



SAN RAFAEL CITY COUNCIL AGENDA REPORT

Department: City Clerk

Prepared by: Lindsay Lara, City Clerk

City Manager Approval: _____

TOPIC: CITIZEN OF THE YEAR 2021

SUBJECT: RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION TO RECIPIENT OF THE RICHARD P. O'BRIEN AND MARY FERRARIO O'BRIEN CITIZEN OF THE YEAR AWARD - 2021

RECOMMENDATION: Adopt the Resolution of Appreciation.

BACKGROUND: In March 2001, J. Michael Mahoney established an endowment in honor of former Planning Commissioner Richard O'Brien and his wife, Mary Ferrario O'Brien. The endowment funds an annual "Citizen of the Year" award. The purpose of this award is to recognize an individual in the San Rafael community who has made exceptional contributions to the City, making it a better place to live or work. In addition to public recognition, the endowment provides a cash award to the recipient.

In September 2001, the City Council adopted procedures for the "Citizen of the Year" award program and process. The procedures include the appointment of a Selection Committee to review nominations from the public and recommend an award recipient to the City Council. The Selection Committee includes two City Council members, two Planning Commissioners, a member of the O'Brien family, a representative from the San Rafael Chamber of Commerce, and neighborhood community representatives (e.g., Federation of San Rafael Neighborhoods).

The call for nominations was initiated in November 2020. Once the current year nominations have been submitted, they are reviewed along with the nominations submitted over the past three years (in this case 2018, 2019 and 2020). Last year's Citizen of the Year recipient (Dominican Sisters – 2020) was removed from the pool of eligible candidates.

This year, a total of 19 candidates were considered. Of this total, 10 nominations were submitted for 3 nominees this year and 16 were carried over from the past three years. On February 3, 2021, the Selection Committee met to review and consider the nominations. The Committee selected Shirley Fischer as the twenty-first recipient of the award.

FOR CITY CLERK ONLY

Council Meeting: _____

Disposition: _____

As summarized in the attached Resolution and nomination materials, Shirley Fischer was selected as Citizen of the Year due to her impact on the community in the areas of civic participation, community engagement and her volunteer work over several decades to participate in planning the future of San Rafael. Shirley has served on countless committees and organizations, such as the North San Rafael Coalition of Residents, General Plan 2000, 2020 and 2040, the North San Rafael Vision Committee, and the Vision in Action Committee, to name a few. Shirley doesn't just participate, she inspires other members of our community to be involved and have their voices heard as well.

Shirley Fischer's impact on our community has been foundational. She invigorates community engagement in constructive governance, and for many decades she has been a dedicated, organized, intelligent, and faithful community volunteer. Her ability to lead and contribute to complex processes has improved our community over her many years of service, and surely will continue to do so for many more years to come. Shirley's efforts and accomplishments have bettered our community in many ways and merit her designation as the City of San Rafael's Citizen of the Year for 2021.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH: The call for nominations for Citizen of the Year was advertised in Snapshot (the City Manager's e-newsletter), the City's website, NextDoor social media, and with neighborhood associations.

FISCAL IMPACT: As the Citizen of the Year Award program is privately funded, there is no financial impact to the City of San Rafael. However, the recipient of this award receives a check in the amount of \$2,500 from the Richard P. O'Brien and Mary Ferrario O'Brien Citizen of the Year Fund, which is administered by the Marin Community Foundation.

OPTIONS:

1. Adopt the Resolution of Appreciation conferring the 2021 Citizen of the Year Award on Shirley Fischer.
2. Return the recommendation to the Selection Committee for reconsideration.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Adopt the Resolution of Appreciation.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Resolution of Appreciation
2. Nomination materials and letters of support for Shirley Fischer



City of San Rafael
Richard P. O'Brien and Mary Ferrario O'Brien
Citizen of the Year Award for 2021
Presented to
Shirley Fischer

WHEREAS, Shirley Fischer has dedicated her life to civic participation for the greater good of the community, and since she moved to Terra Linda 40 years ago she has been consistently active in bringing together community members and organizations to foster communication between residents and the City, to develop a common vision of community needs and aspirations, and to advocate for implementation of this common vision; and

WHEREAS, Shirley was a founder and chairperson of the North San Rafael Coalition of Residents (1988-2005), an umbrella organization of 13 homeowner and neighborhood associations which sponsored Candidates' Nights, community workshops and regular meetings with City staff and officials to advocate for community needs and views on multiple key issues; and

WHEREAS, Shirley has participated actively in the development of three San Rafael General Plans—GP2000, GP2020, and GP2040, and was a key member of the North San Rafael Vision Committee (1996-1997) and the Vision in Action Committee (1998-2003), helping facilitate community participation in the development of a common vision for the future of North San Rafael and the implementation of portions of this vision, such as gateway beautification on Freitas Parkway and conceptual design of the North San Rafael Promenade; and

WHEREAS, Shirley has been instrumental in revitalizing the Terra Linda Homeowners Association's Community Development Committee and has been a key strategist and team leader for Responsible Growth in Marin, analyzing General Plan and Priority Development Area policies and continuing to advocate for the development of a mixed-use Town Center in North San Rafael; and

WHEREAS, Shirley conceptualized, founded and led the North San Rafael Coalition of Residents to reinvigorate neighborhood participation and representation in governance, and under her guidance, the Coalition's meetings, newsletters, and persistent community communications nurtured an increasing interest and participation in civic affairs in the North San Rafael (NSR) community. Her efforts on the NSR Vision Steering Committee and the Vision in Action Committee encouraged wide participation from residents of all ages in developing and refining a unified vision including a town center in the Northgate area and the North San Rafael Promenade to connect Terra Linda to the Marin Civic Center. Shirley Fischer's impact on our community has been foundational and she invigorates community engagement in constructive governance; and

WHEREAS, If you ask Shirley's family, they will say that her civic and community volunteer activities have been her job, her identity, and her principal engagement for the last four decades. Whether Shirley is spending her days counting cars for a traffic study or spending countless hours researching an upcoming project, she is always involved and inspiring other community members to participate in the planning of San Rafael's future; and

WHEREAS, Shirley has been a dedicated, organized, intelligent, and faithful community volunteer, with the ability to lead and contribute to complex processes to improve our community for many decades, and surely for many more years to come;

NOW, THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED, that the San Rafael City Council expresses its appreciation to Shirley Fischer on behalf of her community and hereby awards her the Richard O'Brien and the Mary Ferrario O'Brien Citizen of the Year Award for 2021 on Monday, October 4, 2021.

Mayor

New submission from Citizen of the Year

Forms Admin <notify@proudcity.com>

Sun 1/3/2021 10:28 PM

To: Lindsay Lara <Lindsay.Lara@cityofsanrafael.org>

Date

01/03/2021

Nominee for Citizen of the Year

Shirley Fischer

Nominee' Home Addre

[Redacted]
San Rafael, Ca 94903
United States
[Redacted]

Doe thi nominee live within San Rafael City Limit ?

- Yes

Nominee's Phone

[Redacted]

Nominee's Email

[Redacted]

Your Name

Grace Geraghty

Your Address

[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]

Your Phone

[Redacted]

Your Email

[Redacted]

What contributions has this individual made to the community that are beyond the scope of normal civic responsibilities?

While thi i an annual award, we want to recognize Shirley Fi cher for a lifetime of civic participation for the greater good of the community Since he moved to Terra Linda 40 year ago Shirley ha been con i tently active in bringing together community member and organization to fo ter communication between re ident and the City, to develop a

common vision of community needs and aspirations, and to advocate for implementation of this common vision. Shirley was a founder and chairperson of the North San Rafael Coalition of Residents (1988-2005), an umbrella organization of 13 homeowner and neighborhood associations (some of which had not been active for years) which sponsored Candidates' Nights, community workshops and regular meetings with City staff and officials to advocate for community needs and views on multiple issues.

Shirley has participated actively in the development of three San Rafael General Plans—GP2000, GP2020, and GP2040—and was a key member of the North San Rafael Vision Committee (1996-1997) and the Vision in Action Committee (1998-2003), helping facilitate community participation in the development of a common vision for the future of North San Rafael and the implementation of portions of this vision, such as gateway beautification on Freitas Parkway and conceptual design of the North San Rafael Promenade.

As bespeaks Shirley's personal commitment to the commonweal, her advocacy for the community did not end after her official participation in these organizations. When she noted the opportunity for implanting a key element of the community 'Vision' project, she initiated discussions for implementation of portions of the North San Rafael Promenade during renovations of Northgate Mall (2010) and, more currently, for connection to the SMART train station (DPW advisory committee 2016-2019).

In 2013, with another former VIA Committee member, Shirley pursued the Vision Goal of preserving local history by raising funds and personally participating in conducting an Oral History Project for Northern San Rafael, which archived videotaped interviews of nine early residents of the Las Gallinas (Terra Linda) Valley in the Marin County Library, recognizing and memorializing unique contributions of citizen leadership. This legacy is a crucial to encouraging others to continue in their footsteps, as Shirley does herself.

More recently, Shirley has been instrumental in revitalizing the Terra Linda Homeowners Association's Community Development Committee and has been a key strategist and team leader for Responsible Growth in Marin, analyzing General Plan and Priority Development Area policies and continuing to advocate for the development of a mixed-use Town Center in North San Rafael.

In addition to her community development and planning activities, Shirley has volunteered many hours in various other community activities. She and her husband have gardened in the Terra Linda Community Garden for 40 years, and Shirley has served on the Garden Steering Committee, published a garden newsletter, and weekly taken excess produce to the Marin Food Bank. While her children attended elementary school, Shirley was a classroom volunteer and also taught an experiential nutrition curriculum in the classroom and afterschool programs.

What impact on the community did this individual's activities make? How has this person made a difference?

What difference can one person make? Shirley's impact on the community has been often subtle but continuous over the last four decades. Shirley tends to shy away from the limelight but all the people that have worked with her in the various committees, and civic leaders at many levels of government, both staff and elected officials, will agree that without her excellent research skills, foresight in seeing solutions and attention to detail, while never losing sight of the big picture, major goals may not have been achieved. Here are a few of the community impacts that have made a big difference: Many neighborhood associations in North San Rafael, originally formed to collectively represent homeowners with the original developers, were inactive by the 1980s. There was a vacuum. Shirley conceptualized, founded and led the North San Rafael Coalition of Residents.. She did it to reinvigorate neighborhood participation and representation in governance. Under Shirley's guidance, the Coalition's meetings, newsletters, and persistent community communications nurtured an increasing interest and participation in civic affairs in the North San Rafael community. Her efforts on the NSR Vision Steering Committee and the Vision in Action Committee encouraged wide participation from residents of all ages in developing and refining a unified vision including a town center in the Northgate area and the NSR Promenade to connect Terra Linda to the Marin Civic Center. Her "nudging" and persistent advocacy has often initiated action that otherwise would have languished on a back burner. Shirley Fischer's impact on our community has been foundational. She invigorates community citizenship in constructive governance.

Over the years many City officials and community leaders have grown to know and respect Shirley because of her

objectivity and tenacity in doing what's right for the community. For example, most recently in 2020, after thorough researching traffic methodologies and highly contentious Priority Development Area (PDA) issues, when she voiced her perspective at various City public meetings and in letters to the Marin IJ Shirley was able to influence many in the community to support keep both LOS and VMT, and of supporting the City's application to designate North San Rafael as a PDA.

Describe the time and energy this person has devoted to community project or effort

If you ask Shirley's family, they will say that her civic and community volunteer activities have been and continue to be her job, her identity and her principal engagement for the last four decades. Many days and evenings of consistent and diligent work, including the kind of baseline, primary research and fieldwork (for example, counting cars for a traffic study), that is necessary to support knowledgeable advocacy.

Describe the challenge met and overcome by this individual

Over the years Shirley has had to balance her dedication to civic activities with raising two children and her third career as an assistant teacher and private tutor. This is not an unusual challenge, and one faced by many who contribute to civic life.

The biggest personal challenge Shirley faced, however, was overcoming her intrinsic timidity and allowing herself to speak boldly when necessary, to effect change for the collective benefit. When leadership was needed, she rose to occasion in order to achieve the goals that she so strongly believed in. Over the years, many people have asked Shirley why she did not run for public office. Her answer has always been this role does not match her intrinsic aptitudes, but that she cares deeply enough about the welfare of her community that she is willing to put herself forward and engage in public activities when necessary for greater good.

To what extent has this individual's effort been previously recognized by the community?

Shirley has received resolutions of appreciation from the City of San Rafael for her participation in the Freitas Advisory group, the North San Rafael Coalition of Residents, the North San Rafael Vision Steering Committee, and the Vision in Action Committee.

Cathy Manovi
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

January 9, 2021

Citizen of the Year Selection Committee
c/o Lindsay Lara, City Clerk
City of San Rafael
1400 Fifth Avenue, Room 20
San Rafael, CA 94901
city.clerk@cityofsanrafael.org / Lindsay.Lara@cityofsanrafael.org

Subject: Letter of Support for Shirley Fischer for 2021 Citizen of the Year

Dear Citizen of the Year Selection Committee,

I wholeheartedly support the nomination of Shirley Fischer as San Rafael's 2021 Citizen of the Year.

Shirley is the most informed, engaged and influential community organizer I have ever met, and has been an amazing role model for me personally. She is a wonder at tracking events and organizing and influencing people with diverse interests to work toward community improvements.

I've had the good fortune to work alongside Shirley since 2016 on efforts to ensure North San Rafael neighborhoods' needs got addressed when SMART's hectic design-build works were barreling through our area. SMART and the city were on the brink of making quick decisions that impacted our neighborhoods without adequate consideration of community safety and quality of life and that sidelined prior community vision planning. Shirley's stepping up to ensure the community was heard at a public meeting was critical to creating outcomes that addressed community needs.

Shirley's efforts on behalf of the NSR community began long before she and I met with her involvement in NSR visioning efforts a couple decades ago. Her efforts continue today with her robust involvement in ensuring NSR has a detailed general plan that includes re-imagining Northgate Mall. Shirley's consistent civic engagement over the years has facilitated community vision plans being honored, and has been very important when such plans were at risk of being lost due to inattention during fast-moving events.

The attached notice is evidence of the first public meeting we helped organize—briefly mentioned above. Since that hearing Shirley has been a key member—a leader-by-default—of a group of community members who've been meeting with San Rafael Public Works staff to plan the promenade/multi-use path segment on N. Merrydale Road between the Civic Center Station and Northgate Mall. SMART's promised multi-use-path between its station and N. San Pedro Road, which Shirley and the group advocated for, *did* get built—a much needed, safe and pleasant walk-bike path connecting NSR neighborhoods.

I can't say enough how grateful I am to Shirley Fischer for her diligent, respectful, and influential work on behalf of the North San Rafael community. Shirley is a wonder and highly deserving of receiving the 2021 Citizen of the Year award.

Respectfully,

Cathy Manovi
Resident, Rafael Meadows Neighborhood
[REDACTED]



NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

You are invited to attend an informal public meeting on the following proposed subjects:

Civic Center Drive - Merrydale North Pathway - The City of San Rafael is working closely with the County of Marin and the Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) in the area surrounding the Civic Center Station. The following projects are currently being pursued in this area:

- Civic Center Drive Reconstruction (County of Marin/City of San Rafael) – Currently in Construction
- Civic Center Rail Station (SMART) – Infrastructure Complete
- Multi Use Pathway – Civic Center Station to Los Ranchitos (SMART) – Awaiting Permit Issuance
- Merrydale North – Installation of Parking and Sidewalk (SMART) – Design Phase
- Merrydale South – Installation of Creek Vegetation (SMART)

On Thursday November 10, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. an informal public meeting will be held at the Terra Linda Community Center to provide an update to the community on each of these projects. Representatives from the City of San Rafael, County of Marin and SMART will be present to convey how each project will be implemented in the community.

MEETING DATE/TIME/LOCATION: November 10, 2016, 6:00 p.m. Terra Linda Community Center 670 Del Ganado Road, San Rafael CA 94903

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Contact Kevin McGowan, Assistant Public Works Director at (415) 485-3389 or Kevin.McGowan@cityofsanrafael.org.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN: This is an informational meeting intended to provide the public with additional information about current and proposed construction in the area. The City welcomes your comments and feedback with regard to the projects stated above. If you cannot attend, you can send a letter to the San Rafael Department of Public Works, 111 Morphew Street, San Rafael, CA 94901.

Sign Language and interpretation and assistive listening devices may be requested by calling (415) 485-3085 (voice) or (415) 485-3198 (TDD) at least 72 hours in advance. Copies of documents are available in accessible formats upon request. Public transportation to City Hall is available through Golden Gate Transit, Line 22 or 23. Para-transit is available by calling Whistlestop Wheels at (415) 454-0964. To allow individuals with environmental illness or multiple, chemical sensitivities to attend the meeting/hearing, individuals are requested to refrain from wearing scented products.



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Shirley Fisher for Citizen of the Year for San Rafael

Cecil Nielsen [REDACTED]

Wed 1/6/2021 11:14 AM

To: Lindsay Lara <Lindsay.Lara@cityofsanrafael.org>

Good Morning

I am writing to you because I heard that Shirley Fisher was nominated for Citizen of the Year for San Rafael.

This is wonderful news! I am hugely in support of this nomination! It is about time!!

I worked with Shirley for many years on the VIA committee and on several sub-committees. There wasn't one rock that Shirley couldn't turn over. She was committed about her dedication to this city wholeheartedly. She made sure things got done

This Citizen of the Year Award should commend her for all her years as a true advocate for everyone in San Rafael.

If it weren't for Shirley I doubt many things would have been completed in our City She fueled our fire to keep going and persevere. She made our VIA committee thrive.

We need more people like her.

I support Shirley Fisher's nomination!

Cecil Nielsen

I am writing in support of Shirley Fischer as San Rafael Citizen of the Year. I first met Shirley when I was appointed to a group to oversee the implementation of “Vision North San Rafael in the Year 2010.” The group became known as the VIA (vision in action) Committee, and we served together from 1998-2003.

Shirley had already been active in shaping the Vision, serving as a member of the steering committee for the visioning process. The plan was published in November 1997 and guided the work of the VIA Committee. In our final year, Shirley and I were deeply involved in the process of completing the conceptual plan for the North San Rafael Promenade, working with architects Brian Wittenkeller and Brian Powell. VIA disbanded in May 2003.

In 2008 Shirley and I worked with Bob Brown, San Rafael’s director of Community Development, on specific design features for The Promenade, developed with RHAA Landscape Architects and Planners. This came about because the owners of Northgate Mall, Macerich Company, agreed to install the segment of The Promenade on their property as part of their remodel process.

In May 2010, Shirley and I became involved in planning for a celebration at Northgate Mall. As a direct result of the vision process, Macerich included the first segment of The Promenade as part of its renovation project – as well as the Oak Plaza “community gathering space” behind Kohl’s where the celebration was held.

In 2012-2013, Shirley and I partnered on a new project to capture oral histories of our community. We approached Laurie Thompson, California Room Librarian, Civic Center Library. Laurie brought in professional oral historian Marilyn Geary. Our first hurdle was to successfully raise \$2,000 for the project. In a stroke of luck, neighbor Paul Kawaga saw our fundraising letter posted at Scotty’s. A professional videographer, Paul volunteered to film the interviews.

By the end of 2013, our project had nine oral histories in both audio and video versions as well as written transcripts. Some of the community leaders who shared their memories are no longer with us, including Dave Freitas, Jean Starkweather, and Catherine Munson.

In all these efforts, I have known Shirley to be a dedicated, organized, intelligent, and faithful community volunteer, with the ability to lead and contribute to complex processes to improve her community. I know her contributions have gone well beyond those that we shared.

Kay Noguchi

 San Rafael, CA 94903

January 6, 2021

San Rafael Citizen of the Year Selection Committee
c/o Lindsay Lara
1400 Fifth Avenue
San Rafael, CA 94901
Via email: Lindsay.Lara@cityofsanrafael.org

RE: Support for nominee Shirley Fischer

Dear Selection Committee:

During a presentation by the North San Rafael (NSR) Vision Steering Committee to the San Rafael City Council in November 1997, Shirley Fischer is quoted as saying, “we in San Rafael are blessed to have the opportunity to participate in our own government.” Shirley has taken advantage of that fortunate opportunity for many decades to the benefit of her community.

During the years leading up to Shirley’s service on the NSR Vision Steering Committee and her time since serving on San Rafael’s 2020 General Plan “Getting Around Town” Task Force [GP2020 was adopted in 2004], Shirley has participated in, as well as facilitated others’ participation in, implementing local plans. Tracking and advocating for implementation of long-range action priorities and policies requires sustained focus, commitment, energy and time. Shirley’s dedication to San Rafael meets those requirements.

Shirley is a leader and an organizer. Her tactics for getting things accomplished include frequent communication and developing positive relationships with City staff especially with those in the Community Development and Public Works (DPW) departments, encouraging other community members to take part in meetings, and sharing her detailed notes from public meetings, or meetings she attended with City staff, to keep her community partners informed.

I met Shirley in 2016 when she invited me to attend a site visit with DPW at the Civic Center station area to discuss bicycle and pedestrian connectivity improvements near the intersection of the train tracks with Merrydale Road. She explained the Vision for the Northgate Promenade in connecting the Terra Linda Community Center to the west to the Civic Center to the east in order to ameliorate the physical divide between the North San Rafael communities created by Highway 101. A small group of us met several times at Shirley’s house as we looked at iterations of planning and engineering documents over the years. Directors at DPW have changed hands three times since our first encounter and the planning for continuation of the Promenade down North Merrydale continues.

Recently, in response to development proposals in North San Rafael that would likely jeopardize goals set forth in the NSR Vision, Shirley became re-involved with the Terra Linda

Homeowners Association's Community Development committee. At the time, we were loosely meeting to review development proposals. Today, Shirley is leading the group, holding biweekly meetings with agendas and reports. She has advocated for retaining Level of Service (LOS) as an evaluation tool for new projects in addition to the Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) measurement required by CEQA in order for San Rafael to retain analysis of congestion impacts from development as part of project review. She worked with others to comment on the Terra Linda section of the Neighborhood Element of the 2040 General Plan, attended a number of General Plan 2040 Steering Committee meetings waiting hours to speak as a member of the public, and has submitted individual comments on the draft Plan. She has become active with Responsible Growth in Marin, and last June authored a Marin Voice piece in the Independent Journal promoting the City's application for a Priority Development Area designation in order to secure funding for a community planning process of the Northgate area. The area as described in the NSR Vision would expand and evolve over time as "the heart of the North San Rafael community".

Shirley has not only spent many, many hours each year working on the behalf of her community in San Rafael, but she has supported others in joining her and she has raised the level of achievement for all those involved. Shirley has earned the honor of becoming San Rafael's Citizen of the Year. Thank you for considering this letter of support with her nomination.

Sincerely,

Kate Powers

January 9, 2021

Nomination of Shirley Fischer for San Rafael Citizen of the Year

It is my pleasure to add my support to Shirley Fischer for San Rafael Citizen of the Year. In a year when there have been so many fissures in our system of government, at least at the local level, democracy is alive and well.

One of the reasons our local civic life is so healthy is an active, educated and engaged citizenry. No one embodies this more than Shirley Fischer. For over thirty years she has been steadfastly working for the public good in our city.

I have known Shirley for over twenty-five years. I was co-chair of the North San Rafael Vision Committee in preparation of the General Plan for 2020. We worked on getting input from residents of North San Rafael through many public meetings held at locations throughout the community. We also reviewed survey information and had countless conversations with our friends and neighbors north of the Hill. I know her dedication and hard work, first hand.

I am amazed at how steadfast her involvement and contribution to city life has been. While some of us come and go, depending upon the issue at hand, Shirley is always there providing education, information, doing research, talking to friends and neighbors and providing thoughtful input to our public processes.

None of this would be possible, though, without the openness and good will of our local government. Our civic leaders have worked to make San Rafael the wonderful city it is. For this, we have in large part to thank Shirley Fischer for her years of advocacy and the openness of local government to ensure the wonderful of quality of life that we enjoy in our fair city.

Sincerely,

Annie Song-Hill

Former Co-Chair of North San Rafael Vision
Former Trustee, Miller Creek School District

PATRICK M. SEIDLER
Transportation Alternatives for Marin

January 27, 2021

Dear City of San Rafael:

It is a pleasure and an honor to write to support Shirley Fischer as San Rafael's 2021 Citizen of the Year.

I met Shirley in 1993, and worked with her through 1994 on The North-South Bikeway Study. This pivotal Study led to what is now known as The North-South Greenway. Many of the multi-modal Greenway segments are built, and the remaining segments are planned to be built. When completed, the vision Shirley helped set out in the 1994 Study will be realized.

Part of the North-South Greenway was embodied as the SMART Pathway, which has now been extended to The Great Redwood Trail, ultimately stretching 350 miles from Sausalito to Blue Lake in Humboldt County!

That 1994 project is a prime example of how Shirley Fischer has generously and consistently contributed to her community over many years. Shirley undertakes projects that are intellectually-pure, good-spirited, and deliver long-term community benefits and tangible results that will be enjoyed for generations.

Shirley led the community in creating the North San Rafael Vision Plan, which included the Northgate Promenade. Shirley led negotiations with the Northgate Mall property owner, securing their commitment to build the largest segment of the Northgate Promenade next to Las Gallinas from Northgate Drive past the Merrydale Drive overpass, an impressive financial and alignment feat.

In 2005, the Northgate Promenade "Plans" were upgraded to a Study funded with federal grant money from the Non-Motorized Transportation Pilot Program. Shirley led the community input on this Study, which brought the complete Promenade one step closer to being built as a model for multimodal access and safety.

PATRICK M. SEIDLER
Transportation Alternatives for Marin

From 2019 through the present, Shirley has led the effort to establish the “Preferred Plan” linking the Northgate Promenade from Las Gallinas and Merrydale to the Civic Center SMART Station, a crucial connection. This section of the Northgate Promenade, almost 20 years in the coming, will complete a major link from Northgate Drive along Las Gallinas all the way to the Civic Center.

While the above projects are important building blocks of our community, they represent a small fraction of the multitude of Shirley’s projects and contributions.

Shirley’s prescient vision and ceaseless efforts have made our community a better place to live, and Shirley’s generous character and spirit make us lucky to share that community with her.

It has been an honor to work with Shirley on only a few of her many community projects. It has been a pleasure to witness Shirley’s accomplishments after generations of her personal involvement and volunteerism. We are all better for her efforts and success.

Shirley exemplifies the best in civic engagement; she leaned into the long-haul process of envisioning then creating her own livable community. Shirley’s efforts and projects are the thread that weaves together the vibrant fabric of our community.

These are but a few of the reasons that Shirley Fischer should be recognized as San Rafael’s Citizen of the Year in 2021.

Respectfully submitted,



Patrick M. Seidler
Transportation Alternatives for Marin
San Rafael Home Owner

Volunteer of the Year Award for Shirley Fischer

Carol Mack <[REDACTED]>

Sun 1/24/2021 9:58 PM

To: Lindsay Lara <Lindsay.Lara@cityofsanrafael.org>

Please add this to Shirley Fischer's nomination to the San Rafael Volunteer Citizen of the Year award. Thank you. This will replace the previous one I sent you. Thank you,

Carol Mack

[REDACTED]
San Rafael, Ca 94903

Shirley Fischer is most deserving to receive the **San Rafael Volunteer Citizen of the Year Award**.

I have known Shirley for many years as a fellow gardener in the Terra Linda Community Garden. In the 40 plus years that Shirley has participated in the community garden, she has contributed to making the garden both a successful and productive place for people to grow vegetables, fruits, herbs, and flowers and also a community where people form friendships and encourage and help each other. Shirley has mentored many new and old gardeners, sharing her skills, knowledge and experience of organic gardening. She generously shares plants, vegetables, garden tools, physical help and watering for other gardeners, and often goes beyond working in her own garden to help with the needs of the community garden as a whole. Shirley volunteered as a member of the Garden Steering Committee for a number of years, helped assemble Bylaws for the community garden, and for eight years edited a quarterly newsletter for the gardeners. In recent years she collects extra vegetables every week to share with the Food Bank, and in the fall she organizes the purchase of onion plants on behalf of many of the gardeners (1300 plants this year!). Shirley has put her heart and soul in making our Community Garden a successful and rewarding place for many.