



November 2, 2020

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
William Carney, President
Bob Spofford, Vice President
Greg Brockbank
Jim Geraghty
Linda Jackson
Kay Karchevski
Kiki La Porta
Samantha Mericle
Sue Spofford
Stuart Siegel

415.457.7656

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

RE: Third Street Rehabilitation

Honorable Mayor and Council Members,
Since you last viewed this project a year ago, it has lost its most appealing element, the gracious widening of the south side sidewalk between Miramar Avenue and East Street into a multi-use path providing safe and pleasant passage for both pedestrians and cyclists.

The compromised single-mode scheme before you this evening sacrifices this inclusive Class I pathway for a two-way, bicycle-only Class IV lane, with little improvement for pedestrians over the existing conditions along this mean stretch of road.

The scheme also sacrifices 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. These are London Plane and native Big-leaf Maple trees just reaching their prime after decades of growth, with perhaps another century in front of them. Among the best Marin species for carbon capture, these three trees already sequester about a ton of greenhouse gas annually (about 5% of a typical household’s emissions).

That’s a total of over 40 tons of GHG 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.”

Again, the Plane trees can be saved simply by giving up five parking spaces between East Street and West Street, as previously proposed; the Maple can be saved by returning to the earlier design of a multi-use pathway between Miramar and East Street (with no loss of the seven curbside parking in that block).

This is a stretch of roadway where nature, in the form of our iconic hillsides, asserts herself into the lives of thousands of people daily; she should be recognized and celebrated with a different design approach for this block, that is, a pleasant path for both walkers and cyclists, and preservation of well-established trees.

Because of their carbon capture prowess, and size befitting a major boulevard, we also request that London Planes and ‘Armstrong’ Maples be added to the planting palette for the Third/Second corridor, where they are already featured along both existing and new BioMarin frontages.

Pedestrian safety at intersections is an important objective of the Third Street improvements, and we applaud the proposal for raised intersections at A, B, C,

and D Streets. We urge the same treatment at Lindaro, along with providing a safe crosswalk on the west side of that intersection. This is the northern end of a major and gracious pedestrian route proposed by BioMarin along the west side of Lindaro, linking the front door of its new facility south to the rest of its campus and north to Fourth Street. A crossing here is essential.

Thank you for your close consideration of these concerns.

Sincerely,

William Carney
Board President



2019 Design, Third Street between West Street and Miramar Ave, showing multi-use path east of East Street, which provides a pleasant experience for both cyclists and walkers and allows retention of 3 large existing median trees and 7 parking spaces.