

About Costco

Susan Clark [REDACTED]

Mon 10/14/2019 5:42 PM

To: Raffi Boloyan <Raffi.Boloyan@cityofsanrafael.org>

I have been a San Rafael resident for 25 years. I shop regularly at the Novato Costco and would be delighted to not have to go as far, reduce my carbon footprint and keep my dollars in our city. I think the merchandise Costco offers is to be commended for having wide appeal across San Rafael residents of all economic backgrounds.

I am interested in how this Costco at Northgate could be designed to support more community interaction. My understanding is that plans are afoot to build on the successful pop-up library at Northgate. It would be great if Costco and the library planning were both undertaken with an eye toward increasing community connectedness.

Susan Stuart Clark | cell 4 [REDACTED]

COSTCO AT NORTHGATE IN TERRA LINDA

ANDRE BOGARD <[REDACTED]>

Mon 10/14/2019 8:38 PM

To: gary.philips@cityofsanrafael.org <gary.philips@cityofsanrafael.org>

Cc: Andrew McCullough <Andrew.McCullough@cityofsanrafael.org>; John Gamblin <John.Gamblin@cityofsanrafael.org>; Kate Colin <Kate.Colin@cityofsanrafael.org>; Maribeth Bushey <Maribeth.Bushey@cityofsanrafael.org>; Raffi Boloyan <Raffi.Boloyan@cityofsanrafael.org>

The Honorable Gary Philips
Mayor of San Rafael

Dear Mayor Philips,

QUAIL HILL TOWNHOUSES, INC. is a 110 unit Home Owner Association community, located in Terra Linda. We had a special meeting in our Clubhouse on August 7, 2019, at the request of Costco. The purpose of the meeting was to provide an opportunity for the representatives of Costco and Northgate Mall to make a presentation about their planned project to build a Costco Warehouse and a 6 lane 24 pump gas station at the site of the former Sears Building and to receive feedback from the residents to find out the level of support and opposition to this project.

After an hour of discussions a member of the audience suggested that if Costco is interested to know the level of support and opposition to this project let's vote by raising hands. The representative of Costco said yes, **we want to know how much support or opposition the public has for this project because in case of strong public opposition we will evaluate if we should spend Millions of Dollars on the design or not.** Of the 130 members present 3 hands were raised for support, 3 were undecided and the **great majority, 95% of the audience raised their hands opposing the project.**

The following major concerns were raised:

- > The existing infrastructure around the Mall, the current capacity of the Freeway Exits and Entries and the Merrydale Overpass were not designed for the anticipated heavy traffic and will not be able to handle it.
- > The stop and go traffic during peak periods would prevent emergency vehicles to reach the Kaiser Hospital in time. Fire Trucks will be stuck in traffic also. The already existing heavy traffic at peak times on the Freitas Parkway would be greatly affected.
- > Stop and go traffic and idling vehicles waiting in line at the 24 pump gas station would generate an unacceptable level of

air pollution. Even the idea to build a gas station of that size just across the road of a residential area and an Assisted Living Facility is unacceptable. Costco would be wiser to build Electric Vehicle Charging Stations, like Target did in San Rafael, instead of gas pumps.

- > The noise level of the delivery trucks starting at 4 AM is another major concern of the surrounding area residents.
- > The size of the proposed building is twice the size of the former Sears building. This enormous size building with the Costco store on the ground floor and a three story parking garage on top of it will be 47 feet high, 2 feet higher than the Sears building. This large building is suitable to be built in an Industrial/Commercial area only and not close to an existing residential neighborhood.

During subsequent meetings of our group we agreed that the following upgrades and required changes have to be met before construction permit is issued for this project.

- An Environmental Impact Report has to be prepared and submitted with the final design to the San Rafael Planning Department for review and approval.
- The two lane road, (La Gallinas, Los Ranchitos and Northgate Dr), around the Mall has to be widened to four lanes.
- The Terra Linda/Freitas Parkway Freeway Exits and Entries should be expanded to two lanes each direction.
- The Merrydale Overpass should be expanded from two lanes to four lanes.
- The Mechanical Area, with the noisy HVAC equipment, should be relocated to the North/East corner of the building away from the residential area.
- The Parking Garage lights on the top open level should be turned off 30 minutes after store closing but no later than 8:30 PM every evening.
- Delivery trucks should not be allowed to start before 7:00 AM.
- The planned gas station should be canceled for this project and replaced by Electric Vehicle Charging Stations.

Many members of our group are Costco members and several of us are also Costco shareholders. We want to thank Costco and the Mall Owner for their outreach to Quail Hill residents to inform us about this project. However, if the above upgrades and requirements are not met before construction permit is issued we will vigorously oppose this project and even pursue all available legal avenues to delay the start or stop construction of this project until all issues are satisfactorily resolved.

Sincerely,

Andre J Bogard
Former President
Quail Hill Townhouses, Inc.

Approve Costco ASAP in San Rafael

Richard Creaghe [REDACTED]

Mon 10/14/2019 3:31 PM

To: Raffi Boloyan <Raffi.Boloyan@cityofsanrafael.org>

Dear San Rafael,

My name is Richard Creaghe.

I have lived in San Rafael since 1989.

Please approve the Costco in Northgate.

When San Rafael chased away in 1993, it has cost San Rafael approximately 18 million dollars per year.

that's approximately \$468 million dollars lost.

That would be more than enough to pay for the San Rafael millennium loss.

Don't let a few stop this fantastic possibility for everyone in San Rafael.

Thank you, Richard Creaghe



Coalition for a Livable Marin

...to create and maintain vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable communities

October 13, 2019

To: San Rafael Planning Commission

The Coalition for a Livable Marin, or CALM, is a group of housing, environment and transportation advocates, living and working in Marin. Our coalition stands for town character. We stand for livable places. Our mission is to create and maintain the vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable places that make Marin, in combination with its magnificent open space, such a great place.

The CALM vision is to implement a walkable mixed-use village center for Northgate including a major retail/entertainment component and a mix of housing types and affordability ranges. This is reflected in the San Rafael General Plan 2020 policies for Northgate. Does warehouse retail fit into this vision? Based on these policies, the bulk cash-and-carry automobile-oriented nature of this business model is not indicated for Northgate.

Housing is a critical issue at Northgate since before the Mall was reconfigured ten years ago. This is a prime location for housing, and we would hate to lose that opportunity forever.

CALM supports comprehensive planning for the center. As part of its application for this location, Costco must address the housing and commute issue for its employees.

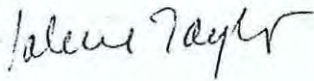
It is not possible to be "livable" or sustainable if our well-being is based on CO2 emission technology. Cheap gas certainly isn't a disincentive to reducing vehicle miles traveled (or driven), or VMT! San Rafael has the opportunity here to pivot towards greater sustainability. CALM advocates for DC charging stations provided free of charge to Costco members and for solar power incorporated in the proposed design.

We believe in the imperative to create affordable housing and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Marin. We appreciate your thoughtful review of the pre-application for the Costco proposal, and urge you to require the inclusion of housing and removal of the gas station to help make Marin a great place to live for everyone.

Sincerely,



Jeff D. Rhoads
Members, CALM



Valerie Taylor

cc: CALM Steering Committee



Protecting Marin Since 1934

October 14, 2019

Raffi Boloyan, Planning Manager
and Planning Commissioners
City of San Rafael
1400 5th Avenue
San Rafael, CA 94901
raffi.boloyan@cityofsanrafael.org

RE: Costco at Northgate Mall

Dear Mr. Boloyan and San Rafael Planning Commissioners:

Marin Conservation League (MCL) has reviewed the Pre-Application and Conceptual Design Review application for the Costco Project at Northgate Mall in San Rafael and has concerns about the proposed project. As you may know, MCL has an 85-year history and legacy of preserving land and protecting natural resources in Marin County. Much of MCL's work today is based on tracking and advocating on local issues, planning processes, and proposed developments that have the potential to create adverse environmental impacts.

The proposed Costco project is large and MCL suspects the accompanying land use changes, especially those related to the proposed gas station, may have potentially significant impacts on the natural environment and on the North San Rafael communities surrounding the proposed project.

We can foresee that the project may have potentially significant impacts in the following areas:

- Geology and soils
- Surface and groundwater hydrology
- Water quality
- Air quality
- Noise
- Greenhouse gas emissions
- Energy conservation
- Hazards and hazardous materials
- Land use and planning
- Population and housing
- Traffic and Transportation
- Public services and Utilities

These topics, and potentially others, should be analyzed at a level of detail adequate for determining potential impacts and mitigation measures. Unless the proposed project clearly qualifies for an exemption from California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review, an initial study should be completed to determine the appropriate type of CEQA document to be prepared. Considering the nature of a warehouse store such as a Costco with associated gas pumps, as well as the location of the site where it is proposed, MCL anticipates that an environmental impact report (EIR) would likely be the appropriate document to be prepared.

PHONE: 415.485.6257
FAX: 415.485.6259

EMAIL: mcl@marinconservationleague.org
WEB: marinconservationleague.org

ADDRESS: 175 N. Redwood Dr., Ste. 135
San Rafael, CA 94903-1977



As has been the standard practice of the City in the past, we anticipate that project plans and technical studies submitted by the applicant will be made available to the public on the City's website, as well as notices and documents related to the CEQA review for the project.

MCL intends to actively participate in the review of this project as it moves forward. Please include MCL on the mailing list for all future notices regarding public meetings, document availability, etc., in connection with this application.

Thank you. We appreciate the City's diligence in providing the public with an open and thorough environmental review of the proposed Costco project.

Sincerely,



Linda J. Novy
President



Susan Stompe
Chair, MCL's Land Use and Transportation Committee



Kate Powers
MCL Director

Costco at Northgate Mall

Claire Halenbeck <[REDACTED]>

Mon 10/14/2019 8:20 AM

To: Raffi Boloyan <Raffi.Boloyan@cityofsanrafael.org>

Dear Mr. Boloyan,

My husband Robert Halenbeck and I have lived on Golden Hinde Blvd. in Terra Linda for 24 years, and San Rafael for more than 35 years. We vote in all elections and have supported all of the school bond initiatives and gladly support and pay parcel taxes for the schools and other taxes added to make and keep our community strong, livable, and desirable. We're very happy with the Smart Train and other improvements in San Rafael. My husband works at BioMarin and is able to bike to work which we truly appreciate. I've owned my own business in San Rafael for 35 years, just recently moved to my home as I consider retirement from Ten H Street in Central San Rafael.

When the recent community survey was distributed by Merlone Geier, we gladly participated and lent our voices to the vision of a North San Rafael "Town Center" vision. We also agree with the Civic Center Station Area Plan in that we strongly value keeping the scale of our community livable and inviting. We in Terra Linda want a village center with many different services and more housing.

Costco will not revitalize the Mall: It will kill it! It will become an huge - blank walled monstrosity generating unbelievable traffic in our neighborhood and with it pollution, gridlock and none of it related to Terra Linda. There will be a road that separates it from the Mall so it is not even part of the Mall! We've weathered many re-dos of this mall and this is the worst idea ever posed.

Housing is needed: This location is easily walkable to the Civic Center Smart Train and with the completion of the spur to the Larkspur Ferry, this is a perfect place for a mixed use development similar to Downtown San Rafael (where they put this in years ago on the Macy's site on 4th Street, or the more recent Mill Center in Novato where housing and office is located with a Whole Foods. This would also be a great place to incorporate more Senior Housing close to other senior housing.

No need for additional gas stations: We have FIVE gas stations already within less than a mile of the huge gas station proposed.

Walkable Community: Nothing about this project will help Terra Linda create a more walkable and bike-friendly community. This is going completely the wrong direction for us.

Destroys our Historic Eichler Community: Nothing about this project supports the one story character of the historic Eichler and other mid-century modern communities surrounding the site. We have a one story overlay on our Eichler community granted by the City some years ago. Why would you go against this with a 60' tall monstrosity?

Guide Dogs For the Blind: Please do not imperil the blind folks just learning to work with their new dogs by introducing multitudes of cars from outside the neighborhood with little knowledge or understanding of the Guide Dogs teams that work daily in our neighborhood. Many of these wonderful teams take their first solo walks over to the Mall and back. Monthly graduations park the surrounding streets full of cars with families attending and no sidewalks. Just imagine this adjacency if Guide Dogs were at Vintage Oaks with out of town cars speeding by.

Please, please, please reconsider your position on this project. Do not destroy our collective vision with one wrong step. Stop looking at dollar signs and help us enrich San Rafael with a lovely village center in Terra Linda and continue to work with us to create a walkable and friendly neighborhood.

Respectfully,

Claire Halenbeck

Claire Halenbeck, IIDA, CID
principal



October 7, 2019

Mr. Raffi Boloyan
San Rafael Community Development Department
1400 Firth Ave.
San Rafael, CA 94901

Mr. Boloyan,

I request you include the letter below in the packet for October 15 Planning Commission. I have serious concerns regarding Costco's proposal for Northgate Mall and I oppose the project.

Regards,
Scott Frerich

[REDACTED]
San Rafael, CA 94903
[REDACTED]

Dear San Rafael Planning Commission,

My family of 4 have been residents of the Terra Linda community for 15 years and Marin for nearly 20 years. My children attend nearby schools and we are active in the community. I, like many of my neighbors, oppose the proposal before you to bring a Costco warehouse to Northgate Mall. There are many issues that this project raises but here are my top issues that the Planning Commission needs to be aware of:

- 1) General Plan – This proposal is against the General Plan 2020 set forth by the City of San Rafael. This proposal does not fit the community-developed vision of a town-center where as to invite the community to gather at retail or restaurants. Costco is a WAREHOUSE and needs to be located in an industrial location due to building size and traffic. Costco clientele generally arrive, purchase and leave because of perishable goods and tend to have a 'get in get out' mentality. This behavior does not lend itself to the before mentioned town-center vision.

Northgate Mall resides in a residential community where residents value quality of life. This proposal would negatively change the characteristics of our neighborhood.

- 2) Infrastructure – All traffic routes are single lane and currently at maximum traffic capacity. The increased traffic will only bring our vibrant community to a standstill. Motorists will alter their driving patterns to side streets to avoid gridlocks around the mall. This will be further impacted by accidents or traffic on highway 101. This impact is not limited to the main freeway exit Manuel T. Freitas Parkway. Residents in Marinwood, Lucas Valley, Mount Marin, Los Ranchitos, and Santa Venetia would be impacted as well because all neighboring exits and surface roads are single lanes.
- 3) Size – The proposed footprint is over 3 times larger than the current Sears structure and extends the warehouse structure towards and up to Northgate Drive. The current Sears automotive and catalog annex buildings are single level and set back from the adjacent Northgate Drive. The proposed structure is 58 feet tall which equates to over a 5 story building. The size is not proportional or complementary to

the surrounding residential area and would significantly impact the characteristics of this vibrant neighborhood.

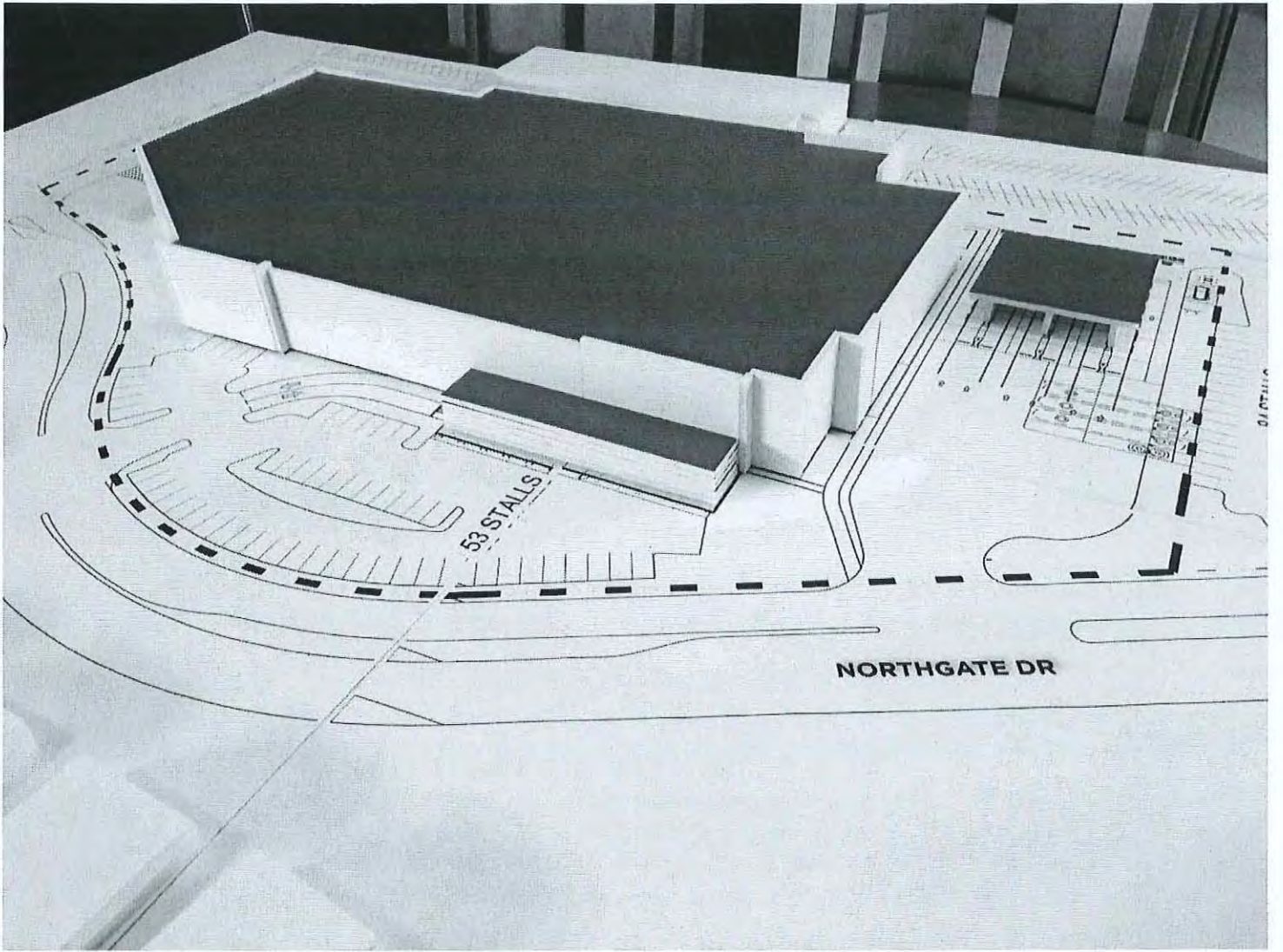
- 4) Sound – Noise levels produced from a warehouse facility would only negatively impact the community. Delivery trucks arriving as early as 2am would produce noise in our residential neighborhood which includes several retirement facility. The proposed site has natural hills on two sides of Northgate Mall. Operational sound (including tire center impact wrenches) will reverberate significantly throughout the entire Terra Linda valley. Constructing a large concrete warehouse would intensify operational noise at all hours of the day. I demand a study to be done on noise levels as it relates to 1) natural landscape (hills), 2) increased hardscape of a 5 story cement building and 3) impact of increasing the footprint as to extend the facility to Northgate drive.
- 5) Environmental – We live in Marin because residents are cognizant of their surroundings and impact on the environment. Terra Linda does not need increased car exhaust and vapor fumes from gas stations. This neighborhood currently supports 5 gas stations. There is no need for a mammoth 30-pump station that can anticipate 2-3 tanker deliveries daily! The proposed parking structure would concentrate emission pollution from idling or slow moving cars as customer maneuver their way through the structure.

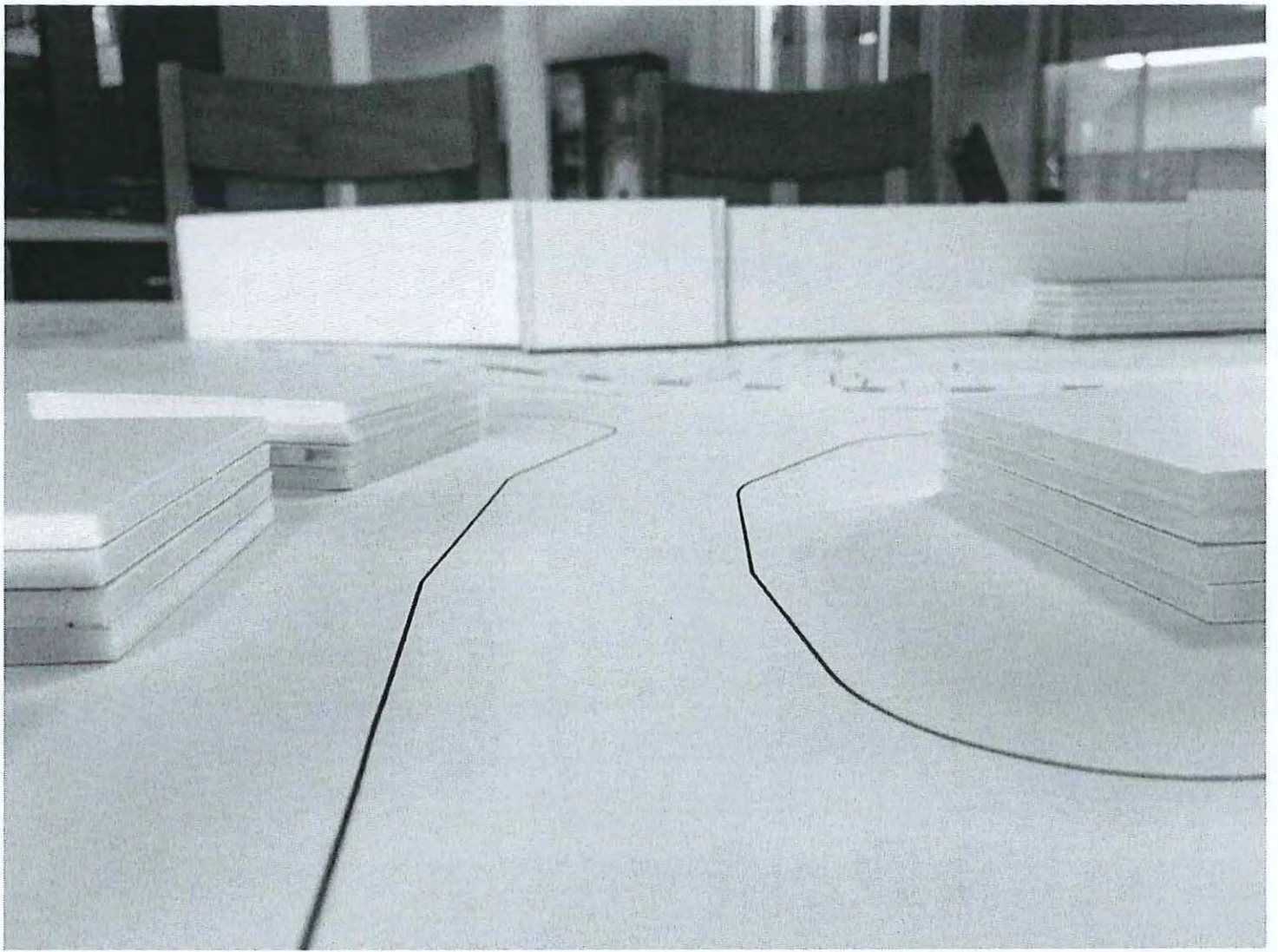
I hope every commission member remembers the City of San Rafael's sustainability goals, the commitments vision outlined in the general plan 2020/40. Moving forward with the proposed WAREHOUSE plan is not good for the community or the City of San Rafael.

For the record, I would support a residential/commercial mixed-use project at Northgate Mall because residents contribute to the vibrancy and characteristics of a community.

Sincerely,
Scott Frerich

[REDACTED]
San Rafael, CA 94903
[REDACTED]







October 15, 2019

RECEIVED

OCT 14 2019

PLANNING

To: Members of the San Rafael Planning Commission

Re: Housing at Northgate is a Priority

The Marin County League of Women Voters is a firm supporter of building affordable housing at Northgate. This location is ideal for the type of housing San Rafael needs to build to accommodate the variety of tenants who clearly need such housing.

That need continues to grow. The site's proximity to transit (the freeway and SMART), employment and shopping choices for new tenants is clearly appropriate.

We need a plan for Northgate that focuses on affordable, workforce and senior housing in keeping with the Northgate Vision Plan.

The League strongly urges the Planning Commission to focus on helping to solve Marin's biggest problem: its housing crisis. 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

ID: SR-0086108
Title: Costco Letter
Tags: Coscto
Description: Contact Community Development form submission
Form Submission:
Subject Oppose Costco plans
Message My home sits directly across from the proposed tire center. It would destroy the value of my home and my neighbors' and unfairly expose all of us in the neighborhood, including the elderly across the street and dogs, puppies and employees of guide dogs for the blind to toxic fumes, air and potential groundwater pollutants. This not a reasonable project across from a residential neighborhood. My home and those of the neighbors on my side of Sao Augustine would become unlivable.
Location [REDACTED]
San Rafael , CA 94903
Attachment [EF93BDC0-65F1-4267-AB1A-60517A8C5455.jpeg](#)
[AFDB6453-3E63-4E7E-BB71-33A448C00A76.jpeg](#)
[2459B929-3B4E-4B19-BB9C-DCD63AF25968.png](#)
Current Status: Request Received
Followers: Anne Derrick, Raffi Boloyan
Created At: October 14th, 2019 at 9:06 AM
Last Updated: October 14th, 2019 at 9:06 AM



Comments (1):

Subject: Oppose Costco plans\nMessage: My home sits directly across from the proposed tire center. It would destroy the value of my home and my neighbors' and unfairly expose all of us in the neighborhood, including the elderly across the street and dogs, puppies and employees of guide dogs for the blind to toxic fumes, air and potential groundwater pollutants. This not a reasonable project across from a residential neighborhood. My home and those of the neighbors on my side of Sao Augustine would become unlivable. \nLocation: {"zipcode"=>"94903", "city_name"=>"San Rafael", "delivery_line_1"=>"9 Sao Augustine Way", "delivery_line_2"=>"", "state_abbreviation"=>"CA"}\nAttachment: [# , #]
by Michele Presley on October 14th, 2019 at 9:06 AM

Planning Commission Meeting, Oct 15, 2019

ANDRE BOGARD [REDACTED]

Sun 10/13/2019 3:42 PM

To: Raffi Boloyan <Raffi.Boloyan@cityofsanrafael.org>

OPPOSITION TO COSTCO AT NORTH GATE MALL IN TERRA LINDA.

Please include my email in the packet of Oct.15, 2019 Planning Commission meeting

To: Raffi Boloyan

Planning manager

City of San Rafael, CA

Dear Mr. Boloyan,

At a recent meeting with Costco and Mall representatives, the Costco representative explained the reason why Costco want to build a large warehouse in Terra Linda. He said, Costco want to provide closer access to members who live in Southern Marin and also anticipate members from San Francisco to come to this location.

We all know that Terra Linda is not located in Southern Marin. It takes me seven minutes to arrive at the Novato Costco from Terra Linda. Costco members from Southern Marin and San Francisco would be better served if Costco would select a location closer to Southern Marin.

In addition to the Novato store, Costco Warehouses are located in Rohnert Park, Santa Rosa, Vellejo, Fairfield and Richmond, in our vicinity. All these Costco stores, including Novato, have multiple lane roads to access and exit these store locations.

If the City, after the review of the environmental impact report, including the traffic study, will approve this project and grant construction permit without requiring to upgrade the existing infrastructure around the Mall, including the Freeway Exits and Entries and the Merrydale Overpass from one lane to two lanes in each direction, this decision would immediately trigger a legal challenge in the court.

Assembly Bill 1515 will go into effect in July 2020, requiring a review of this proposed project under the California Environmental Quality Act. This review will include, among others, the efforts to improve air quality, reduce climate pollution, and reduce vehicle miles traveled. I believe that the existing infrastructure without the upgrades will not meet the requirements of (SB) 1515.

I also believe, that Costco would be able to obtain approvals and permits easier and faster to build this project in a commercial/industrial area in the Southern part of San Rafael.

Andre Bogard
Resident of Quail Hill Townhouses, Inc.
Terra Linda

Costco in Terra Linda

Basia Leaffer [REDACTED]

Sun 10/13/2019 9:52 PM

To: Raffi Boloyan <Raffi.Boloyan@cityofsanrafael.org>

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a resident and a voter of Terra Linda since 1985. The purpose of this email is to advise you that I am opposed to Costco Wholesale's proposal for Northgate Mall. I have several concerns of which I will mention just a few, most relevant ones:

1. Terra Linda is a village, it needs to revitalize its existing shopping center, bring in cafes and gardens to make it more beautiful and attractive to its residents. It doesn't need a warehouse style store to further spoil its ambiance.
2. Costco is a wonderful store and it brings enormous amount of traffic and with it a lot of noise. There is no space for such automobile traffic in Terra Linda. The noise and the traffic jams will unalterably change the character of our community. We are happy to travel to Vintage Oaks, an enormous and well planned shopping center, to shop in Costco.
3. Bringing in Costco will NOT help revitalize the existing stores in the Mall, on the contrary, low price competition will contribute to destruction of smaller businesses in the mall and will discourage bringing in more classy and more appealing stores. We deserve better and more attractive and healthier rather than more ugly discount stores dotting every corner of American landscape.

I urge you to scrap the thoughtless project.

Thank you,

Basia Leaffer

[REDACTED]
San Rafael, CA 94903

October 12, 2019

Re: COSTCO

To: Planning Commissioner

In 1997 I was co-chair of the North San Rafael Vision committee. We were charged with engaging the community to provide input on their dreams for the future of our beloved City. In a series of community meetings and using other methods of public input, we heard about the hopes and dreams of people from various neighborhoods in North San Rafael. This effort resulted in the document, Vision, North San Rafael in the year 2010. There were several recurring themes that emerged from this community engagement process. Some of the major themes were:

- A sense of community and a hometown feel where people know their neighbors
- Preservation of the natural beauty of our open spaces
- Creating inviting gathering places
- Ease of transportation, promote walking, biking

Specifically, with regard to business development we recommended:

- Encourage live/work and home businesses
- Encourage incubator business
- Preserve small tenant spaces
- Ensure that environmental, traffic, design, parking and access concerns are met in all new business development or when renovation or remodeling occurs.

The Vision, North San Rafael 2010 was supposed to inform planning and development decisions by the City of San Rafael. In many respects, the vision developed so many years ago, became a reality. The City has developed a network of bike paths. For example, bike paths were installed along Las Gallinas Avenue between Freitas Parkway through Lucas Valley Road extending north to Marinwood. This achieved both traffic calming in a residential area where speeding was a problem and provided safety in biking. Walking and biking paths have been elsewhere installed. Family restaurants and community promoting spaces such as the area of Northgate Mall where concerts Under the Oak take place were implemented. I attended the recent concert where Caravanserai – The Santana Tribute played to an enthusiastic local audience where neighbors joyfully greeted each other and danced. I tried to imagine that same scene with COSTCO looming around the corner.

We wanted to preserve the aspects that make our City such a special place to live. We wanted appropriate development. We specifically stated that big box retailers such as COSTCO was not appropriate for North San Rafael. If big box retailers were to be approved, it would be where Home Depot and Target now exist east of 101 in an industrial area of San Rafael. At the time, there was some talk of putting a COSTCO on east side of Redwood Highway at 4300 Redwood Highway which had some vacant warehouse space. Even for that area of North San Rafael with little residential areas, we explicitly stated "Prohibit big box retail". (pg 28 of the document entitled, Vision, North San Rafael

2010. Imagine my surprise when I learned that there was a proposal to put COSTCO at Northgate Mall! There are so many other options for the space vacated by Sears. We have a severe housing shortage. The Vision 2010 talks about homes for a variety of people and mixed use development.

We already have a COSTCO at Vintage Oaks just a few freeway exits North. I also have to think that clothing retailers at Northgate Mall would not welcome the rock bottom prices that they would have to compete with were COSTCO to be located in the Mall. In addition, that area of Northgate Mall is directly adjacent to residential neighborhoods in Terra Linda. The additional traffic congestion COSTCO would generate would be problematic.

How is approving COSTCO consistent with the Vision established to guide planning and development in our beautiful City? Where is the evidence that the community supports this? How is it that there has not been a more concerted effort to involve the input of the citizens of North San Rafael? This is a big decision and will impact the character of our community for years to come.

Annie Song-Hill
Former Co-Chair
North San Rafael Vision

Cc Raffi Boloyan, Planning Manager

October 8, 2019

Fr Eric Caindec, Terra Linda Homeowner
Dt October 8, 2019
Re Proposed Costco at Northgate Mall

Dear San Rafael Design Review Board

I am writing to register my opposition to the proposed Costco store at Northgate Mall. I have more questions than answers at this time, which I assume will be investigated, studied and results presented before anything resembling a final decision is made.

My question include:

- What kind of traffic related study will be conducted, including slower in and out traffic flow based on the roof top garage parking proposal
- How will my nearby neighborhood streets be impacted by drivers seeking alternative routes to avoid anticipated Costco traffic?
- What kind of air quality issues accompany a Costco gas station?
- What economic impact is anticipated to the existing 4 gas stations already in the vicinity? What is the basis for this prediction?
- What economic impact is anticipated to the existing restaurants and other retail stores already in the vicinity? What is the basis for this prediction?
- What kind of modifications to existing street design will be a part of this project?

Above are some of my concerns. I also just don't like the aesthetic impact to a peaceful and harmonious residential community when a big box store like Costco will be pushing the borders of the mall parking lot, and be right across the street from residential historical Eichler homes.

Why does San Rafael need a Costco when we have one already about 7 miles away in Novato?

Thank you for accepting my letter, and please include this in the material packet for the October 15 Design Review Meeting.

Eric Caindec

From: Keith Granger, Northgate Area Resident, 25 years
[REDACTED], San Rafael, CA

To: San Rafael Planning Commission, San Rafael, CA

RE: Costco's Plans for Northgate

Dear Planning Commission,

I wish to EXPRESS MY OPPOSITION to Costco's current plan for Northgate Mall. Its massive size, gas station, and tire center would greatly impact traffic and the environmental quality in nearby residential areas such as ours along Golden Hinde Blvd. and Nova Albion. We already struggle with commute traffic and Kaiser Hospital and Terra Linda High traffic. This plan is not within the current community planning or vision 20/20 guidelines as I understand them.

SPECIFICS AND SUGGESTED IMPROVEMENTS:

I do however SUPPORT A SMALLER COSTCO plan if it could be developed within the footprint and operating scale of the current Sears building and maybe extend in to the former garden center area, but NO GAS STATION. That would be within the current zoning and usage permissions and harder for residents to oppose. I favor a small Costco to high density housing. Costco is way overestimating the market in this location, and I do not want the City Rafael to invest in infrastructure projects relating to this project or give tax breaks of any kind to Costco.

I understand the tire center is zoned for such, and arguably offsets the loss of Toscalito Tire. However it might be more palatable and garner support if it were also a massive ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING COMPLEX with a great number of charging lots around all sides of the building's walls, and tire service inside. That would free up space for needed parking. Tesla owners could stock up on 90 point wines and cheese while their vehicles charge!

Perhaps the biggest issue for I and my neighbors, is that their ingress/egress ramp pours customers right on to NOVA ALBION BLVD AT NORTHGATE DRIVE, and encourages our residential neighborhood to be used as a shortcut to get to Costco. Many if not the majority of customers from southern Marin they are targeting will avoid northbound traffic on 101 and the chaos of the Freitas Parkway exit, and instead take N. San Pedro and Los Ranchitos as locals know to do, and glide through residential stop signs to avoid traffic lights. There ramps need to be moved and ingress/egress plane to KEEP MALL TRAFFIC ON NORTHGATE DRIVE.

One drastic measure my neighbors propose to fix everything (thinking outside the box!) is to make Nova Albion dead end on to Northgate drive. I would be happy for starters with a TRAFFIC LIGHT AND TURN LANE ON NORTHBOUND LOS RANCHITO AT GOLDEN HINDE, allowing two greens forward for every one left turn on to Golden Hinde. I would also like to see no right hand turn from Northgate Drive on to Nova Albion, and as stated above forcing ramp to Costco's roof parking to be located further down Northgate or on Las Gallinas.

Keith Granger





October 10, 2019

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

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Re: Proposed Costco at Northgate Center

Dear Planning Commissioners,

Sustainable San Rafael has looked at the early conceptual plans for Costco at the Northgate Mall. Clearly, the idea of having a Costco in Terra Linda has major implications for both the immediate area and the entire city. The new store is a major effort to revive a declining commercial area and improve the City's tax base. Given the significant impacts of the proposed project, taking the time and effort to study a range of intended and unintended aspects is crucial.

Northgate, in its present layout, does not accommodate the planned Costco in accordance with our General Plan. The Plan calls for a community based development with up to 200 housing units in a multimodal transit oriented design. Costco would rely heavily upon auto use. Few Costco shoppers would walk, ride bikes or take the train. It is also unclear if Costco shoppers would patronize other stores at the mall after shopping for large, bulky items. The proposed design separates Costco from the rest of the mall by an internal road. Its placement occupies what could be a prime housing site. Many of these shortcomings stem from the lack of an overall plan for the center.

The inclusion of a 30-pump gas station makes the situation far worse, forsaking the creation of an attractive pedestrian environment and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions called for by the General Plan and the Climate Change Action Plan. It makes no sense to be building major new gasoline infrastructure at a time when the City has committed to the goal of transitioning away from fossil fuels—and at a place already served by multiple gas stations much closer to the freeway. Residents quite rightly worry about long lines of idling cars, and traffic congestion needlessly attracted to their neighborhoods.

Our General Plan calls for developments of this size to be part of a Planned Development zone. There is none for Northgate. If a comprehensive plan were to be developed, it might show that a Costco and housing could coexist. The current piecemeal development process denies the neighborhood, and the City, the chance to create a coherent and thriving retail, housing and community center.

Before the City allowed the Target project to proceed, it required the developer to produce a Community Impact report. The Costco project may have even more serious impacts, particularly concerning neighborhood traffic, and deserves no less. Costco has plans to hire locally, as did Target. It would be interesting to see if Target, as a model for Costco, still maintains a local hiring practice. In this case, Costco has a stellar opportunity to provide affordable housing for its employees in fulfillment of the mixed-use vision for Northgate Center.

San Rafael, CA 94901

Many of the problem issues Costco presents could be addressed, and perhaps solved, if the City followed its General Plan and required a Planned Development process. At least the mall ownership, in conjunction with Costco, needs to develop an overall master plan for the mall properties, showing how the new store might fit into the kind of 'town center' vision that both the owner and the City have previously proposed. Such a master plan should include several alternatives, given the uncertainty of the retail sector and the long time frames involved.

The challenge is how to translate the proposed big box store into a project compatible with existing and future residential development, as well as the economic vitality of surrounding businesses. One possibility would be significant residential development along Northgate Drive, serving as a neighborhood buffer while helping the mall to thrive.

Rotating the proposed Costco by 90 degrees (counterclockwise) and shifting the building east towards Las Gallinas Avenue and north along the east wall of the theaters could open up this residential possibility. Such a reorientation would also place the main Costco entry adjacent to the current food court mall entry, restoring retail synergy with mall retailers while retaining a strong visual identity for Costco.

By moving the mass of the Costco anchor somewhat closer to the Macy's anchor in this manner, the overall visual sense of the mall would be strengthened and its 'center of gravity' shifted towards Las Gallinas. Importantly, Costco traffic would also shift towards Las Gallinas and closer to the freeway, allowing a more residential character along Northgate Drive. The south mall entry could also be reopened, for easy pedestrian flow between the new residential parcel and the mall.

We believe that a master planning process is needed to explore such ways in which a store of the size and nature proposed might best contribute to the mixed-use development of Northgate Center and the long-range vitality of San Rafael's economy. Corporate vision often favors short-term gains. Community vision needs to be long-term.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

Jerry Belletto
SSR Land Use Task Force

Costco

Britton Parawell [REDACTED]

Thu 10/10/2019 10:20 AM

To: Raffi Boloyan <Raffi.Boloyan@cityofsanrafael.org>

Hello - as a lifetime marine resident, and homeowner of the los Ranchitos community, I strongly oppose Costco going into the Northgate site. I do not believe it is harmonious with our neighborhood. I believe it unsightly and excessively large. Warehouse stores should not be allowed in such a intimate community. We already have two grocery stores banks and gas stations. I do not welcome extra traffic into our community, as well as the breakdown of our small shops nearby. I am sure it all affect traffic as well- though a concern it is not my main concern. I strongly believe that it is not a right fit for the community- and excessively large.

Sincerely,

Vivicka Parawell

[REDACTED]

-Homeowner

-Lifetime marin resident.

Sent from my iPhone

Raffi Boloyan
City of San Rafael
Planning Manager
1400 5th Avenue
San Rafael, CA 94901
Raffi.boloyan@cityofsanrafael.or

Dear Planning Commission:

For all lovers of the Planet, we have a beautiful San Rafael Climate Change Action Plan 2030, which was approved by the City Council May 6, 2019. The plan called for reducing the City's CO2 footprint by promoting the use of Electric Cars to 25% of all passenger trips by 2030.

COSTCO's plan to install a 30 pump mega gas station along with their warehouse at Northgate Mall goes completely against the Climate Change Action Plan? The gas station is estimated to sell 18 million gallons of gasoline a year. Two 80 foot gasoline trucks will arrive each day to fill up the five massive underground storage tanks serving the 30 pumps. 18 million gallons of fuel will put close to 134,000 metric tons of CO2 into the atmosphere right out of Terra Linda. None of this makes sense in an era of global warming with 4 of the hottest summers on record in the last 4 years and goes completely against the Vision for North San Rafael which was developed in 2010.

This is a very bad idea for San Rafael, for our community and for the planet. Please oppose this project.

Thank You for Your Attention

Ligia Atkinson



DR. San Rafael

CA, 94903

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OCT 16 2019
PLANNING

Raffi Boloyan
City of San Rafael
Planning Manager
1400 5th Avenue
San Rafael, CA 94901
Raffi.boloyan@cityofsanrafael.or

Dear Planning Commission:

I want to record my opposition to the proposal to put a COSTCO warehouse and 30 pump gas station at Northgate Mall in place of the old Sears Building.

This proposal goes against the Vision North San Rafael 2010 document that so many of us who live in Terra Linda worked on. Page 28 of the document calls for the prohibition of big box stores in North San Rafael, and should be located in East San Rafael where Home Depot and Target are already located. A perfect place for COSTCO.

Approving COSTCO is completely inconsistent with the vision created to guide planning and development for North San Rafael, where is the community input to support this project? Traffic could be a nightmare, and this is a huge decision that could affect our neighborhood for years to come.

Lets have a more sensible set of options for Northgate mall that fits the Vision we all worked for.

Sincerely:

Jan Colton
[Redacted]
San Rafael, CA

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OCT 16 2019
PLANNING

Raffi Boloyan
City of San Rafael
Planning Manager
1400 5th Avenue
San Rafael, CA 94901
Raffi.boloyan@cityofsanrafael.or

Dear Planning Commission:

Merlone Geir Partners purchased Northgate Mall in 2017. Since that time, they have been exploring various ways to revive this important community destination. They claim to have received a lot of community input that has helped them to guide their long-term vision for Northgate Mall.

Merlone Geir believes that the old fashioned mall that Northgate is, needs to transform into a vibrant Town Center, with diverse retail centers and entertainment, where there is something for everyone. Their online poll lists such things as casual eating establishments, gym, fitness chain and other health-oriented business, specialty retailers and entertainment focused businesses. This implies a pedestrian, bicycle transit-oriented neighborhood with work force housing that is consistent with the North San Rafael Vision of 2010. We'll walk or bike from home to our Town Center for a great night out. Perhaps take in a movie, dine at a restaurant, have a coffee after the show with friends and neighbors.

In a muddled and puzzling announcement, Merlone Geir has announced that they wish to bring a desired retailer, Costco Wholesale to Northgate. This is an oxymoron to begin with. Costco is a membership only wholesale business. At a minimum cost of \$60 per year membership will limit access to members only and does not in any way meet the needs of a vibrant town center open to everyone.

Merlone Geir claims that of everyone they have talked to COSTCO is an ideal fit for. But who else have they talked to? Isn't it time that Merlone Geir shared with the the community who else they have spoken to about this important destination?

Not in one's wildest imagination could you imagine COSTCO being a vital step in turning Northgate into a vibrant Town Center.

Please oppose this project

Richard ATKINSON

San Rafael, CA 94903



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OCT 16 2019
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Raffi Boloyan
City of San Rafael
Planning Manager
1400 5th Avenue
San Rafael, CA 94901
Raffi.boloyan@cityofsanrafael.or

Dear Planning Commission:

I want to record my opposition to the proposal to put a COSTCO warehouse and 30 pump gas station at Northgate Mall in place of the old Sears Building.

This proposal goes against the Vision North San Rafael 2010 document that so many of us who live in Terra Linda worked on. Page 28 of the document calls for the prohibition of big box stores in North San Rafael, and should be located in East San Rafael where Home Depot and Target are already located. A perfect place for COSTCO.

Approving COSTCO is completely inconsistent with the vision created to guide planning and development for North San Rafael, where is the community input to support this project? Traffic could be a nightmare, and this is a huge decision that could affect our neighborhood for years to come.

Lets have a more sensible set of options for Northgate mall that fits the Vision we all worked for.

Sincerely:

Raffi Boloyan

[Redacted Signature]

SR 94901

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OCT 10 2019

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Raffi Boloyan
City of San Rafael
Planning Manager
1400 5th Avenue
San Rafael, CA 94901
Raffi.boloyan@cityofsanrafael.or

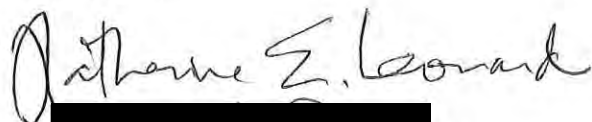
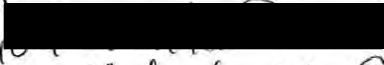
I am 100 % opposed to the proposal to put a COSTCO warehouse and 30 pump MEGA gas station at Northgate Mall in place of the old Sears Building.

This proposal goes completely against the Vision North San Rafael. Page 28 of the document calls for the prohibition of big box stores in North San Rafael. All big box stores should be located in East San Rafael where Home Depot and Target are already located. This is a perfect place for COSTCO. And with an existing COSTCO just 7 miles up the road it doesn't make sense to have another one so close.

Approving COSTCO would be completely inconsistent with the vision created to guide planning and development for North San Rafael, where is the community input to support this project? Traffic could be a nightmare, and this is a huge decision that could affect our neighborhood for years to come.

Lets have a more sensible set of options for Northgate mall that fits the Vision we all worked for.

Sincerely:



San Rafael, CA 94903

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4

October 6, 2019

Raff Boloyan
Project planner
City of San Rafael


I am a resident of San Rafael, close to the projected Costco Warehouse project. I have seen the site plans. I strongly oppose this project for the following reasons:

- 1) The traffic problems seem to be unresolvable. The exits from the freeway are awkward and subject to congestion, and the neighboring streets are not wide enough to accommodate the projected traffic.
- 2) The six-lane gas station is a joke (though not a funny one), coming within half a mile of four existing gas stations.
- 3) Have the planning commissioners considered the effect of the large delivery trucks necessary to stock such an immense warehouse? Has the developer presented an estimate of the number of cars expected on any given day?

Thank you for considering my objections to this project. I am not alone in these concerns.

Sincerely,


Lucile Griffiths


San Rafael

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OCT 10 2019
PLANNING

Costco project

Paula Doubleday <[REDACTED]>

Thu 10/10/2019 1:04 PM

To: Raffi Boloyan <Raffi.Boloyan@cityofsanrafael.org>

Hello Raffi. I've read through the Costco proposal document and would like to register my opposition to this Northgate project.

I already find traffic on Freitas Parkway to get backed up in the middle of the day. The entrances to the mall are currently a series of small stubs, with room for only a few cars at red lights. If there is a Costco, these interchanges cannot support the traffic that will cause. It will be gridlock with traffic backing up into the residential neighborhood.

But the Costco 30-pump mega-gas station is the worst part of it. There are currently four gas stations at the mall entrance. 30 pumps with room for 42 cars to IDLE while they wait to save ten cents per gallon, spewing pollution into the air starting at 5am daily. What about San Rafael's desire to be green, with a low carbon footprint? This runs completely contrary to that plan. Why is this not 30 EV stations? San Rafael needs to walk the talk on this one.

Finally, how will an ambulance get to Kaiser when the freeway is clogged at the exit ramps, side streets backed up because locals know better than to get near that mall? Costco is 5 min away in Novato and we don't need this here. They have lots of high-priced press people and smooth-talking planners but we are a City of neighborhoods who don't sell out for a few sales tax dollars. Do we?

Paula Doubleday
Dominican neighborhood
San Rafael

Support for Northgate Costco

Sat 10/5/2019 12:46 PM

To: Raffi Boloyan <Raffi.Boloyan@cityofsanrafael.org>

Mr. Boyolan:

My family and I own a home in Quail Hills Townhouses. We in fact are in the portion closest to Kohl's and the former Sears, and we see and hear that area much better than most of our neighbors.

Several Quail Hills residents have organized a campaign to write letters to you and to the Marin Independent Journal opposing the project for a Costco in Northgate. I did not join in that letter-writing campaign, because my family and I support the Costco project.

At present, we shop several times a month at the Costco in Novato. Coincidentally, my wife, son and I have spoken about how it would be nice if the Costco were across the street, where the Sears was, and now that looks like a possibility. It is an excellent chance to revitalize the Northgate Shopping Center, which was one of the attractions when we first bought our home nine years ago.

Over the years, we have seen the decline of the Northgate Shopping Center. First, there were fewer and fewer shoppers—we can tell because we have a birds-eye view of the parking lot. Then during the day school buses and other commercial vehicles began using the parking lot for their breaks, and during the night it is used by hot-rodders who disturb our evenings. These phenomena began as shopping declined, and besides being an eyesore and noise pollution, they obviously detract from our property values. Our neighbors selling their homes are getting good prices because of the shortage of housing on the Marin market, but their homes surely would sell for even more if Northgate hadn't become the blight it currently is. Regardless of whether our property values increase or remain the same, we would be happier to see Northgate return to the area full of happy shoppers that it was when we moved here.

I realize that with Amazon.com and other Internet shopping, the economy has changed and we will not have vibrant Sears or JC Penney stores anymore. They are being replaced by Walmarts and Targets. I for one would much prefer a clean and organized Costco than a disheveled and disorganized Target or Walmart across the street from my home.

Some people have said that people shopping at Costco would only go there and would not patronize the other shops. One has even said people's perishables would go bad in their trunks, deterring them from shopping elsewhere after going to Costco. Those are specious arguments. When we go to the Northgate Costco, we usually eat lunch at Sushiholic, Chevy's, or one of the other restaurants in the Vintage Oaks Shopping Center. We also combine the trip with shopping at other places in Vintage Oaks, like DSW and Target, before or after going to Costco. If we are going to buy perishables, we bring insulated bags for our groceries. So we are living proof that those arguments do not hold water.

In closing, we hope you realize that any new project will attract discontents and people with too much time on their hands. I posit that the letter-writing campaign is not representative of the community, and there are many more supporters of the Northgate Costco than are writing to you. I am writing to you only because I keep receiving e-mails from two of my neighbors telling us to write to you and to the MIJ, possibly writing under more than one alias themselves, and I am afraid you will be getting slanted views as a result.

I trust that you will keep this e-mail confidential, or if you need to use it, that you will sufficiently anonymize it so my family and I don't encounter retaliation from our more vocal neighbors.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
San Rafael, CA 94903