

From: Kara Barnhart [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 21, 2025 1:18 PM
To: Distrib- City Clerk <city.clerk@cityofsanrafael.org>; John Stefanski <John.Stefanski@cityofsanrafael.org>
Subject: Request for Review of Decision: Parking Boxes in Gerstle Park Neighborhood

Dear Mayor Kate, Vice Mayor Bushey, Council Members, City Manager, and Assistant City Manager -

I am writing as a nearby resident and regular user of the Makin Grade trail to respectfully urge the City to pause any plans to allow on-street parking on lower Makin Grade, pending further review and community input.

Makin Grade is not just a street—it is a cherished and heavily used recreational path for Gerstle Park residents. Hikers, cyclists, and dog walkers rely on its peaceful, car-free nature for safe access to the Open Space. Allowing parking on this narrow, curvy stretch of roadway—despite current “No Parking” and “Fire Lane” signage—would compromise public safety and hinder emergency access.

As someone who walks this area frequently, I’ve seen firsthand how even one parked car can create blind corners, restrict passage, and increase risks for pedestrians. Our concerns are shared by the residents at 281, 285, 287, and 289 Makin Grade, all of whom have ample off-street parking and do not want or need additional street parking. A recent neighborhood survey and petition confirm broad opposition to this change from others who use and value this route.

The staff has offered three main justifications for permitting parking, none of which withstand scrutiny:

1. **To stop illegal parking** – But illegal parking is not a current problem on this section of the road. Legalizing parking here creates new hazards where none existed before. It’s not solving a problem; it’s introducing one.
2. **Visibility-based placement of parking boxes** – Photos from the site show that even in proposed “visible” areas, parked vehicles block sight lines and put pedestrians and cyclists at risk. A parked van in one of the designated boxes hides anyone walking uphill from a downhill vehicle. That is inherently unsafe.
3. **Equitable access** – Access to this Open Space is already available to all. People hike here precisely because of its quiet, natural character and its accessibility on foot from nearby streets like Clark, San Rafael Ave, and Grove. This is not a destination park that requires expanded vehicle access. Furthermore, there’s been no indication that residents of Kentfield or Ross—who were mentioned by staff—have ever requested additional access from this route.

This is not an anti-parking stance—it's a pro-safety, pro-resident, and pro-open space position. Some neighborhoods benefit from parking boxes. Ours does not. Nothing is safer on a steep, winding road than no parking at all.

For the safety of pedestrians, for the integrity of emergency access, and for the voices of residents and trail users alike, I respectfully request that the Council direct staff to pause this proposal for further review.

Thank you for your time and for listening to the community's concerns.

Sincerely,
Kara Barnhart
Resident and Regular Trail User
D street, San Rafael