From: Kemper Hyers [redacted]
Sent: Friday, April 24, 2026 4:10 PM
To: planning <planning@cityofsanrafael.org>; Margaret Kavanaugh-Lynch <Margaret.Kavanaugh-Lynch@cityofsanrafael.org>; Lindsay Lara <Lindsay.Lara@cityofsanrafael.org>
Cc: Mayor Kate <Kate.Colin@cityofsanrafael.org>
Subject: 700 Irwin

I was traveling during the city meetings on this project. However, I am a resident of the neighborhood adjacent to the project. Among the many concerns I have - traffic in and out of that particular site, scale in a residential low rise neighborhood, rolling over a community less equipped to wield political power in this location, inappropriately cheap and urban aesthetic that is an anathema to the community, etc - my biggest question for this office is why is there no planned, curated zoning in the City of San Rafael that would preclude a project of this size in the neighborhood it inhabits? San Rafael needs a thoughtful, intelligent zoning plan that protects all that is special, but also drives growth where it makes sense and when it benefits the community, forming coherently and naturally in a way we are all proud of in 50 years' time.

I'm concerned that this lack of locally agreed-upon strategic town planning is the central gap that will allow this large-scale, aberrant piece of big-city architecture to dominate this lovely low-rise neighborhood for a century. No urban planner, no town commissioner, no mayor, no one in their right mind would condone this project as conceived. Among the rebuttals reviewed at the hearing was a response about "objective" versus "subjective" decision-making power in the city of San Rafael on the subject of building approvals. If I may, let me dig into that response. First, by the very nature of the title of your area of your government, "Planning", you are squarely in a world of subjectivity. Great cities are a product of BOTH art and science. Planning a great city requires vision, curation,

empathy, aesthetics, balance, forward-thinking ideas beyond today's momentary needs. These are inherently subjective. Hausmann with Paris, Olmstead with New York City, these were not objective projects.

But let's not just take that as fact, let's enumerate the objective things we know to be true about this project:

- this is the tallest building in Marin and is illogically located in a low-rise residential/light office and commercial neighborhood adjacent to both low-income and moderate-income communities in small apartment buildings and homes
- the traffic on this exit from the highway is already crowded at heavy hours of the day and there is no possible right-hand turn off the highway, which even now fills with cars all the way up to the highway traffic light every day, that won't be affected by an entrance on that block to this enormous residential project
- this is the opportunistic greed of a developer who has a difficult site in a depressed area and is using this moment of governmental leash-loosening to their advantage, not a developer looking to create a new positive element in this community
- They have chosen an area that does not have the political capital to fight back...the Canal District, the low-rise area around San Rafael High School,

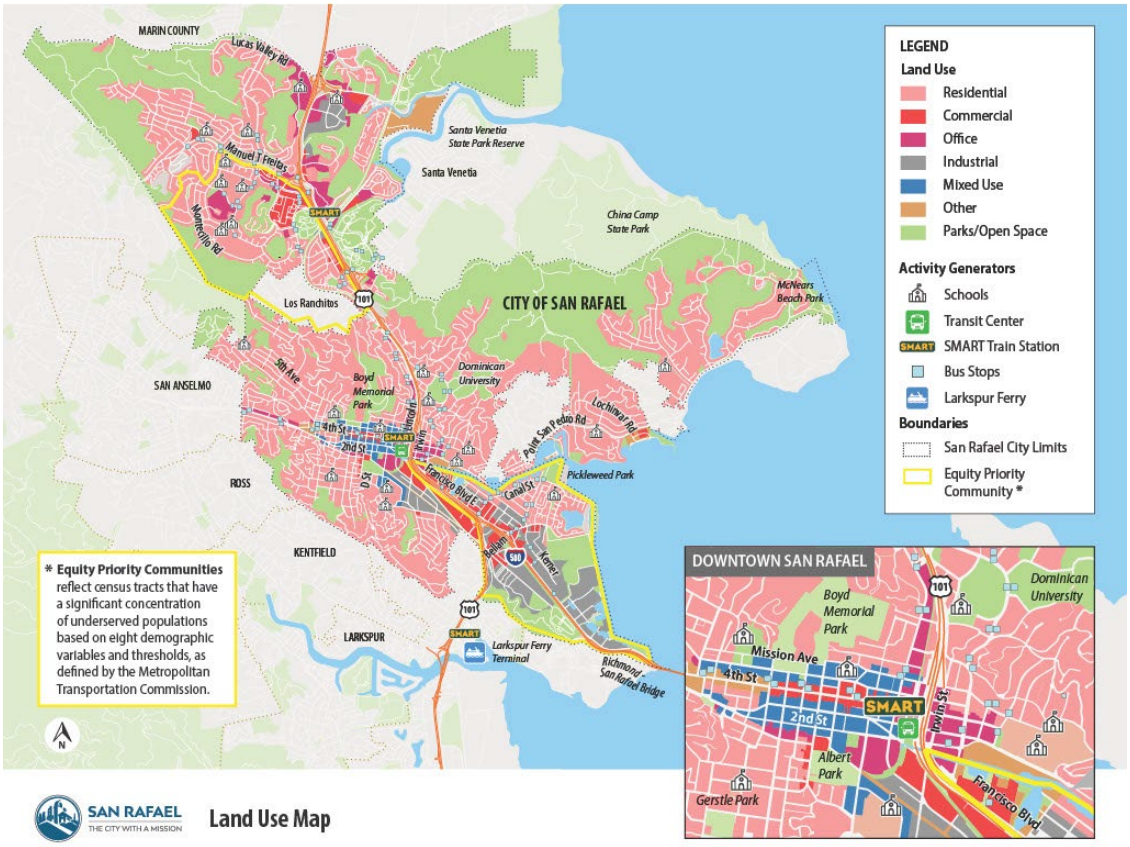
etc. These are hardworking people without high-priced legal means

- The project sits on a block that is clearly marked on the city website with a land use of Office. How has this now been granted an exemption to be residential where it neither belongs nor functions from an access point of view

These are objective statements and we can infer the subjective implications of each. I have looked at a map of San Rafael (below) and am proposing a simple zoning plan that would avoid this kind of egregious town planning in the future. While I am not a town planner, even a mere citizen can see where density should be placed in the City. If you follow the color labeling on the attached. Everything in the Residential pink color should be a maximum height limit of 3-5 stories, depending on block location, taller towards the center of the city and lower around the edges. If you look at the Mixed Use color blocks, these could rise to a current high-rise height of 7 stories. I would temper this by landmarking the quaint small-town main street shop buildings that give the city its charm and character. The Commercial zones are ripe for development and should be looked at in a planned community strategy over multiple parcels. No building there should exceed a 6-story limit. This simple math increases density, shapes the city's energy and aesthetics around natural context, and would protect against patchwork decision-making that will obliterate the fabric of San Rafael.

Adopting a locally generated, locally approved plan should trump any State requirement that aims to thoughtlessly tear at the heart of our Marin communities. Please intervene. This monstrosity will kill the community it is invading. Marin is not Oakland or Berkeley, where these disconnected, ill-conceived projects are destroying those cities parcel by parcel. Please help stop this, or at a minimum, resize it to something that harmonizes with the city we all call home.

Sincerely, Kemper Hyers



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