

## Fwd: Please do not make our downtown experience MORE difficult by closing the 3rd St. entrance to Walgreen's!

April Miller <April.Miller@cityofsanrafael.org>

Mon 11/2/2020 5:50 PM

To: Lindsay Lara <Lindsay.Lara@cityofsanrafael.org>

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**From:** lisa merigian <[REDACTED]>

**Sent:** Monday, November 2, 2020 5:49 PM

**To:** Maribeth Bushey; John Gamblin; Andrew McCullough; April Miller; Lauren Davini

**Subject:** Fw: Please do not make our downtown experience MORE difficult by closing the 3rd St. entrance to Walgreen's!

Hello, City Council Members!

I didn't realize I needed to send this to all of you for "official" consideration at tonight's meeting. It's too late for submission, and anyway, I should write a more professional letter if it's going to be included on the agenda. I'm new to participation in city council proceedings - just a citizen with some concerns, I don't represent anyone or any organization.

I'm forwarding this now in hopes only that at some point you will read it and consider the value of it's content. I will try to familiarize myself with the process and formally submit something for review before the next meeting.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Lisa Merigian  
[REDACTED]

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**From:** lisa merigian

**Sent:** Monday, November 2, 2020 1:54 PM

**To:** April.Miller@cityofsanrafael.org <April.Miller@cityofsanrafael.org>; bill.guerin@cityofsanrafael.org <bill.guerin@cityofsanrafael.org>; jim.schutz@cityofsanrafael.org <jim.schutz@cityofsanrafael.org>; kate.colin@cityofsanrafael.org <kate.colin@cityofsanrafael.org>; gary.phillips@cityofsanrafael.org <gary.phillips@cityofsanrafael.org>; frontdesk@srchamber.com <frontdesk@srchamber.com>

**Subject:** Please do not make our downtown experience MORE difficult by closing the 3rd St. entrance to Walgreen's!

Dear City of San Rafael,

I am a San Rafael resident since 1989. I am a graduate of Dominican University and I absolutely love living in San Rafael. I am a frequent flyer in the parking lot adjacent to Walgreens on 3rd St. As in, I am in that parking lot and in that area sometimes more than 4 or 5 times per week. My elderly mother requires medications and supplies from Walgreens; I shop for multiple pets at the Woodlands Pet Market across the street; my bank is Mechanics Bank on the corner of 4th St. and Lootens; I often eat at

Double Rainbow; I get my hair cut at Caterine Peter's or Sol Salon both near the corner of 4th St. & Lootens. I live back in the area near Davidson Middle School.

I am writing to implore you NOT to close the 3rd Street entrance into the Walgreen's parking lot.

I have read your proposal and looked at the drawings of what seems to be the current proposal, but I don't understand:

What problems are you hoping to solve? It says "safety", but your proposal to close the entrance to the Walgreen's lot from 3rd St. creates more safety issues for pedestrians and motorists than it solves.

1) Pedestrians walking west on 3rd street will still have to cross autos turning right, onto Lootens instead of into the parking lot, but now without the safety and aid of a stop-light. Pedestrians who turn right onto Lootens headed toward 4th Street will now have to cross the ONLY exit and without a stop light, therefore also crossing the path of ALL THE CARS attempting to exit the lot. This puts more pedestrians in front of cars, not fewer.

2) The ONLY egress, onto Lootens, will now require vehicles exiting the lot, trying to get back onto 3rd street, to zig zag, across on-coming traffic, or drive around in circles crossing paths with more pedestrians and clogging up the streets with more traffic.

Please consult a map. With the proposed single exit from the lot onto Lootens, cars exiting the lot trying to get back to 3rd street must either:

a) turn right on Lootens, right on either the alley or on 4th St, right on Cijos and THEN right on busy 3rd Street - all of which means more turns, avoiding more pedestrians, and most of those turns have no regulating stop lights. This, instead of exiting once from the lot onto 3rd St WITH the aid and safety of a stop-light.

Or,

b) autos will have to turn left out of the parking lot onto Lootens, across oncoming traffic, with no light at the entrance for pedestrians, and now with increased traffic of people trying to access the only entrance, onto a narrow street (Lootens) with two lanes of traffic AND parked cars, then right onto 3rd St. Instead of exiting once from the lot onto 3rd St. WITH the aid and safety of a stop-light).

All this equals more cars driving in circles, more traffic congestion in the area, more times an auto has to turn and avoid oncoming traffic and pedestrians with no help from street signals.

Honestly, I just don't understand how the city sees this as solving any safety issues. It makes it more dangerous for cars, pedestrians, and even bicycles.

2) Your proposed closure also makes the lot itself more dangerous for vehicles and pedestrians.

Closing that entrance will leave citizens of San Rafael with only ONE exit from the busy and congested parking lot; a lot which is already too small for the number of cars in it. Currently, with the existing two exits, it is still often impossible to maneuver from or into a parking space as cars block you in while they wait to exit from either or both of the exits. Forcing only one egress option will clog and congest the lot further.

It also looks like you are removing one parking spot to widen the Lootens entrance, but adding three others? Why do you think we need more parking spots in the already small, congested, and difficult lot? We don't. There is much needed on-street parking on Lootens AND a gigantic parking structure right there across the street. By adding additional spots you've increased the load on the lot, while at the same time the decreasing egress options by half. So you've increased how many cars are trying to park and maneuver, but you've reduced how many cars can exit at a time and increased wait time trying to leave the lot. This equals more congestion. More cars trying to avoid pedestrians walking across the lot. More cars waiting to get out of the lot, clogging up the egress. More cars trying to avoid pedestrians leaving the lot. How is this helpful?

3) The proposed closure makes getting to Davidson Middle School, the Bret Harte neighborhood, or the many businesses in West Francisco corridor even more difficult than it already is. It doesn't seem like anyone involved in this project lives in the Bret Harte area? Or has children who attend Davidson Middle School? Or Laurel Dell School? Or that any of you have ever tried to get from this area downtown (Walgreens) to the West Francisco corridor, Best Buy/Staples/Spouts complex, or Bret Harte businesses? It certainly doesn't seem like it. Because if you did, it seems like you would understand the value and importance of that exit out of the lot straight onto Lindaro.

Lindaro is the ONLY straight-shot access or connecting street from downtown to the Woodland Ave. corridor, Davidson Middle School, Bret Harte neighborhood, and it takes you to Anderson Dr. which is the main thoroughfare for accessing the MANY businesses in the area. How can it be helpful to make it difficult and force cars to drive in circles to get over there?

Eliminating the 3rd street egress from the Walgreen's parking lot straight onto Lindaro will eliminate that access and force motorists to travel in circles, adding traffic to streets they wouldn't need to be on if you kept the entrance open. With the new proposal, how would one get from the lot at Walgreen's to say, pick up their child at Davidson Middle School, or get home to Bret Harte? How would one get back onto Lindaro to head south towards Bret Harte, the schools, the West Francisco businesses, the Woodland Corridor? Let's look at it:

The proposed closure would send cars out the ONE exit on Lootens. To get back to Lindaro, they would have to either:

a) turn left across Lootens (into oncoming traffic, avoiding pedestrians, without a light), right onto 3rd Street (avoiding pedestrians at the corner without a stop-light), cutting quickly across three lanes of traffic to turn left onto the tiny street, Brooks, then left onto 2nd Street as the traffic comes rushing by (again with no traffic signal), then cut across 3 lanes quickly to get back to Lindaro and now turn right onto Lindaro. All of that, instead of exiting once out of the parking lot, across 3rd St., onto Lindaro, WITH the aid of a traffic light.

Or,

b) turn right out of the lot (avoiding pedestrians without a light), right onto either the alley way or onto 4th street, right again onto Cijos, right onto 3rd St. (avoiding pedestrians without the aid of a traffic signal), cut quickly quickly quickly across three lanes of 3rd St. traffic to turn left onto Lindaro. Again, all of that, instead of exiting once out of the parking lot, with the aid of a traffic signal, across 3rd St. onto Lindaro.

More traffic congestion, more zig-zagging, more trying to avoid pedestrians WITHOUT the aid of traffic lights = more dangerous, not less.

4) And finally, the million-dollar question: why does the city think motorists slowing to turn right onto Lootens, avoiding pedestrians without the aid of a traffic signal for safety, as opposed to slowing to turn directly into the parking lot, will significantly decrease traffic congestion along 3rd St.? It's basically the same right turn, just up about 30 feet. It makes no sense.

With the proposed closure of the 3rd St. Walgreen's entrance, instead of turning right into the parking lot where there is a light, cars will instead make the same right turn, 30ft or so up on the same stretch of 3rd St., onto Lootens, with NO LIGHT for pedestrian safety, and now onto a narrow street with two-way traffic and parked cars. Motorists will slow and pause and wait there at Lootens to turn right just as they would to get into the parking lot. But now bicycles and pedestrians will not be regulated by a streetlight. Which makes it more dangerous for them and more likely the car will sit there waiting to turn right onto Lootens. Cars will still have to slow to turn there just as they did to get into the parking lot, but without a stop light. So, it doesn't seem to do much to decrease traffic along 3rd St, and it makes it more dangerous for pedestrians.

I am sure someone has some thoughtful answers, and I look forward to hearing them, but at the moment, it remains unclear why the city thinks the closure would either increase safety for pedestrians or decrease traffic. It seems the proposed entrance closure would make the situation more, not less, dangerous for pedestrians and for bicycles; it would increase traffic congestion in an already difficult and crowded parking lot, along Lootens, and around 4th St; it would make it almost impossible for someone to get from that area back to Davidson Middle school area, Woodland Corridor, over by the Best Buy complex, or the Bretthart neighborhood without going significantly out of their way, zig-zagging around clogging up the streets and adding unnecessary traffic; and it does not seem in any way to aid in keeping traffic moving on 3rd Street as it still requires cars to slow to make a right turn (onto narrow Lootens instead of directly into the parking lot) and now WITHOUT a stop light there to help regulate pedestrian traffic.

How is making intersections less safe and driving more complex and convoluted helpful to San Rafael residents, pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers alike?

A simpler solution might be to remove the shrubs along 3rd street for greater pedestrian visibility, remove (flatten) the dip in the 3rd St. to make turning quicker, and widen the 3rd St. entrance to Walgreen's so cars could more quickly make the turn from 3rd st into the parking lot. Or something. But, please, closing that entrance entirely will make things worse and less safe. Please, let's find another solution. One that takes into account ALL the factors the city is trying to address while still keeping in mind the citizens of San Rafael who frequently access that area. Closing that entrance will truly make an already difficult situation so much worse and so much more dangerous for more San Rafael citizens.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Lisa Merigian  
