



Responsible Growth in Marin

January 11, 2021

San Rafael Planning Commission
1400 Fifth Avenue, Room 203
San Rafael 94901

Re: Comment on Downtown Plan and Design Review

NOTE: PLEASE INCLUDE IN PUBLIC COMMENTS

Dear Planning Commissioners,

Responsible Growth in Marin appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on San Rafael's proposed Downtown Precise Plan. The Plan is a thorough and clearly written document which charts San Rafael's path forward in using the parameters of the new Form Based Code methodology to shape the future redevelopment of Downtown San Rafael. We are hopeful that when this methodology and zoning codes are implemented, they will successfully fulfill the goals articulated in the Downtown Plan.

We would like to express our questions and concerns regarding Section 9, 1.1.050 of the Downtown Precise Plan.

Table 1.1.050 Permit Requirements (pg. 240/pdf pg. 14) specifies two levels of Design Review for different projects, a structure for Design Review which is not currently part of City policy. This table contains a column for " Minor Environmental and Design Review Permit" and a column for " Major Environmental and Design Review Permit", with different projects requiring permits in one or the other of the categories.

A pdf search of the Downtown Precise Plan reveals that nowhere in the document are there definitions of what constitutes a " Minor Environmental and Design Review" and a " Major Environmental and Design Review".

We request clarification of the following issues:

- 1) What do these two categories mean? What is the difference between a "minor" and a "major" Design Review?
- 2) Who will be conducting the "minor" and "major" Design Reviews?
- 3) What will be the opportunity for public input into "minor" and "major" Design Reviews?
- 4) What is the difference between a "minor" and a "major" Environmental Review?
- 5) Who will be conducting the "minor" and "major" Environmental Reviews?

6) What will be the opportunity for public input into “minor” and “major” Environmental Reviews?

Since City staff have not yet submitted a revised proposal for a pilot project of a two-level Design Review Process to the current Design Review Board and to the City Council and since this proposed two-level Design Review Process has not been debated and approved by the City Council, this two-level review process delineated in the Downtown Precise Plan needs further explanation and may be pre-emptive and premature to be included in this Plan.

We look forward to discussion and clarification of this issue.

Respectfully,
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