November 2, 2020

San Rafael City Council
14 Fifth Avenue
San Rafael, CA 94901

RE: Third Street Rehabilitation

Honorable Mayor and Council Members,

I am writing about the new multi-use path providing safe and pleasant passage for both pedestrians and cyclists.

In a city where tree canopy is vital, and helps to meet the City's Climate and Adaptation goals, the loss of three large median trees, one near G Street in order to accommodate the significantly wider "bicycle facility" and two more between East Street and West Street in order to salvage a mere five parking spaces impact those goals, and the quality of life that these tree supply to residents. These are London Plane and Ginkgo trees just reaching their prime after decades of growth, with perhaps another century of growth in front of them. Among the best Marin species for carbon capture, these three trees already sequester over a ton of greenhouse gas annually (about 5% of a typical household's emissions).

That's a total of over 40 tons captured by 2050, just by these three trees. And that's in addition to gracing the main western entry to San Rafael with luxuriant canopies rooted in an ample planting area, welcoming people to our beautiful "tree city."

It is our understanding that these mature trees can be saved simply by giving up five parking spaces between East Street and West Street, as previously proposed, and by returning to the original design of a multi-use pathway between Miramar and East Street (with no loss of the seven curbside parking in that block). These trees also protect pedestrians from passing cars. Additionally, other important co-benefits are rainfall interception, stormwater management, air quality management, property values, and public health, among others.

Please consider honoring the important icons of the community contribute to the overall well-being to the community, and the important work they will continue to do.

Thank you for your kind consideration.

Nancy Hughes

Executive Director
California Urban Forests Council