



July 23, 2019

San Rafael Planning Commission
1400 Fifth Avenue
San Rafael, CA 94901

Re: Northgate Walk Development

Dear Commissioners,

The Coalition for a Livable Marin (CALM) is comprised of leading sustainability, housing, planning, transportation and design advocates. Our mission is to create and maintain the vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable places that make Marin, in combination with its open space, such a great place.

To address the demonstrable shortage of new affordable homes in Marin, CALM strongly supports the concept of infill housing near transit, shops and services. The proposed Northgate Walk project will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by providing such housing for local workers. It will provide the most number of affordable units built in over a decade in San Rafael. It will enable Terra Linda seniors to move to a smaller place in their neighborhood. It will give local residents amenities such as the walkway loop and a revitalized hotel.

- We recognize the project sponsor's responsiveness to community concerns.
- We support the diversity in unit types, size and affordability - maximizing housing choice.
- We are disappointed that the proposal does not contain more housing. A greater number of units overall would help further alleviate San Rafael's housing supply/demand imbalance.
- We encourage reducing parking demand through an aggressive and enforceable Transportation Demand Management (TDM) program. This could help free up additional land for more housing in the future, within the site's existing height and density restrictions.
- We appreciate the walkway design, as this will be a great amenity for residents, visitors and neighbors. We would like to see the pathway loop accessible at additional points.
- We support native plant restoration of the hillside and creek.
- Connectivity from this site to the shopping centers and SMART is essential. The crosswalk at Manuel T Freitas Parkway must be safe for pedestrians, and the connection to the North San Rafael Promenade clearly delineated for this project to live up to its name "Northgate Walk."
- CALM strongly supports applying LEED design standards to the project.

Thank you for your careful consideration.

Sincerely,

Kiki La Porta
On behalf of the Steering Committee of Coalition for a Livable Marin



July 22, 2019

To: Members of the San Rafael Planning Commission
Re: Northgate Walk

The Marin County League of Women Voters supports the Northgate Walk project and the efforts its developers have made to reach the compromises necessary to satisfy the neighbors and gain the approval of the Design Review Board.

The location is ideal for the type of housing San Rafael needs to build to accommodate a variety of tenants who clearly need such housing. Included in the 136 total units are 30 units for senior housing and 28 below-market-rate units. The site's proximity to transit (the freeway and SMART), employment and shopping choices for new tenants is clearly appropriate.

In addition, others who could benefit immediately from the project's amenities are nearby workers from Kaiser and other tech and office businesses as well as nearby tenants of assisted living facilities and apartments.

With so many diverse benefits included in the project, now is the time for San Rafael to support this project.

We agree with the recent IJ editorial that "housing should be in the future of Northgate Mall." Let's start with Northgate Walk.

The League strongly recommends that the Planning Commission join with the Design Review Board in its unanimous decision to support this project.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ann Batman".

Ann Batman, Co-President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ann Wakeley".

Ann Wakeley, Co-President

Steve Stafford

From: Martha Lee <4parks2016@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, July 22, 2019 2:36 PM
To: Steve Stafford; Paul Jensen
Subject: Comment on Proposed Northgate Walk Development for Planning Commission

July 22, 2019

San Rafael Planning Commission
cc: Paul Jensen, City Planning Director
cc: Steve Stafford, City Planner

Dear Members of the Planning Commission:

As a resident of San Rafael Manor in Terra Linda, one of the communities most directly affected by this proposed development, I am requesting that the Planning Commission not approve this development at the July 23, 2019 meeting, but instead grant a continuance. There are a number of issues that have been raised through the past year and more by members of our community that have not yet been addressed or responded to by the project proponents.

I know that a number of the residents of the greater Terra Linda community don't fully understand the mass and potential impacts of this project to the neighborhood. The following asks would ensure there is full disclosure for residents:

- 1) Erect "story poles" at the sites of the proposed buildings to indicate how tall they would be and their actual locations on the site.
- 2) Produce photo simulations for what the development would look like at the intersection of Los Gamos and Oleander as well as from the center of Oleander Park.
- 3) Require completion of a noise analysis of proposed development on neighbors to the west.
- 4) Disclose how emergency access and potential evacuation would be ensured via only one road access into the site.

There are other concerns that have been raised by the Board of Directors of San Rafael Manor and other community members that have not yet been addressed. It is ironic that this project is being billed as senior and low income housing, when San Rafael Manor (which will be the most directly affected) is *de facto* one of the most affordable senior and low-income housing options in Marin County. Perhaps because of our economic situation, we may not be seen as having as much social, political or economic sway as other San Rafael communities.

I feel strongly that it is premature to issue approval of this proposal at this time: issuing a continuance would be the most responsible course of action for the July 23 meeting.

Thank you,

Martha J. Lee

Martha J. Lee

San Rafael Manor, Los Gamos Rd, San Rafael, CA 94903
Email: 4parks2016@gmail.com

July 22, 2019

Commissioners
Mayor and ~~Councilmembers~~
San Rafael City Council
1400 Fifth Ave.
San Rafael, CA 94901

RE: 1007, 1020 and 1030 Northgate Drive

Commissioners
Dear Mayor and ~~Councilmembers~~

We need more Senior Units and non-senior units. As a gerontologist and owner of a placement agency, Senior Living Services, for 18 years in Marin, I see an increased need of additional Senior Units. The Northgate units are ideal for seniors to easily navigate to amenities such as hospitals, Dr.'s offices, grocery stores, banks, restaurants, hair and nail salons, entertainment, fueling stations, etc. The location is ideal for safety, security and to avoid isolation which are big factors in the next stage of an older person's life. All of the amenities enable seniors to stay in units longer so they may be better able to afford Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly which are Assisted Living and Board and Care Homes when they can no longer take care of themselves. *I am also a member of the Aging Action Initiative.*

According to the Area Plan for Aging 2016-2020, 27% of the county consists of people over age 60 which will increase to 33% by 2020. San Rafael needs more units because of this and the elderly population explosion ("elder or silver tsunami") soon upon us. In the last 18 years I witnessed Marin County losing at least 53 RCFE beds with only 12 RCFE beds being replaced prior to a year ago. The Northgate project helps plan for the future so our seniors can be safer, independent longer, stretch their finances and not be in isolation!

At what costs would the units be at each level? I believe senior units may be less costly to live in than Assisted Living. The Senior Units will fill the gap between living at home and Assisted Living. My only concern is the traffic lights and will there be enough time for seniors to ambulate across the street to Northgate 1 or 2.

As an advocate for seniors, I need to express my support for the proposed Northgate project that will benefit older people. Some seniors are struggling at home alone because there is not a vacancy in a particular Assisted Living or they can not afford an Assisted Living Community. Our seniors are important citizens and we need to ensure a housing where they can "Age In Place" as long as they are able. The amenities nearby will enable seniors to reside more comfortably, more securely and will allow them to be healthier and engaged in the community. *Seniors moving into the Northgate project will open up housing for young families?*
The planned building seems to be architecturally appealing and will complement the Northgate area.

Sincerely,

Marjorie Cuitti

Marjorie Cuitti- B.A. Gerontology/Human Development
Senior Living Services - placement agency
Residential Care Facility for the Elderly license 17 years
P.O. Box 150027
San Rafael, CA 94915
Coldwell Banker, Seniors Real Estate Specialist
CalRE#01993642
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JUL 23 2019

PLANNING



July 22, 2019

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415.457.7656

166 Greenwood Avenue
San Rafael, CA 94901

San Rafael Planning Commission
1400 Fifth Avenue
San Rafael, CA 94901

Re: Northgate Walk Approval

Dear Planning Commissioners,
Sustainable San Rafael believes that this development could make a significant contribution to much-needed, transit-supported housing in the city. We urge your approval, without further delay.

Housing is essential to sustainability. Just as the balance of the natural community depends on diversity, the human community needs a varied population. To sustain a thriving city, we need a diverse economy, a diverse workforce, ethnic diversity, age diversity, diversity of backgrounds and perspectives. Sufficient and diverse housing is foundational to such a community.

The Northgate Walk site is exactly the kind of place to build such housing in a compact manner that both encourages community interaction and helps reduce our growing climate crisis. It's close to transit, shopping, services and jobs, so people living there can walk, bike and bus more. That means driving less, thereby emitting fewer greenhouse gases to warm the planet.

This is also a rare upland infill site, already developed, and away from the dual climate change threats of sea level rise and wildfire zones. Such sites are a valuable community resource, to be managed for optimal yield—both in terms of the number of units reasonably accommodated and the quality of contributions to the wider area. The proposed development holds the promise of ongoing improvements, including enhancement of its open space for recreation and carbon sequestration, restoration of Gallinas Creek, increased non-car connectivity, and even additional units on underutilized parking lots.

The surrounding neighborhood has had its say with this project, reducing it to less than half the units the zoning allows, suppressing the State height bonus for affordable housing, and promoting ownership housing instead of rentals. It is now time for the City to act on behalf of the whole community and support the housing we so sorely need.

Steve Stafford

From: Becky Page <srmi.rpage@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, July 19, 2019 4:20 PM
To: Steve Stafford; Alicia Giudice; Raffi Boloyan; Paul Jensen; Maribeth Bushey; Kate Colin; John Gamblin
Subject: Concerns and opposition to the planned development known as "Northgate Walk"

City of San Rafael Design Review Board & Planning Commission
Attention: Paul Jensen and Steve Stafford July 18, 2019

Dear Members of Design Review Board and Planning Commission:

We understand that the City Council is meeting again on July 23rd to review a revised design for the proposed Northgate Walk development in Terra Linda.

Along with community members representing Oleander Park, Mont Marin and Lucas Valley, and as the Board representing San Rafael Manor, Inc., we have on several occasions and in a number of specific meetings—including several with the developer and the many architects who have been engaged over the years—solicited and received input from our residents regarding the proposed project and their opposition to it. In this matter we have also engaged several land use attorneys to confirm the validity of the 1964 Covenants and Restrictions documents mentioned below, which we have been told should be considered in-force. As Board members as a group and individually, we have previously voiced our opposition to this project at meetings in person, through submitted petitions to Mr. Stafford, and through direct communication to the attorneys involved, the City Council, the Design Review Board and to the Planning Commission. We have even been named in a lawsuit by the developer.

As the residents most impacted by this proposed development, the Board of San Rafael Manor, Inc. (SRMI) would like to again go on the record to express our opposition to this proposal as currently designed. We believe that:

San Rafael Manor, Inc has a valid agreement/covenant that limits the kinds of development that can be built on the site, and which would exclude this residential development as it is an "apartment", with an exterior shell which encompasses units separated and "apart" from one another with interior walls;

Impacts of the proposed buildings along the creek to shading and views for a large portion of our community are unacceptable and not fully disclosed;

Safety and traffic impacts to the intersection at Freitas have not been thoroughly addressed;

There has not been appropriate participation of county emergency services officials for determining feasibility of current plans to ensure safe evacuation and access in case of a catastrophic emergency (such as recent fires in Santa Rosa).

Noise impacts from the proposed development on adjacent communities, including SRM, have not been analyzed or disclosed. With this letter, we would request that the DRD and Planning Commission require the developers:

Erect "story poles" at the sites of the proposed buildings to indicate how tall they would be on the actual site.

Produce photo simulations for what the development would look like at the intersection of Los Gamos and Oleander as well as from the center of Oleander Park. We believe that a number of the residents of the SRM and greater Terra Linda community don't really understand what this project would look like nor what the impacts would potentially be for the neighborhood.

Require completion of a noise analysis of proposed development on neighbors to the west.

San Rafael Manor is a cooperative community on 13 acres directly across the creek from the proposed development. Our community stretches along Los Gamos Road on the west side of the proposed development and is bordered on the east by the creek and the current hotel development. Our buildings were constructed in the 1960s and consist of 160 units stretching along about four city blocks 158 of which are required (and are) to be all owner-occupied. Because of our cooperative ownership, our units are among the most affordable housing options in Marin County and we also have a significant number of seniors and others on fixed incomes among our residents.

Covenant: There is a "Covenants and Restrictions" document dating from 1964 that precludes the property being used for a "...supermarket, discount house, retail shopping center, apartment house or commercial use..." The term "condominium" was not in common use at the time the covenant was put in place, but we believe that the intent of the 1964 agreement would exclude such development.

Views & Shading Analyses:

1. **Views:** the view analysis on the City's website did not include any views of what the new construction would look like from San Rafael Manor or the community around Oleander Park. The only view that is relevant to these concerns was done from the corner of Freitas and Los Gamos. We request that a view simulation be completed for the intersection of Los Gamos and Oleander as well as from the center of Oleander Park.
2. **Shading:** We are grateful to neighbor Loren Powers for his thorough shading analysis, which demonstrates that if the project were constructed as designed, many of our residents directly across the creek would lose access to morning sun and experience significant shading to yards, gardens and housing units. As our board is currently evaluating a potential major investment to install solar on carport rooftops, we are understandably alarmed that this project may make a solar option unfeasible for SRM

Traffic at intersection with Freitas: This intersection is already problematic with dangerous interaction between vehicles coming off the freeway, turning into adjacent shopping areas, trying to get to 101 from the west, and pedestrians and bicyclists using the crosswalks. We question the conclusion that the number of vehicle trips per day through that intersection will be reduced from current volume.

Emergency Services: It seems irresponsible to propose residential development on the top of the hill at Northgate One with only one road in/out. Recent experience with the fires in the Santa Rosa area have emphasized the need for multiple routes for residents' escape as well as for emergency vehicle access. We do not see evidence that our County Emergency Services and Fire personnel have been engaged in this planning.

Noise impacts: While we appreciate that there have been some modifications of the original design to move public rooftop spaces back from the creekside edges of building, we continue to have concerns about noise impacts to SRM and the Oleander Park community. The only noise analysis we could find on the city's website was for impacts of noise *to* residents of the *new* construction from Freitas and 101. We request that there be an analysis completed to determine if there would be a potential increase in noise emanating FROM the project, once built, on the surrounding community – specifically, the neighborhood that includes San Rafael Manor and the houses around Oleander Park. Such noise would come from balconies over the creek, rooftop amenities, the proposed new bikeway and pedestrian trail, and vehicle access to the site.

The Marin General Plan presents guidelines for housing infill (pp 24 and 43). It notes, "housing...infill sites must be developed in a way that best adds value to a neighborhood...design policies for multifamily housing will try to ensure enhancement of neighborhood identity and sense of community by having new housing sensitively address scale and compatibility in design to the surrounding neighborhood." We do not believe that this development, as currently presented, is compatible with the existing, surrounding community, and we believe that it will create significant negative impacts to San Rafael Manor and the Oleander Park community.

Sincerely,

Becky Page, Board President
Charles Schultz, Vice President
Corey Shultz, Secretary

Chris Carter, Treasurer Craig Yates, Member-At-Large

o o o o o o o o o o

Betsy Page

srmi.rpage@gmail.com

July 19, 2019

RE: Northgate Walk Project Proposal

To: San Rafael Planning Commissioners
City Planner Steve Stafford
City Planning Director Paul Jensen

Dear Planning Commissioners,

When the Northgate Walk Project is brought before you this July 23, 2019, I urge a continuance until the applicant provides crucial information needed to make the best project possible.

The Applicant has been unwilling to provide basic information to inform the neighboring low to middle income neighborhood. For the last year, the Terra Linda Homeowners Association, the San Rafael Manor Board, and many Terra Linda residents have requested in writing and at DRB meetings, that **the applicant must provide mockup photos from the west side of the project**. So far, the applicant has not provided any mockups that show the surrounding neighbors what the project will look like to them. The applicant has only shown mockups of what it will look like from the freeway and from the Freitas intersection.

Also, these same organizations and individuals have requested the Applicant **provide story poles to reveal the height and breadth of the project** just across from the San Rafael Manor.

So far, the Applicant has shown an unwillingness to provide information to show the Project's potential impact on a Co-op of many low income to middle income residents. Mock up photos and story poles are crucial to let you, as decision makers, know the impact of the proposed project on a disadvantaged neighboring community.

Please ask for a continuance and request that the Applicant provide this important information so that the best, and least harmful to others, proposal can move forward.

Pamela Reaves, Terra Linda



95 Brady Street
San Francisco, CA 94103
415 541 9001
bayhac@sfhac.org
www.sfhac.org/bayhac

To Whom It May Concern:

The staff of the Bay Area Housing Advocacy Coalition (BayHAC) is officially in support of the proposed project at 1007-1030 Northgate Drive. After an extensive presentation from the public affairs representative, Lighthouse Public Affairs, and architect, LCA Architects, the staff of BayHAC considers the proposed project a strong addition of well-designed, well-located, and necessary new homes at all levels of affordability.

Across the Bay Area, long-time residents and newcomers alike face an acute housing shortage, which has driven up prices and dragged down affordability. While no single project can solve this shortage, 136 new homes go a long way toward creating enough for Bay Area residents. BayHAC specifically commends the team for creating a mix of housing opportunities with 136 total units: 20% being one-bedroom units and 40% being two-bedroom units. In addition, of the 136 total units, 30 units will be one-bedroom senior units to reflect an underserved population need in Marin. Finally, this project will offer an affordability rate of 20%, a high mark for the Bay Area due to building costs.

Given that emissions from personal automobiles account for approximately 25% of carbon emissions in California, encouraging transit ridership is paramount in achieving our regional sustainability goals. The project is exceptionally well-located to help achieve this goal, being within walking distance to different transit stations: Marin Transit Bus Stop and Marin Civic Center SMART station. Additionally, the project site interfaces different bicycle and pedestrian pathways which encourages a healthier lifestyle and reduces the amount of vehicular trips generated. BayHAC staff would support less parking, given the urgency of our sustainability goals and the project's location near transit.

Beyond design, the project implements several strong community benefits. The project team engaged in a good faith community outreach program to local stakeholders, namely, Marin YIMBY, NextGen Marin, and Housing Crisis Action Group. Input from the community resulted in the 30 senior housing units exclusively dedicated to active seniors (55+), a need which was a constant theme voiced by many residents during the community outreach process. Additionally, the project team responded to community input, resulting in the top floor removal. BayHAC would have preferred the project retain this floor and the necessary new homes therein.

Ultimately, BayHAC's staff is proud to support this project proposal because it creates more homes for the Bay Area, contributes to our shared sustainability goals, and contributes a significant number of community benefits.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Todd David".

Todd David, *Executive Director*
Bay Area Housing Advocacy Coalition (BayHAC)

July 18, 2019

Planning Commission
City of San Rafael
1400 Fifth Avenue
San Rafael, CA 94901

RE: Northgate Walk

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing in support of the Northgate Walk Project, scheduled to be before you on July 23rd. I am sorry I cannot attend the meeting in person.

Seldom have I seen a significant project that deserves your full and enthusiastic support more than this one. Northgate Walk offers San Rafael new, multi-family housing so desperately needed. It also fulfills many important goals agreed to over years (decades, actually) of community planning and repeatedly ratified by numerous planning commissions and city councils. Project benefits include:

- Added affordable housing at a significant 20% ratio
- Limited traffic impact
- Infill project with minimal impact on the natural environment
- Housing with easy access to all transit types – bus, SMART, walking, bike
- Close to 101 with minimal traffic impact on adjoining neighborhoods
- Provides housing for an aging population
- Fully accessible to the disabled
- Supports the gathering place concept, so central to North San Rafael planning schemes
- Height and mass are a match to adjoining office and hotel buildings (which are up to 5 stories)
- Modern housing in a community where housing is mostly over 40 years old, meeting the needs of today
- Close to a wide variety of employers, including Kaiser and the County

As many of you know, I have been active in San Rafael community-based planning efforts for nearly 30 years (Downtown Vision, N. San Rafael Vision, N. San Rafael Station Area Plan, General Plan 2020 and now General Plan 2040). I am also a current member of the CAC. Moreover, I have a lifetime of experience in North San Rafael and my office was at 899 Northgate Drive for 20 years. I know the area and I helped write many of its planning documents.

While I understand neighbors' concerns expressed in numerous letters, upon more careful review, it turns out the majority were either factually incorrect or a reflection of people's natural resistance to change. As planning commissioners, you are no doubt used to being faced with these passionate and mostly sincere entreaties to prevent a wide range of ills that can result from insensitive development.

Hopefully, in this case, you will be more moved by rational analysis and by San Rafael's extreme need for housing. The major issues have been studied by neutral professionals and have been either mitigated by the developer or found to be in fact inconsequential or immaterial. In addition, and this is extremely important, this project is totally in keeping with the City's housing goals for both the area and the entire City. It is the type of housing, in the kind of location and of a style and form that we have **all** been advocating for.

At the risk of hyperbole, I would like to take the planning matter further. Why bother with community-based planning, with all of the thought and effort that goes into it, if we are simply going to ignore goals we set forth for ourselves when an actual project comes forward? My personal take on Northgate Walk is that it should be far closer in size to its full potential of 422 units than the 136 approved. I think as Planning Commissioners, you should take note of the failure in a planning process that resulted in this project being whittled down so dramatically. How many prime, low impact housing opportunities like this do you think you will see in our built-out city? Yet, before the project even came to decision makers for formal consideration, it ends up only 1/3 of what it could deliver to San Rafael in fulfillment of our oft repeated but seldom achieved housing goals.

Based on this experience, it is no wonder that the State of California is moving to take away local control of local planning. More's the pity.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Smith", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Roger A. Smith
65 Moncada Way
San Rafael, CA 94901
rsmith@rasprop.com