



1230 Fifth Street

From Emese Wood <[REDACTED]>

Date Sun 11/16/2025 1:21 PM

To Planning Public Comment <PlanningPublicComment@cityofsanrafael.org>

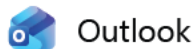
I am very much opposed to the proposed building at 1230 Fifth Avenue in its current form. At 13 stories it is all out of scale with the rest of the city, and that neighborhood in particular. It is not only the height of the building but also its bulk which will dwarf the surrounding area. From much of downtown it will obliterate views of Lincoln Hill (not sure if that's what it's called) which provides such a beautiful and historic backdrop for our city. It will change the character of San Rafael forever. On top of that, the design is totally banal and takes away any individual character from the city. This developer is already responsible for some of that blandness.

In addition, although individually each new construction project may add only a small burden to the city's traffic load, there are now so many new proposed projects downtown near the expressway that cumulatively they will make an already congested area turn into a gridlock.

I am not against development, but we need to get back to some standards of appropriateness and functionality, and hopefully aesthetics, so that we can continue to enjoy our city for a long time.

Respectfully,
Emese Wood

[REDACTED]



Public Comment 11/18/25 San Rafael Planning Commission Mtg Items 1 & 2

From David Moller <[REDACTED]>

Date Tue 11/18/2025 2:40 PM

To Planning Public Comment <PlanningPublicComment@cityofsanrafael.org>

Cc Margaret Kavanaugh-Lynch <Margaret.Kavanaugh-Lynch@cityofsanrafael.org>; 900A <900ASt@cityofsanrafael.org>

Public Comment 11/18/25 San Rafael Planning Commission Mtg Items 1 & 2**Dear San Rafael Planning Commission,**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on consideration of a Major Environmental and Design Review Permit for the proposed multifamily developments at 1248 Fifth Avenue and 900 A Street (1030 3rd Street) in San Rafael.

These comments are submitted on behalf of the seventy-plus members of the Marin Electrification Council, a county-wide community-based organization that promotes local climate policies and actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by accelerating the transition of vehicles and buildings away from the use of fossil fuels. Several of our members are residents of San Rafael.

We strongly support development of additional affordable housing in Marin but want to make sure that in adding housing, we don't miss opportunities to future-proof these buildings from a climate perspective and avoid *increasing* greenhouse gas emissions. We have reviewed the proposed developments and accompanying staff reports and offer the following comments for your consideration:

Consistency with Climate Policy

The staff reports appear to miss a critical evaluation of the proposed developments' consistency with San Rafael's *Climate Change Action Plan*, which supports the climate goals in San Rafael's General Plan. It's difficult to understand how an "Environmental Design Review" could exclude evaluation for consistency with one of San Rafael's central environmental guidance documents. We respectfully recommend that the Commission require an evaluation of the proposed developments for consistency with San Rafael's *Climate Change Action Plan*.

All-Electric Buildings

The proposed developments should be all-electric (no fossil-fueled appliances or equipment) in order to avoid *increasing* greenhouse gas emissions and to support local, regional and state greenhouse gas reduction goals. We have not seen a commitment by the applicant regarding all-electric. It's noteworthy that for new construction, all-electric is less costly to build than dual-fuel (gas and electric) and is safer and healthier for residents.

EV Chargers

The proposals appear to be incomplete and/or inadequate with regard to EV charging infrastructure. The drawings for 900 A St (1030 3rd Street) show a total of only 11 EV chargers (for 131 units) and the drawings for 1245 Fifth Avenue show only 6 EV chargers (for 188 units). As far as we can tell, the proposals don't address EV Ready or EV Capable for any of the remaining parking spaces. These numbers of EV chargers are out of compliance with San Rafael's Enhanced EV Charger ordinance as well

as California Building Code requirements, which require more EV chargers and a significant number of EV Ready and/or EV Capable parking spaces. This infrastructure is critically needed, as evidenced by the fact that in 2024, 40 percent of new vehicle registrations in Marin County were for full EVs or plug in hybrids. Another consideration is that without in-house EV charging availability, most renters are simply excluded from the opportunity to own an EV. We urge the Commission to require the highest level of EV preparedness, including a reasonable percentage of parking spaces having EV chargers and all remaining parking space being EV Ready or at least EV Capable to meet this growing demand.

Bicycle Parking

It is disappointing that the developments propose only about one half the number of bicycle parking spaces required by San Rafael's Precise Plan. The stated rationale for this substantial reduction, that "bicycle parking would occupy floor area that is otherwise allocated to dwelling units" and that this justifies a waiver under State Density Bonus Law is without merit. The staff reports cite that since the proposed developments are within ½ mile of a transit hub, no minimum number of vehicle parking spaces is required. This means there's no reason not to convert a few of the proposed vehicle parking spaces into additional bicycle parking areas with no effect whatsoever on the number of dwelling units.

Ebike Charging

The drawings seem to show that the covered bicycle parking will be located on the walls at the inboard ends of the proposed parking spaces. This location makes it simple to provide an ebike charger receptacle, and more reasonably, an EV/ebike charger receptacle at each parking space. This should be required to support the explosion of ebike use as an alternative, and greenhouse gas-free, mode of transportation.

In summary, we believe that integrating all-electric design, a higher standard for EV charging and code-compliant bicycle infrastructure with ebike charging are vital steps that will maximize the long-term value, health and sustainability of these developments for their owners and residents as well as for the greater San Rafael community.

Respectfully,

David Moller, P.E.





Outlook

Dense housing deserves less parking

From Olivier Bouan [REDACTED]

Date Sun 11/16/2025 6:10 AM

To 703Third <703Third@cityofsanrafael.org>; 900A <900ASt@cityofsanrafael.org>; 1230fifth <1230Fifth@cityofsanrafael.org>

Hi there,

I'm writing regarding projects at 703 Third St., 900 A St. and 1230 Fifth St, although these comments could apply more generally to other planning applications for dense housing in San Rafael.

As a Ross Valley homeowner, I'm ecstatic to see the amount of proposed housing in the pipeline, and hope we'll continue to see more. However, many of these proposals indicate large amounts of parking for future residents. I think some will rightly worry about this will mean for traffic and road safety in the area.

The right answer is not to reduce the size of these projects, or to try and block them altogether. Instead, we should be finding solutions to help developers deliver housing with a much higher housing to parking ratio. San Rafael, if all of this development comes to pass, could become a car-light urban center for Marin. People moving to these apartments should be able to live car-free, or car-light via readily available car sharing schemes.

This would induce demand for public transit, including SMART, Ferry, and buses. This would in turn justify more and better service, further making it possible to build and market car-light housing.

Please consider paths to encourage or require developers to deliver less parking with all this great housing.

Best,
Olivier Bouan

Dear Members of the Planning Commission,

Re: 1248 Fifth Street, Monahan Pacific proposal

November 17, 2025

We join Sue Burrell (*italics*) in requesting that you apply your wisdom, design expertise and power to alter the proposed 13-story building to be a better fit for our city.

The concept of more housing close to downtown and the transit center is important, and we need to meet our required housing element under state law.

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- This proposed building 13-story building is way out of scale with downtown's important and human-scaled buildings on Fifth Street, disproportionately upsetting the balance between our civic and historic buildings such as the City Hall, the Safety Building, the Carnegie, the Mission, Falkirk, Elks Lodge, Boyd Gate House. These are precious parts of our city's identity, and their presence is one reason people chose to visit and to live here. I could foresee a structure at this address the same height as its neighbor, the Marriott AC Hotel.
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- The design itself is uninteresting. *It utterly fails the test of context-sensitive design, and the failure to provide setbacks around the perimeter exacerbates this appearance. Monahan Pacific can do better than this, as evidenced by the more graceful buildings elsewhere in their portfolio.*
 - We are a strong believer in setbacks. They are in our muni code for a reason, to humanize the pedestrian experience - for passersby and for residents – with the added benefit of greening the city. This provides better air quality and placemaking whereas concrete does not!
 - It is our observation that while the goal of providing housing is driving this, so is profit-making for the developer. Please consider a building that houses fewer which would provide a less compacted living situation in a more beautiful building, providing a better quality of life for everyone downtown.
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Thanks for your consideration,

Amy and Joe Likover





Public Comment on Proposed Buildings for November 18, 2025 Special Meeting

From Sue Burrell [REDACTED]

Date Sun 11/16/2025 11:37 AM

To Planning Public Comment <planningpubliccomment@cityofsanrafael.org>

Dear Members of the Planning Commission,

The concept of more housing close to downtown and the transit center is a good one, and we do need to meet our required housing element under state law. But the proposed buildings, particularly the one at 1248 Fifth Street, are out of scale and lack the requisite harmony with the existing historic neighborhood:

- At 13 stories, the building will overshadow even the AC Hotel, our tallest current building. Recognizing that the future of downtown will have taller buildings, this is too much, too soon. It will create a jarring presence downtown - like the ill-fated skyscraper at the beach ultimately rejected by San Francisco.
- The City's planning policies call for thoughtful transitions to established neighborhoods and that allow downtown to retain its sense of history and authenticity. This ultra-modern building does not fit in a neighborhood graced with the Marin History Museum Boyd House, the Fallkirk House, the Mission, the Carnegie Library, the Rafael Theater, and the historic buildings of Fourth Street.
- Beyond the location, the cold, sterile building itself is a misfit. In terms of design, the conceptual drawings of the building suggest a giant air conditioning unit. It utterly fails the test of "context-sensitive" design, and the failure to provide setbacks around the perimeter exacerbates this appearance. Monahan Pacific can do better than this, as evidenced by the more graceful buildings elsewhere in their portfolio.
- As others have pointed out, a 188 unit building with only 128 parking spaces will impose an additional burden on the already difficult infrastructure of downtown. People who live in luxury units are going to have one or two cars, and a variety of helpers who need parking.

The building at 900 A street seems more reasonable in comparison, but it is still too tall. Even allowing that downtown will become gradually taller, it would be better to cap this project at 5 or 6 stories instead of 8. And again, allowing the building to go right up to the edge with no setbacks contributes to the appearance of a project that pays more attention to the square footage than the quality of life for residents and passers by.

The long term fate of our downtown will be impacted by your decisions on these properties. Other projects, like the new Fire Department, the renovated Carnegie Library, and the proposed Transit Center have honored history and context in their design. Please use your power to secure much needed adjustments to these projects.

Thank you, Sue Burrell

Sue Burrell





Outlook

1248 -1240 Fifth Avenue (APN 011-300-26) –

From Judi Pietromartire [REDACTED]

Date Tue 11/18/2025 3:12 PM

To Planning Public Comment <PlanningPublicComment@cityofsanrafael.org>

1) A 13 story building does not fit our city. I question the transparency that is taking place that something this large is acceptable to dwarf . . . most other buildings in our city.

2) San Rafael already has a very large parking problem in residential areas that has not been addressed properly. Plans for the 188 unit . . . building only have 158 parking spots is not realistic and will only add to the large problem.

3) The 2023 traffic report does not reflect 2025 traffic flow on Mission street and Fifth. Most people commute now that Covid is over.

Traffic during rush hour going East on these streets backs up to a stop in front of this proposed building as well as the Elks club on Mission already because of the smart train and new large buildings.

I drive every day to and from San Anselmo to Lincoln ave during rush hour. It's now a 45 minute commute, BEFORE you add a 13 story . . . building that does not belong. I lived on San Rafael Hill for 30 years and It's becoming unsafe with commuter traffic from Robert Dollar to . . . avoid gridlock.

Please honor our past and historical buildings by keeping highrise buildings out of our city.

Judith Pietromartire



1030 3rd Street and 1248 Fifth Avenue

From: Clare Krebsbach <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Tuesday, November 18, 2025 12:33 PM
To: Kristina Estudillo <kristina.estudillo@cityofsanrafael.org>; Krystle Rizzi <krystle.rizzi@cityofsanrafael.org>
Subject: 1030 3rd Street and 1248 Fifth Avenue

Dear Ms. Estudillo and Ms. Rizzi,

I suspect you are hearing from many people regarding the above proposed buildings, much of it likely about the size. I would like to comment on the fact that Monahan Company should NOT be given the contract for whatever iteration of the building comes to approval. He has already built too many, boring, lackluster, almost ugly buildings in San Rafael. Why? His buildings add nothing to the character, beauty, charm, street appeal, historical value to San Rafael. We deserves better!! I was recently in Reno, Nevada, where new buildings and renovations of older ones are being built a lot. It's worthy of its own architectural tour because the designs are contemporary - lots of innovation, variety, integrity, charm, beauty. Please, get a different company - one that wants to beautify San Rafael with interesting, modern new ideas.

Sincerely,
Clare Krebsbach



Outlook

No to the Monstrosity on Fifth Avenue

From Elaine Holland <[REDACTED]>

Date Tue 11/18/2025 2:48 PM

To Planning Public Comment <PlanningPublicComment@cityofsanrafael.org>

I'm a lifelong Marin resident and shop often in downtown San Rafael. The proposed 13-story apartment building on Fifth Avenue is wrong for so many reasons:

- Monstrous size and bulk are out of proportion to downtown San Rafael
- Insufficient parking for the number of living units. Parking in downtown San Rafael is already difficult
- Insufficient access to increased traffic or emergency vehicles on either Fourth Street or Fifth Street for that number of new residents.
- Massive height will block sunlight to the city park north of the building

Respectfully,
Em Holland



Proposals Scheduled for Meeting 11/18/2025

From Cecily O'Connor <[REDACTED]>

Date Sun 11/16/2025 4:56 PM

To Planning Public Comment <PlanningPublicComment@cityofsanrafael.org>

To The Planning Commission,

I am a long time resident of San Rafael and I live in the Gerstle Park area. I am writing to ask you please to not allow the creation of a 13 story apartment complex at 1248 5th Avenue. This building would completely dwarf all other buildings around it and be the tallest building in San Rafael. It would change any character the city still has. There is nothing attractive about the design and it certainly would not add anything aesthetically to the area which I believe is one of the nicest parts of downtown. That being said, I realize the mandate for building more housing is pressuring our communities to comply, but 13 stories is just way too tall for a nice town like San Rafael. Adding more cars to roads that are not built to accommodate them would be another sad outcome if this goes through. Hopefully something much smaller would be better. I also think the 8 story buildings proposed for 900 A street and 790 Mission are too tall and will make our town look more like Emeryville. This is not what we all want for San Rafael or Marin County.

Thank you,

Cecily O'Connor

