



Terra Linda Homeowners' Association

P.O. Box 6167
San Rafael, CA 94903-0405

April 14, 2022

City Council of the City of San Rafael
1400 Fifth Avenue
San Rafael, CA 94901

RE: North Merrydale connection to the Promenade in North San Rafael

Dear Mayor Colin and Councilmembers:

The Terra Linda Homeowners' Association (soon to be Neighborhood Association) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the North Merrydale connection to the North San Rafael Promenade. **A fully constructed Promenade has been a long-desired community pathway that was clearly identified twenty-five years ago in the community-driven 1997 Vision for North San Rafael, further refined in the 2002 Promenade Plan, and most recently included in policies and programs in San Rafael's 2040 General Plan, which you adopted last summer.**

The North San Rafael Vision describes Northgate as a walkable destination in a pedestrian-oriented environment and the Promenade is envisioned as a beautiful walkway and bikeway along a restored creek -- a continuous green space from the Terra Linda Community Center to the Marin Civic Center. While there is much work to be done to restore portions of both the north and south forks of Gallinas Creek, **the opportunity to implement this important connection in the Promenade and create a safe corridor where pedestrians and bicyclists are truly prioritized, is upon us.**

While all the proposed alternatives include the desired multiuse path widths that provide safe and separately designated space for both pedestrians and non-motorized vehicles (bikes, scooters, wheelchairs and strollers), **only the No Parking alternative optimizes the corridor's width to retain existing trees and unpaved surfaces on the west side of the roadway while including adequate space for the integration of green infrastructure to absorb and filter stormwater before it flows into Gallinas Creek on the east side.** Implementing green stormwater infrastructure into the project will not only reduce pollution in the creek but will decrease risk of flooding during large storm events and will increase the experience of the pathway as a greenway. The No Parking alternative is also the most likely to include spaces for plantings to partially screen the highway along the path's eastern edge.

Officers: President, Kim Keith-Brown
 Vice President, Eric Boales
 Secretary, Denis O'Leary
 Treasurer, William Bacon
 Liaison to the Federation of San Rafael Neighborhoods, Kate Powers
 Members: Alicia Levin, Mark Gainer, Greg Knell

Recent years have changed the landscape and need for office workspace. Many commercial and office buildings and their required parking spaces are now significantly underutilized east of Highway 101 along Civic Center Drive and Redwood Highway. **We request that you work with SMART, the County, and property owners on the east side of Civic Center Drive to secure an adequate amount of surface parking for the projected need for SMART's Civic Center Station customers.** SMART currently advertises free parking along McInnis Parkway and Merrydale Road, which are city and/or county-maintained infrastructure. SMART should instead be a partner in contributing to adequate parking solutions for its users on the east side of the Civic Center Station, so that Merrydale Road can serve its highest multi-benefit use and purpose for the community.

The Northgate Mall/Town Center redevelopment project will have many impacts on our community. The proposed development is also creating an opportunity to evaluate how infrastructure will best serve the significant density increase and land use changes that are coming and how those infrastructure changes will be financed and implemented. We urge you to act now to take advantage of an opportunity to fulfill a long-held vision for North San Rafael.

In summary, we believe the No Parking alternative for North Merrydale Road would most fully realize the Policies and Programs adopted in San Rafael's 2040 General Plan that reflect the longstanding Vision for the North San Rafael Promenade. We have included a partial list of the relevant GP 2040 policies and programs as an addendum. We hope they will guide your planning and decision making.

Thank you for taking these comments to heart. We look forward to supporting the City's efforts to accomplish these goals.

Sincerely,

The TLHOA Board of Directors

Some Relevant Policies and Programs in San Rafael's General Plan 2040

Neighborhood Element:

Policy NH-4.1: North San Rafael

The City is committed to protecting and restoring North San Rafael's natural environment, investing in multimodal that makes it easier to get around ...

Policy NH-4.2: North San Rafael Town Center

Promenade improvements described in the North San Rafael Promenade Conceptual Plan (2002) should be included in any substantial rehabilitation or expansion of the Mall. Opportunities to include green infrastructure and low impact development (LID) methods should also be pursued.

Policy NH-4.4: Transportation Safety and Accessibility

Improve access and bicycle/pedestrian connections between Northgate One, the Mall at Northgate, Northgate Three, the Civic Center SMART Station, the Civic Center, and surrounding neighborhoods.

Terra Linda

“Together with the North San Rafael Promenade, creek restoration would create a neighborhood amenity that would help decrease car traffic, enhance the environment, and proactively address global climate change.”

Program NH-4.7A: Community Improvements

Consider the following improvements in the Terra Linda area:

- e) Implementation of North San Rafael Promenade improvements
- f) Improved pedestrian walkways connecting Terra Linda streets
- h) Safety improvements to infrastructure

Policy NH-4.8: Community Beautification and Environmental Restoration

Continue efforts to beautify Terra Linda and restore its natural environment.

“Opportunities to combine creek restoration, utility, and promenade projects for funding purposes are strongly encouraged, and will make projects more competitive in the grant application process”.

Conservation and Climate Change Element:

Policy C-3.2: Reduce Pollution from Runoff

Require Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce pollutants discharged to storm drains and waterways. Typical BMPs include reducing impervious surface coverage, requiring site plans that minimize grading and disturbance of creeks and natural drainage patterns, and using vegetation and bioswales to absorb and filter runoff.

Policy C-3.3: Low Impact Development

Encourage construction and design methods that retain stormwater on-site and reduce runoff to storm drains and creeks.

Program C-3.3A: Development Review.

Provide guidance to developers, contractors and builders on the use of rain gardens, bioswales and bioretention facilities, permeable pavers, grass parking lots, and other measures to absorb stormwater and reduce runoff rates and volumes.

Policy C-3.4: Green Streets

Design streets and infrastructure so they are more compatible with the natural environment, mitigate urban heat island effects and have fewer impacts on air and water quality, flooding, climate, and natural habitat.