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**Sent:** Tuesday, January 19, 2021 6:01:57 PM  
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**Subject:** Proposed 3rd and Lindaro Driveway Closure; 3rd Street Rehabilitation Project (not for public comment)

January 19, 2020

RE: Proposed 3rd and Lindaro Driveway Closure; 3rd Street Rehabilitation Project

Dear Madam Mayor and Esteemed Council Members,

I write to you today in my continued efforts to oppose the proposed closure of the 3rd & Lindaro driveway to the public parking lot adjacent to Walgreen's and to bring awareness to the issue.

As you are hopefully coming to understand, opposition to this closure is widespread in the community of your constituents. Please reference the numerous online opposition comments directed to the City Council via the "Contact" form; the letters of opposition and concern written directly to the Council; and petitions opposing the closure with 40+ signatures of local business owners, employees, residents of nearby adjacent neighborhoods, and other concerned citizens. You would have received the bulk of this correspondence in mid-to-late December 2020, although more is likely pouring in.

Your San Rafael community, like people everywhere, are drowning in debt, struggling to pay rent, feed our children, and keep our businesses afloat. We are hemorrhaging fear and uncertainty on just about every level and yet, facing all this, with the Holidays and a pandemic looming, and a country bursting at the seams with civil unrest, we still found this issue important enough to take action, speak out, and ask for your help. Are you listening? We are hopeful that you are.

Our willingness to take action should be a strong indication to you that, for us, this is no mere driveway. This issue is significant, deeply personal, important. Enough to unseat us from the pressures of our daily lives and call us to reach out to you. That is simply because for many of us, pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists alike, this parking lot is deeply woven into the fabric of our daily lives - it is quite literally the hub and epicenter of our shopping, banking, dining, salon-ing, errand-running downtown experience. We have safety concerns. We are not whining about matters of mere convenience, like many special interest stakeholder groups assert. We are intimately familiar with this area of San Rafael. We walk here. Bike here. Drive here. We own business here. We work here. We represent and offer a unique perspective that cannot be gleaned by even the most astute professionals. We offer valuable insight. And we were shut out of the process in favor of loud organized voices and powerful stakeholders. We would simply like our small but individual voices heard and our perspective acknowledged.

Your Department of Public Works staff seemed genuinely willing to listen to the community and weigh the merits of our safety concerns with their own and with the many factors and challenges involved in such a large and complex project. This is a familiar process for them! However, in an uncharacteristically abrupt manner, I was told by Staff back in November that they were being "directed to move forward with the project as directed by the City, including the proposed closure." I don't understand. If the experts themselves are willing to work with the community to hear, understand, and address our safety concerns and to integrate our feedback into their design plans, why would anyone on the Council or in the City deny that process? Is it just a matter of timing or mixed signals with the Holidays and the pandemic getting in the way? Or is it something else? Your expert Staff at the DPW have worked tirelessly it seems to foster and maintain a wonderful working relationship with the public. We may not always get what we want, but, in general, we do have the experience of being heard. So what's happening here?

We love our City for its community outreach and involvement with regards to public projects and we have come to trust and rely upon its transparency in such matters. So, it is shocking and confusing to be met with such resistance to our input and feedback on a project, the Third Street Rehabilitation Project, with such a long history of cooperation and community integration that spans over four years.

It is difficult to know or understand the inner workings of this process. I only know that we have been asking for better pedestrian and bicycle safety for over a decade at that location and we thought we had it in the form of actual safety measures and enhancements (bulb-out curbs, better/bigger traffic and pedestrian lights, pedestrian crossing stripes, augmented placement of shrubbery for enhanced visibility, etc), pictured on ALL publicly presented design plans before September 2020, not a closure foisted upon us at the last hour. A closure that many of us believe is bad for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists alike. And it certainly seems unlike the Council and the City of San Rafael to allow such a truncated process (September 23, 2020 when the proposed closure was disclosed to the public - November 2, 2020 when the recommendation was accepted by the City with no design review phase or community meeting between) to dictate the fate of this vital area of the City.

Please, revisit design plans for this this area with integrated community feedback and our safety in mind. We have many more aspects of the project still being discussed with your experts. Won't you please allow the public to continue a positive, dynamic, and mutually respectful relationship with your Staff? Such a relationship can only benefit more of San Rafael and Her citizens.

Respectfully,

Lisa Merigian  
