

## SECTION 3: SITE ORGANIZATION

### 3.1 Introduction



View Number 6, from Marin Center toward Civic Center

The Civic Center campus is unique for its natural and cultural history alike. Care must be taken to protect and enhance the campus while also planning for the future of Marin County. The issues discussed in this section relate to the overall organization of the site.

It should be noted that Frank Lloyd Wright's master plan addressed site organizational issues as well. Of this the National Historic Landmark Nomination states that "the master plan for the site respects its topography. The buildings, hills, roads, parking areas, lagoon, and prominent landscape features were linked together to facilitate the movement of people and automobiles." It goes on to point out that while Wright's plan set aside the north portion of the site for the fairgrounds, many of the features for this area were never built. The lagoon is the "major surviving feature of this part of the grounds."



View Number 8, from intersection of Civic Center Drive and No. San Pedro

### 3.2 View Corridors

There are many spectacular views through and to the Civic Center site. Views help to define the site and orient visitors thereby enhancing their overall experience of the landscape and buildings. The following guidelines are to help protect, enhance and frame significant view corridors at the Civic Center.

#### GUIDELINES

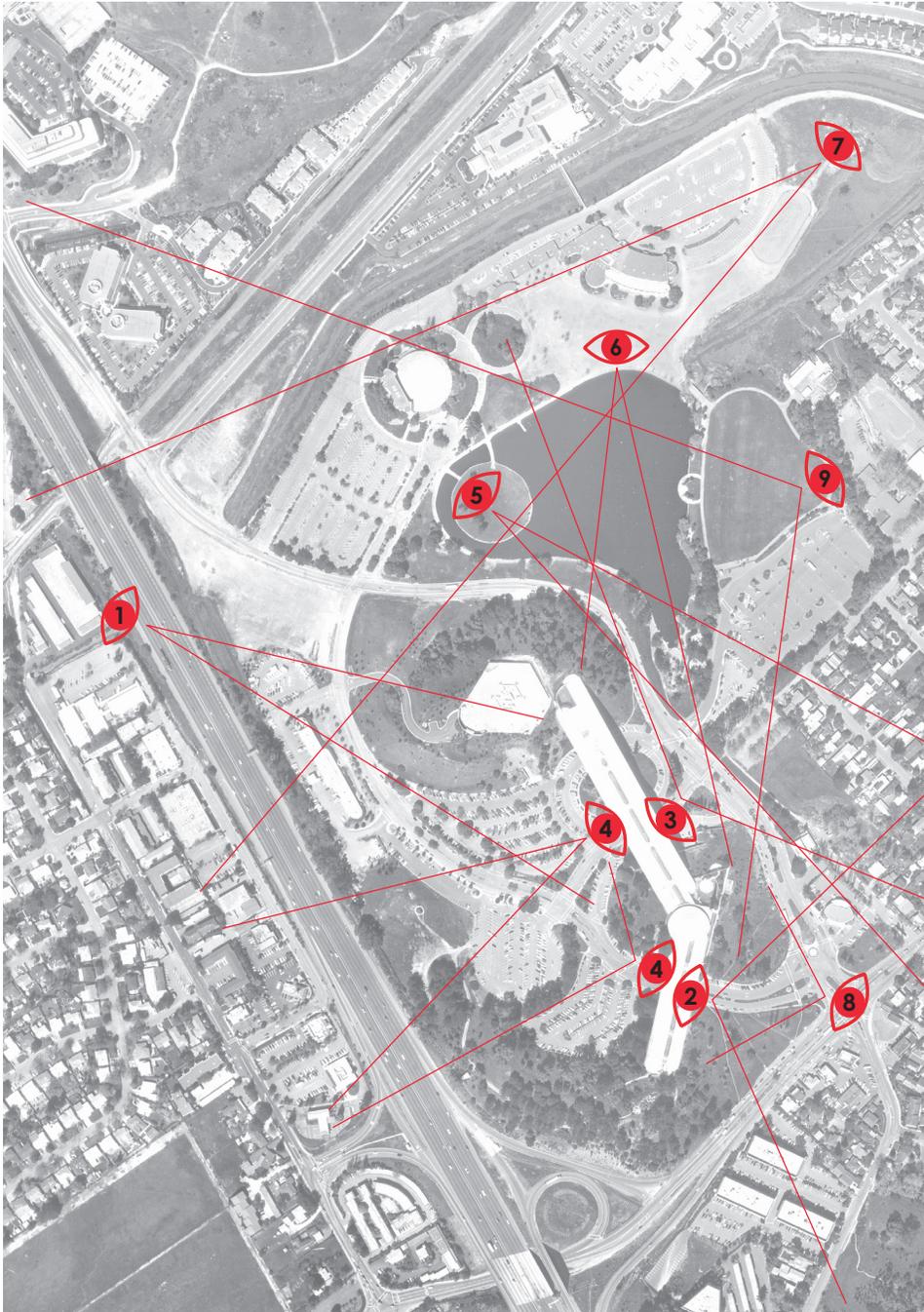
- **Where views from the Civic Center buildings to the east and south are obstructed due to tall trees, replacing the trees with smaller species should be considered. (This must be handled with care; a thorough tree planting master plan is required.)**
- **Undesirable views of Highway 101 from the Civic Center buildings should be mitigated with buffer and screen planting along the site's western edge. Care must be taken, however, to protect the view from the highway back towards the buildings.**



View Number 9, from the Hill in Lagoon Park

Several important views are listed below and indicated on the View Corridors diagram.

1. View from Highway 101 southbound to the Hall of Justice and Administration Building
2. View from the offices on the east side of the Administration Building eastward toward the San Pedro ridge
3. Views from the offices on the east side of the Hall of Justice



### VIEW CORRIDORS

- to the lagoon, Lagoon Park, the open space in the northeast corner of the site, and the bay
- 4. Views from the offices on the west sides of the Administration Building and the Hall of Justice to Mount Tamalpais
- 5. View from the island in the lagoon south and eastward toward San Pedro ridge
- 6. View from the northern edge of the lagoon southward to the Civic Center buildings framed by the San Pedro ridge
- 7. View from the open space area just east of the existing corral southwest to Mount Tamalpais

8. View from entry at Civic Center Drive and North San Pedro Road
9. View from the hill on the west edge of Lagoon Park

Where views of the Civic Center buildings are obstructed due to tall trees, replacing the trees with smaller species should be considered. (It should be noted that virtually all of the Monterey Pines on the campus will be removed within the next few years due to disease.) Careful attention must be paid to the historic character of the site when selecting replacement trees; drastic changes should be made only after careful consideration.

### 3.3 Site Circulation and Parking Capacity

#### PEDESTRIAN CIRCULATION

The following guidelines outline an approach to enhancing pedestrian accessibility to the Civic Center.

#### GUIDELINES

- **Sidewalks along primary and secondary streets are preferred site-wide in order to strengthen connections between buildings and recreational features on the site. Signage and nighttime lighting should also be included. Sidewalks will improve overall pedestrian safety and access to alternative parking lots for events.**
- **A paved walkway of a minimum 12' in width that circles the lagoon entirely should be completed per Frank Lloyd Wright's original plan. Signage and nighttime lighting should also be included. Width and material should be consistent.**
- **Pedestrian access to the undeveloped area in the northeast corner of the site is encouraged. Paths should be adequately signed for wayfinding and formalized to the degree necessary to protect sensitive habitats. Habitat control fences will be necessary to protect sensitive wetland areas. Paths should typically be approximately 4 - 6' wide.**
- **Existing trails on the site may or may not be formalized, based on the adjacent natural conditions at the discretion of the County. If formalized, trail width and materials should be consistent and determined on a case by case basis.**

The County of Marin is committed to enhancing the travel experience for pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users to ensure that alternate modes of transportation are successful in reducing car traffic. The Marin Countywide Plan underscores this commitment with repeated emphasis on the importance of pedestrian links and connections between neighborhoods, shopping centers, employment centers, schools and recreational sites.

Similarly, Frank Lloyd Wright and later planners agreed that access to the entire site by way of foot paths, walkways and bicycle

routes was critical to the site's success as a recreational, cultural and civic destination. Plans for the Civic Center campus have always included a comprehensive network of walkways. Currently the site lacks several critical pedestrian links. Stronger and consistent pedestrian connections would enhance accessibility to the site for visitors and employees alike.

It is also becoming increasingly important to provide access to



- Existing pedestrian or multi-use path
- - - Proposed pedestrian or multi-use path
- Existing bicycle lanes
- - - Proposed bicycle lanes

## PEDESTRIAN & BICYCLE CIRCULATION

the Civic Center from adjacent neighborhoods, as the campus now serves as a neighborhood park for an increasing number of local residents. Currently access to the site from adjacent areas is limited and could be improved.

For the purposes of this document, primary streets include major arterial and key north/south and east/west routes – North San Pedro Road, Civic Center Drive, Peter Behr Drive, and the Avenue of the Flags. Secondary streets are Judge Haley Drive, Vera Schultz Drive and Armory Drive.

### **BICYCLE CIRCULATION**

The following guidelines would improve bicycle circulation and accommodate increased bicycle usage on the Civic Center campus while reducing adverse effects on the landscape and environment.

#### **GUIDELINES**

- **Civic Center Drive and other primary streets should have striped bike lanes and should meet all City, County and State standards.**
- **Bicycle access via bike paths or multi-use paths throughout the open space areas is encouraged. Care should be taken in designing these paths to avoid user conflicts and safety problems.**
- **Coordination with relevant County agencies, City of San Rafael plans (including the Northgate Promenade), and interested citizen groups is encouraged.**

The Transportation Section (Built Environment Element) of the Marin Countywide Plan emphasizes the importance of non-automobile transportation. The plan suggests expanding and improving existing bicycle facilities and access. The County of Marin believes that “roadway designs should strive to adequately serve all types of users.” Again, this sentiment was expressed in the Marin Civic Center Master Plan developed in 1972. The plan recommended that “various areas be linked with bicycle paths” including a loop around the lagoon and along Civic Center Drive.

Today the Civic Center lacks a strong draw for cyclists. Only North San Pedro Road has striped bike lanes; the pathways in the recreation areas are not connected in a logical fashion; and there is a lack of adequate bike parking/storage. The Countywide Plan recommends adding a bicycle route along McInnis Parkway and a bicycle path along Civic Center Drive. While these additions would improve the Civic Center's accessibility to cyclists, a more comprehensive approach that provides links internally on the site as well as to other areas of the County is preferred. The County should also explore ideas such as providing additional bike parking (possibly covered areas) in various locations on site and implementing a “loaner” bike system would be beneficial

for County staff and visitors to the Civic Center.

The *Marin County Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan* (June 2002), the *North San Rafael Vision 2010* (November 1997) and the *North San Rafael Vision Promenade Conceptual Plan* (November 2002) identify the need to establish new pedestrian and bicycle connections from Terra Linda to the Civic Center. All suggest that this connection run under Highway 101 along the railroad tracks and then follow Civic Center Drive to North San Pedro Road. The County will work in collaboration with these previous efforts if and when such improvements are made on the campus. In addition, the Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit (SMART) plans have incorporated these ideas into their plans for a future station at the Civic Center. SMART is discussed further in the following section on Public Transportation.

### **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**

The following general guidelines address public transportation issues on the Civic Center campus that will help to accommodate increased transit utilization.

#### **GUIDELINES**

- **The County is committed to enhancing public and alternative modes of transportation to and from the Civic Center. Future transportation planning efforts should emphasize options other than the use of private vehicles.**
- **Bus shelters are encouraged on the Civic Center campus and should be designed specifically for the site.**
- **Additional bus service to the Civic Center for cultural events (evenings and weekends) and access to the library is encouraged.**
- **Coordination with and support of the SMART project and station at the Civic Center is encouraged.**

Public transportation to and from the Civic Center campus is provided primarily by Golden Gate Transit bus service. The same was true in 1972. Today five bus routes stop along Civic Center Drive including the 33, 57, 59, 75, 123 lines. The primary bus stop is located at the intersection of Civic Center Drive and Judge Haley Way. Even so, most visitors travel to and from the Civic Center via automobile.

In addition to the regular bus service, the Marin County Department of Health and Human Services provides a free, wheel chair accessible shuttle service from the San Rafael Transit Center to 120 North Redwood Drive in San Rafael. This service increases public access to Marin County social service agencies and the Civic Center campus.

The Marin Countywide Plan supports and emphasizes the need



Bus shelter on Civic Center Drive

for expanded local bus service. It also encourages bus service providers to “post current schedules and maps at all transit stops and other key locations” and to “provide shelters that adequately protect riders from inclement weather.”

The *Marin County Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan*, June 2000, states that communities “may choose to have bus shelters designed and built uniquely for individual sites.” This approach seems especially appropriate at the Civic Center given its unique architecture and history. It should be noted that bus shelters must be installed in accordance with all disabled access requirements.

The Countywide Plan also supports the Sonoma-Marín Area Rapid Transit (SMART) project, which proposes to bring rail service to the Civic Center campus. A new regional transportation district was established in 2003 to oversee the development and implementation of passenger rail service in Sonoma and Marin Counties. The goal of the SMART project is to provide passenger train service to Sonoma and Marin County residents along the Northwestern Pacific (NWP) rail corridor that lies next to Highway 101. A transit station is proposed at the northwest corner of the Civic Center campus. Further details regarding the station and its location at the Civic Center is discussed in Section 6.1, Possible Future County Facilities Needs.

SMART passenger train service will provide a much needed transportation alternative for thousands of commuters traveling within and between Sonoma and Marin counties as well as commuting to San Francisco. For example, currently the average southbound automobile trip between Santa Rosa and San Rafael during the peak morning commute along Highway 101 takes 70-80 minutes. The same trip by train will take approximately 55 minutes (CalTrans Report, 2001).

### **VEHICULAR CIRCULATION & PARKING**

The following guidelines present recommendations from an analysis of the potential traffic and parking impacts that would be associated with possible future changes to the Marin Civic Center campus in the County of Marin, including four alternative schemes for expanding use at the Marin Center together with additions such as the Public Safety Building and the Court Facilities which are also under consideration. The traffic and parking study was completed in accordance with the criteria established by the County of Marin and the City of San Rafael, and is consistent with standard traffic engineering techniques.

### **GUIDELINES**

- **The northbound, southbound and eastbound approaches to Civic Center Drive/Peter Behr Drive should be re-stripped to include separate left-turn lanes and through/right-turn lanes and the intersection should be signalized as part of the development of the new Court Facilities.**

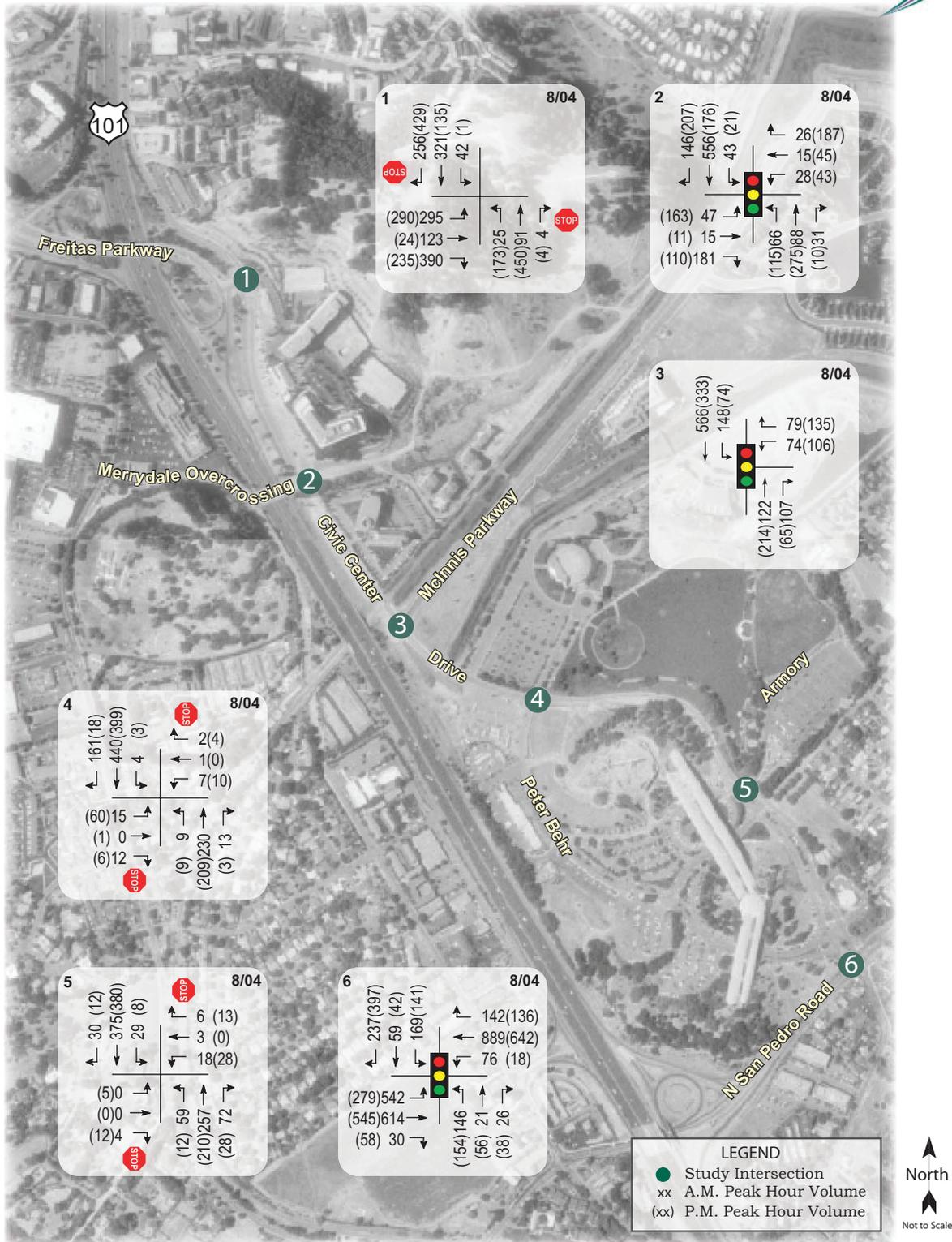


FIGURE 1: STUDY AREA AND EXISTING TRAFFIC VOLUMES

- **The County should coordinate events at all of the various facilities throughout the Marin Civic Center campus to ensure that the parking supply is not exceeded.**
- **The County should improve the signing and pathway connectivity between the east parking lot and the Marin Center facilities so that this parking area can be more readily assimilated into the supply for large events.**

Traffic impacts are typically evaluated by determining the number of trips the new use would be expected to generate, distributing the new trips to the surrounding street system based on existing travel patterns or anticipated travel patterns specific to the proposed project, and then by analyzing the impact the new traffic would be expected to have on critical intersections included in the study. Parking impacts are evaluated by determining if the planned supply of parking will be adequate for the new land uses or development proposed.

The study area consisted of the following six intersections chosen with input from County staff. Although worst-case conditions for the Marin Center would exist in conjunction with a large event at one or more of the venues, since such events typically occur when there is limited activity at the Civic Center or in the area in general, conditions were evaluated during the weekday morning and evening peak periods when commute traffic creates the greatest congestion in the vicinity of the Marin Center.

1. Civic Center Drive-Redwood Highway/Freitas Parkway
2. Civic Center Drive/Merrydale Overcrossing
3. Civic Center Drive/McInnis Parkway
4. Civic Center Drive/Peter Behr Drive
5. Civic Center Drive/Armory Drive
6. Civic Center Drive/N. San Pedro Road

The location of the project area is shown in Figure 1.

The complete Vehicular Circulation & Parking study, including the full analysis, tables, assumptions, methodologies, and discussion is contained in the Appendix. This includes an analysis of existing and future traffic and parking conditions under alternative scenarios.