



Responsible Growth in Marin

February 12, 2021

San Rafael Design Review Board
1400 Fifth Avenue, Room 209
San Rafael 94901

Re: Comment on Design Review Advisory Committee Pilot Program

NOTE: PLEASE INCLUDE IN PUBLIC COMMENTS cc: Paul Jensen and Ali Guidice

Dear Design Review Board Members,

Responsible Growth in Marin (RGM) have been following the proposed changes to the Design Review Board and the proposal to pilot a Design Review Advisory Committee since last year. We provided comments for public record at the September 2020 City Council meetings and voiced our agreement with questions and points made in the October 6th letter submitted by the Terra Linda Homeowners' Association during the November 4th Design Review Board meeting. RGM submitted letters to the City on this topic on December 4, 2020 and January 11, 2021.

We sincerely appreciate your taking a few of our collective comments in updating the February 17th draft pilot program in the staff report (Exhibit 1). We have a few questions/comments based on Exhibit 1:

1) Section A: Authority-- The qualifications for projects that qualify for DRAC review are still not clearly defined.

a) It was clear from previous meetings that a project of 10 units or less could have small impacts in some areas and major impacts in other areas.

b) Help us understand the multifamily residence provision: " Additions to multifamily residential structures of between three (3) to ten (10) units, where the addition constitutes more than forty percent (40%) of the total square footage of the building but would not increase the unit count by more than 3 units." Shouldn't that be "less than forty percent (40%) of the total square footage"?

c) Section E states: "If at any time, it is determined that a project meeting the criteria in Section A above, would benefit from the full Design Review Board due to proposed design, size, or surroundings, the project may be referred to the full DRB." Who will decide if a project goes to the full DRB? The public is not notified about DRAC meetings nor about the project reviewed unless the project and the DRAC recommendations go to the Planning Commission for approval. So how will the public have an opportunity to say, "This project should get a full DRB review?"

2) Section B: membership--if the alternate is either an architect or a landscape architect, it is possible that at any particular meeting the DRAC could be two building architects or two landscape architects. Shouldn't there be two alternates? One in each category, so the alternate with the same qualifications can replace the DRAC member who is unable to attend? This could also provide continuity of transition if the program is continued for another year and the alternates become the full DRAC members.

We look forward to City Staff discussing and clarifying these points at the February 17th DRB meeting.

Respectfully,

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Responsible Growth Marin

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