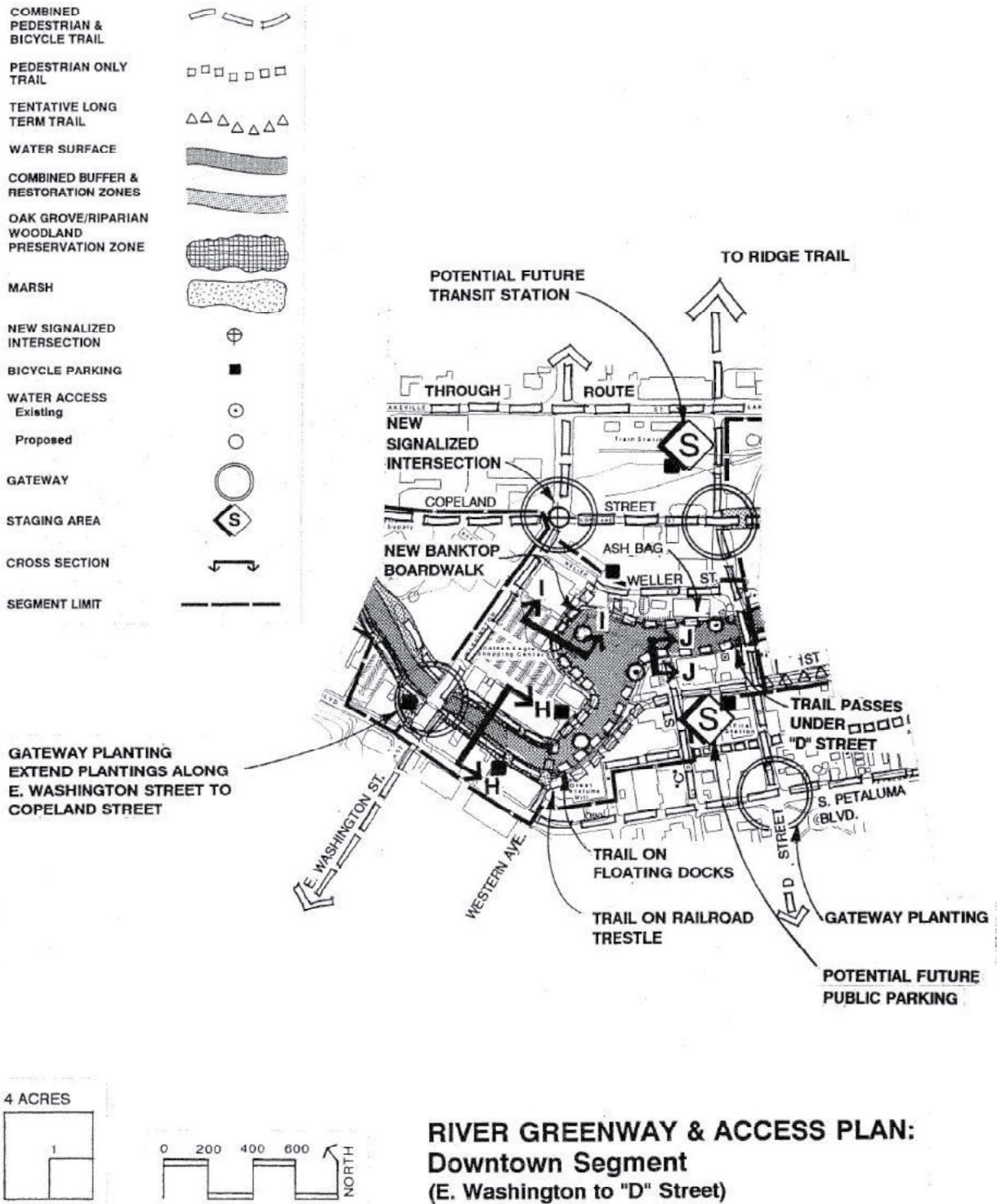
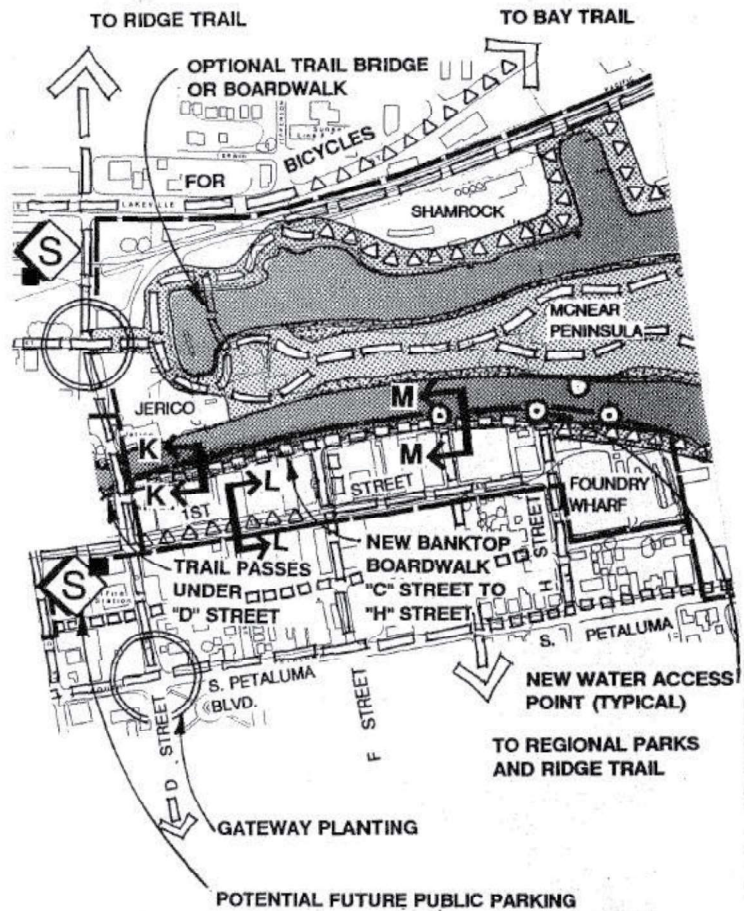
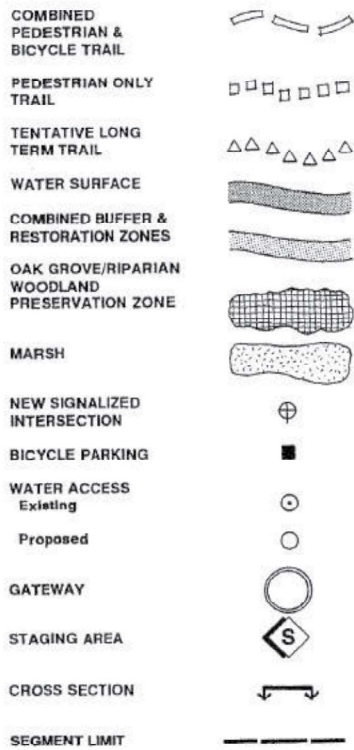


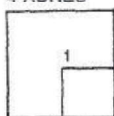
Exhibit G Petaluma River Access and Enhancement Plan (1996)

3.7 Warehouse Segment Goals, Objectives, Policies, and Programs

Petaluma River Access and Enhancement Plan



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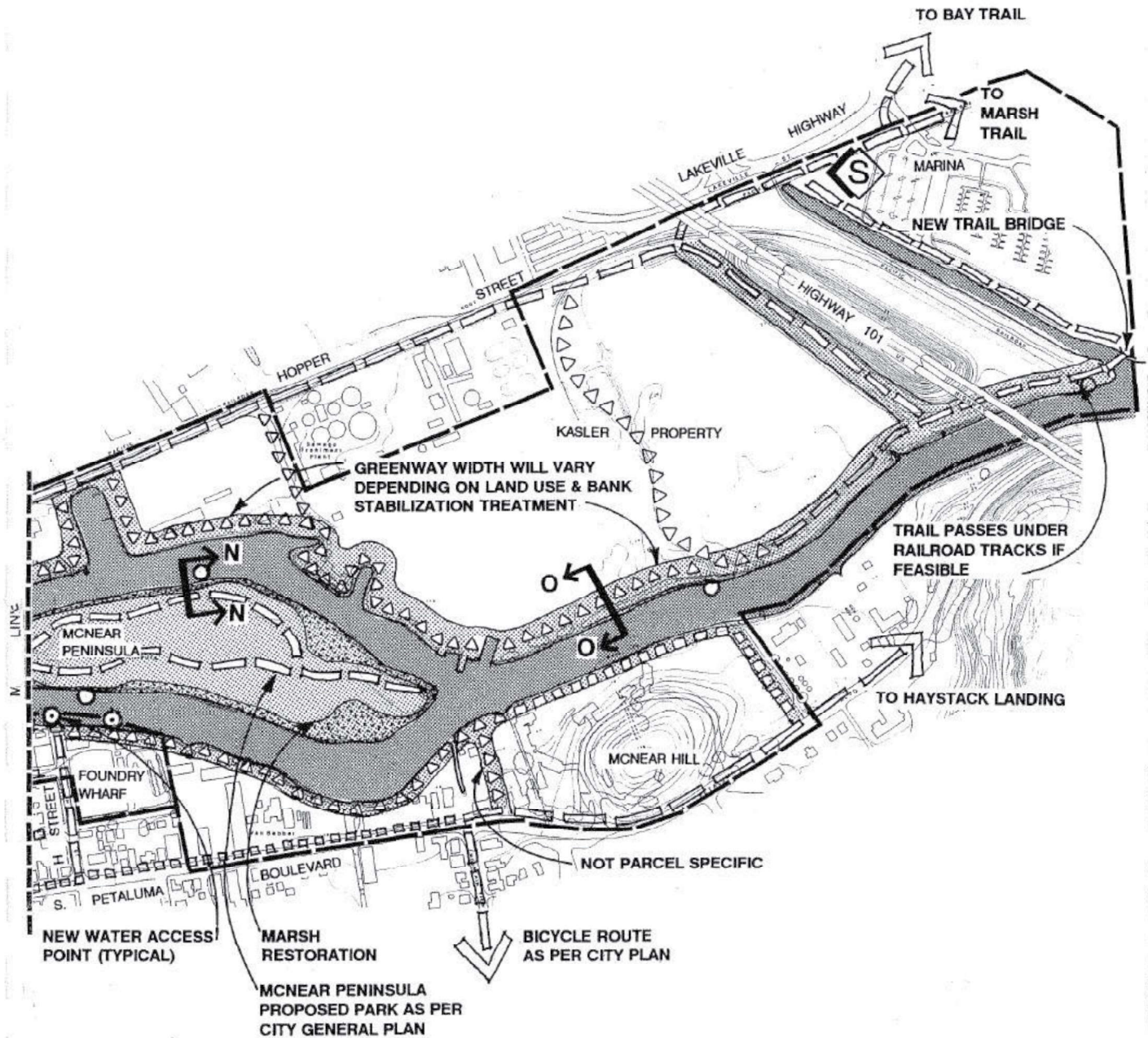


RIVER GREENWAY & ACCESS PLAN:
Warehouse Segment
(West Bank "D" to "H" Street)

Exhibit G Petaluma River Access and Enhancement Plan (1996)

Petaluma River Access and Enhancement Plan

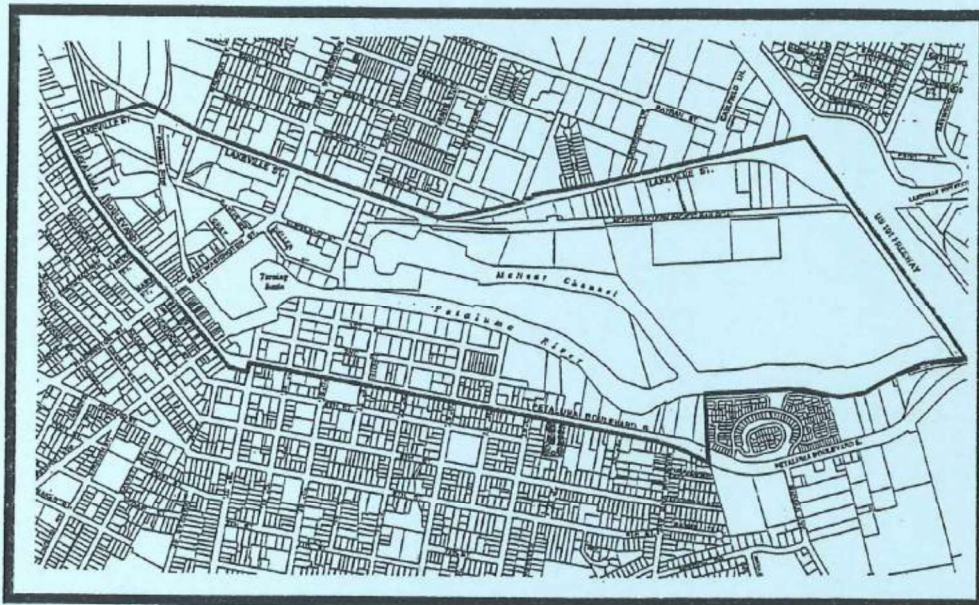
3.8 Downstream Segment
Goals, Objectives, Policies, and Programs



COUNTER COPY

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT
FOR THE
**CENTRAL PETALUMA
SPECIFIC PLAN**

SCH Number 2002-112-039



Prepared for the
CITY OF PETALUMA
by
WAGSTAFF AND ASSOCIATES
Urban and Environmental Planners

March 2003

Exhibit H Central Petaluma Specific Plan (2003)

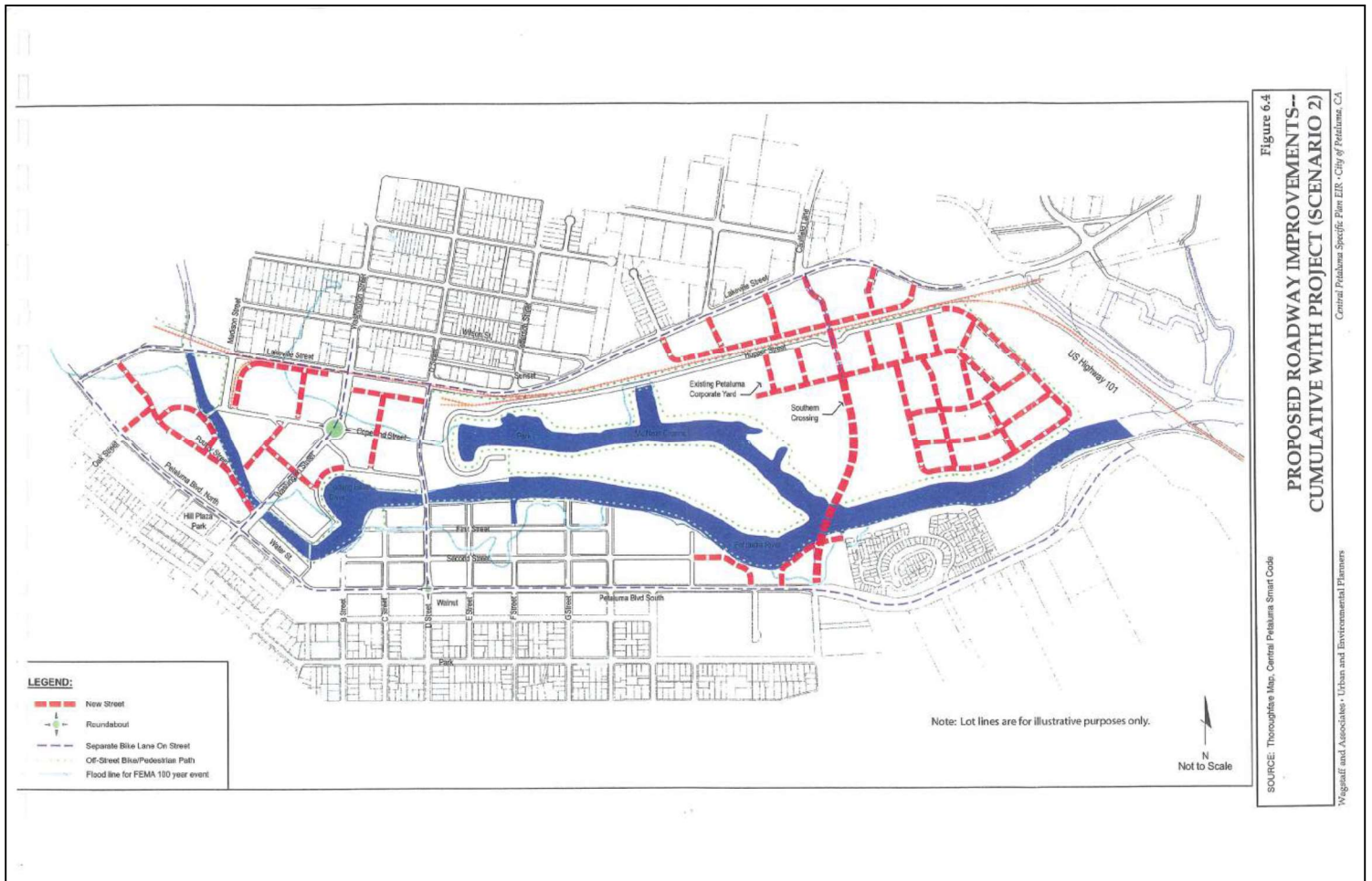
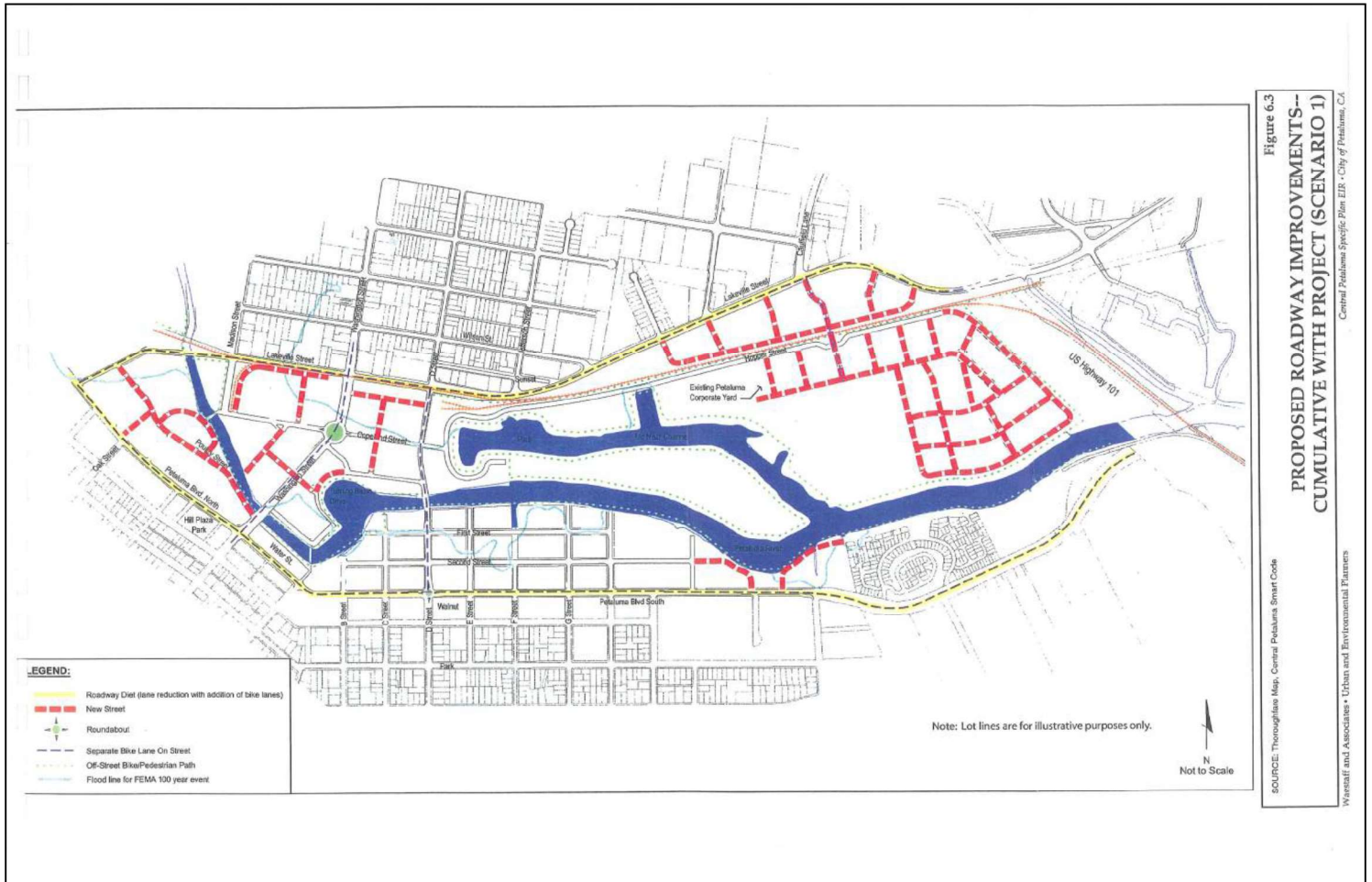


Exhibit H Central Petaluma Specific Plan (2003)



CITY OF PETALUMA, CA

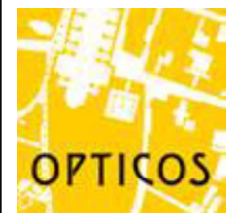
Petaluma SMART Rail Station Areas: TOD Master Plan



Prepared By:

Station Area Master Plan

June 2013



Opticos Design, Inc.
Berkeley, California

Exhibit J Petaluma SMART Station Area Plan (2013)

Fig. 5.4.A: Proposed Access and Connectivity Projects Downtown Petaluma SMART Station Area

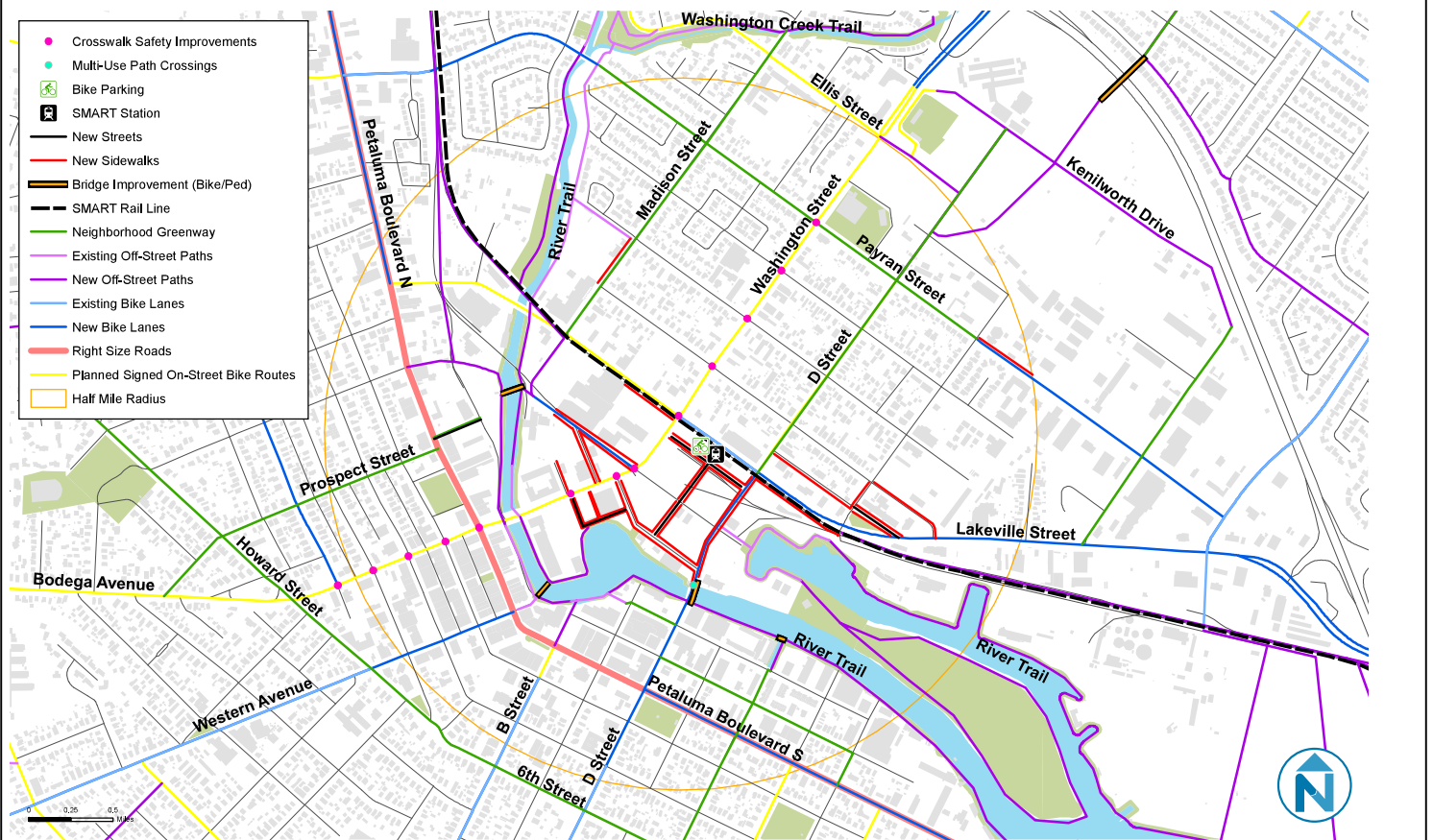


Exhibit K Petaluma Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan (2008)

