

Public Comment: 350 Merrydale Project & Strategic Plan Update

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Good evening, Mayor and Councilmembers. Marianne Nannestad, San Rafael Meadows. I am speaking today regarding **Agenda Item 3.c, the Strategic Plan Update.**

While the staff report lists the identification of 350 Merrydale and the securing of grant funding as "key accomplishments" under Objective D.1.1, I must express concerns regarding some lack of transparency in the project's long-term vision.

Comment
At your December 15 City Council Closed Session meeting, in the public comments section, Ken Dickinson a resident of San Rafael Meadows and on behalf of the Meadows and surrounding neighborhoods presented a letter in person to this Council requesting early, direct engagement before the 350 Merrydale project concepts were finalized. He specifically highlighted in the letter, the sudden change on your website in the project description to a *680 units* **"minimum of 80 units,"** which signals a much larger entitlement decision than originally anticipated.

Despite our request to meet before decisions were baked in, the City issued a formal Request for Proposals (RFP) on February 19th. This RFP explicitly requires developers to propose at least 80 units and sets a developer selection date for August 2026. By moving to the RFP stage now, the city is bypassing the community's request to shape the project's density and scale from the start.

The Strategic Plan update notes that certain expert panels were deferred due to the "politically complex" nature of the Merrydale site. This complexity is a direct result of the breakdown in trust experienced by residents. I urge the Council to pause and honor our invitation to meet with impacted neighborhoods before you enter into an exclusive negotiating agreement with a developer.

Thank you.

Marianne Nannestad