

From: [Harold Meyrowitz](#)
To: [Planning Public Comment](#); [Tricia Stevens](#)
Subject: Plans for the Northgate Town Square, FOR PUBLIC COMMENT
Date: Tuesday, November 29, 2022 1:17:45 PM

Dear Honorable Commissioners,

PLEASE take this opportunity to make this project a more welcoming venue by increasing the recreational open space area and decreasing the height and size of the proposed development. It should have a sensible and esthetic environmental impact for the future of our community and retain the cultural feel and character of our neighborhoods. Please allow the Northgate Town Square to enrich our beautiful area with a more harmonious, warm, attractive and inviting design!

Thank you for your consideration,
Harold Meyrowitz

From: [Lori Dang](#)
To: [Planning Public Comment](#)
Cc: [Tricia Stevens](#)
Subject: Northgate Town Square Public Comment
Date: Tuesday, November 29, 2022 3:19:32 PM

Subject: Northgate Town Square

Dear Commissioners,

I grew up in Marin and chose Terra Linda as a beautiful place to live and raise our family and have been actively involved in the community prior to the 1997 North San Rafael Vision planning meetings.

The redevelopment of Northgate Mall provides an incredible opportunity for the developer, the City of San Rafael and the community with the development of more housing, retail and a much(!) needed community gathering space for the people of North San Rafael as well as all of Marin.

Many friends and neighbors I have spoken with have strongly expressed and share the following concerns and desires:

- The density of the housing and the height of the buildings-- Seven story buildings are out of proportion with the surrounding suburban area. The look and feel of our suburban community would be negatively impacted especially for the many who frequently walk, run and bike in the area.
- The industrial feel and design of the development is also not appropriate for this area. We do not need a feeling of loft spaces converted to housing with huge, tall buildings that feel similar to the development of Emeryville.
 - We need a design that takes advantage of our beautiful location, which is surrounded by open space and our pleasant weather; Shade structures, greenery, outdoor recreation and seating, a connection of the interior spaces with the exterior spaces (like the many Eichlers in the area) , an airy and open feel are all desirable.
- In addition to the low amount of greenery and open space, the **extremely** small town center with a lack of amenities is a deep flaw.
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We desire:

- mixed-use space with much of the ground floor used for retail, restaurants, cafes, entertainment, gyms and/or recreation for families/children, etc....A total of 4-5 story buildings that includes up to 4 stories for housing over retail space would be acceptable.
- upscale retail, restaurants options, cafe (not in a shipping container), bakery, plant nursery, etc. spaces similar to Corte Madera Town Center or Larkspur Landing. (With the pleasant weather in TL many from all over Marin and San Francisco would come to shop and dine. We are centrally located between the Village in Corte Madera and Vintage Oaks in Novato which would draw shoppers from all over Marin and beyond.)
- Marin families and teens are sorely in need of a place to have fun and build community bonds. Spaces such as the current jewelry making shop, skating rink, cafes with outdoor spaces, Ounces (with their music events and trivial nights, etc) work well. (How about a wine tasting room? A nursery?)
- Being surrounded by these amenities will only increase the desire and long term marketability of these new residences and make this development stand out amongst the influx of housing that will eventually come to this area.
- Adding 10 percent plus to the Terra Linda population requires infrastructure changes to accommodate more traffic and needs of more community members with amenities such as grocery stores, etc.
 - Traffic on Freitas Parkway is already quite congested especially in the mornings with commute traffic and the many schools in the area; Additional housing pending at Gateway gas station will add even more traffic to those trying to get in and out of the area. Please, this needs to be acknowledged and addressed.
 - Please add a grocery store like Trader Joe's(!) We only have Safeway and Scotty's Market in TL and with such a huge influx of residents another market is sorely needed. Many who live in Lucas Valley, Marinwood and Santa Venetia shop in TL as well and would frequent a Trader Joe's or similar store (Nugget, Sprouts) in our area.

- A dedicated space for a Farmer's Market would be an incredible addition. It would also help generate foot traffic bringing more consumers to support the retail offerings at Northgate. (Perhaps invite the popular, bi-weekly market at Civic Center to move to a permanent location at Northgate similar to what is offered at SF Ferry building?)
- There is also concern about the impact on our local public schools. Do you have an estimate about how many students 1400 new residences would generate and how supporting these additional students would impact our schools especially Vallecito?
- Is there any way to lessen the amount of time this project would take? Twenty years is a long time for a community to be under the constant stress of ongoing construction.
- **One of my biggest concerns is the minuscule size of the Town Square and lack of greenery.** For over 30 years, even during the 1997 discussions North SR Vision meetings, the community has begged for a community gathering space for families, old and young. The proposed space allotted for the Town Square as an outdoor recreation and gathering space is completely inadequate and the overall green space with the addition of thousands of new residents does not, I believe, even meet the requirements of the San Rafael 2040 General Plan. "In-lieu" payments from the developer would be an insult to the people who live in Terra Linda and who will have to deal with close to 20 years of construction (noise, dust, vehicles, traffic, as well as increased population, increased burden on schools, etc.). Please reconsider and increase the amount of green space and retail amenities for the future residents and community!

I believe this project is one of the largest and longest (20 years!) developments in San Rafael and Marin County. Northgate Mall was once the only "real" Mall in all of Marin and a community gathering place with its outdoor fountains and quaint shops. I am cognizant of the fact that shopping patterns and malls across America are changing, but that is why plans for accommodating housing as well as the *thoughtful* use of retail and community-minded spaces is crucial to the success and longevity of this project. Marin will never become tired of good food, cafes, friendly welcoming gathering places- both indoor and especially outdoor, places for family entertainment and music venues, and eccentric boutiques and retail offerings. Please make Northgate a vibrant "destination" exemplifying the "only in Marin" long term appreciation of beauty, sustainability and respect for where we live.

Thank you for your time,
Lori Dang and family

From: [Matthew Gregoire](#)
To: [Planning Public Comment](#)
Subject: Northgate Mall Study Session - Bike and pedestrian network comments
Date: Tuesday, November 29, 2022 12:52:17 PM

Hello!

Chair Previtali and Members of the Planning Commission,

I am writing to speak in support of the project as a whole, but the proposed bicycle and pedestrian network is somewhat lacking.

To ensure pedestrian safety and comfort, the internal roads need wider sidewalks, raised crosswalks, and sharper street corners to calm automobile traffic.

The bicycle network is much improved over the last draft. However there are still issues. Several sections of pathway meander side to side, which is poor design. The west side of the site lacks any bicycle accommodations, and the multi-use path on the east side should be set back from the road at intersections to protect bicyclists. Additionally, it would be leagues better to put bicycle facilities above the curb rather than simply providing Class 2 paint-only bike lanes, which are uncomfortable at best and dangerous at worst.

Lastly, the project is providing a huge amount of surface parking. The Town Square is only one acre, compared to roughly nine acres of surface parking. Given that state law no longer requires projects located close to transit to provide so much parking, we believe the space could be better used than a sea of asphalt car parking.

Thank you for your time and consideration!

- Matthew Gregoire

From: [Philip Mooney](#)
To: [Planning Public Comment](#)
Subject: Northgate Mall Study Session - Bike Network Comments
Date: Tuesday, November 29, 2022 1:36:12 PM

Chair Previtali and Members of the Planning Commission,

I am writing to speak in support of the project as a whole, but have some comments concerning the pedestrian and bicycle network as proposed.

To ensure safe and easy circulation of pedestrians, the internal roads need wider sidewalks, raised crosswalks, and sharper street corners to calm automobile traffic.

The bicycle network is much improved over the last draft. However there are still issues. Several sections of pathway meander side to side, which is considered poor design. The west side of the site lacks any bicycle accommodations, and the multiuse path on the east side should be set back from the road at intersections to protect bicyclists. Additionally, it would be preferable to put bicycle facilities above the curb rather than simply providing Class 2 paint-only bike lanes, which are not comfortable for all riders.

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Thank you for your time and consideration.

From: [Sandy Allen](#)
To: [Planning Public Comment](#)
Subject: Northgate Mall Study Session - Bike Network Comments
Date: Tuesday, November 29, 2022 2:54:57 PM

Chair Previtali and Members of the Planning Commission,

I am writing to speak in support of the project as a whole, but have some comments concerning the pedestrian and bicycle network as proposed.

To ensure safe and easy circulation of pedestrians, the internal roads need wider sidewalks, raised crosswalks, and sharper street corners to calm automobile traffic.

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Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sandy Allen

From: [Susan Nawbary](#)
To: [Planning Public Comment](#)
Subject: Northgate Mall Study Session - Bike Network Comments
Date: Tuesday, November 29, 2022 1:43:49 PM

Chair Previtali and Members of the Planning Commission,

I am writing to speak in support of the project as a whole, but have some comments concerning the pedestrian and bicycle network as proposed.

First, I'd like to note that this area is full of speeding, impatient drivers and the sharing of road space puts people riding bikes in the door zone where there is no dedicated bike lane along North Gate Drive. The increase in vehicle traffic as a result of the development will exacerbate the situation. I am happy to see housing built, but all development should come with dedicated bike lanes to prevent collisions due to the increase in vehicle traffic.

Surface parking is a theft of public space. I don't store my personal items on the street. Roads are for travel, not for parking. The idea that people can have excess numbers of cars and just store them in public rights-of-way should not be supported.

To ensure safe and easy circulation of pedestrians, the internal roads need wider sidewalks, raised crosswalks, and sharper street corners to calm automobile traffic.

The bicycle network is much improved over the last draft. However there are still issues. Several sections of pathway meander side to side, which is considered poor design. The west side of the site lacks any bicycle accommodations, and the multiuse path on the east side should be set back from the road at intersections to protect bicyclists. Additionally, it would be preferable to put bicycle facilities above the curb rather than simply providing Class 2 paint-only bike lanes, which are not comfortable for all riders.

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Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Dave Rhoads](#)
To: [Planning Public Comment](#)
Subject: Supporting the Northgate Mall redevelopment plan + feedback on bike/ped improvements
Date: Tuesday, November 29, 2022 3:50:05 PM

Hi Planning Commission,

I write to you my general support of the plan for the Northgate Mall as proposed. The plan is not without it's challenges, specifically around bike and pedestrian experience, but I support the housing and density components broadly.

I also support the Marin County Bicycle Coalition / WTB Tam's feedback (see their letter sent to you) on the biking and pedestrian experience and infrastructure and encourage you to take on their advice to improve the project.

I'm supporting the project generally in it's current form (following significant public and City feedback) because it:

- Provides much needed housing in San Rafael on a site primed for redevelopment
- Will add value to our community by creating a new vibrant hub of activity in northern San Rafael
- Is close to the SMART Civic Center Station, multi-use pathway, and freeway and the developer has committed to contributing financially to improving the nearby bike/ped connections
- Will be 100% all-electric buildings, including solar PV
- Has an appropriately sized activated open space/square in the center
- Has a variety of housing types for different income levels, including affordable housing
- The design reflects the neighborhood residence's desire to have smaller scale development closest to them with the change to townhomes
- Places highest density residential closest to the bike/ped corridors and access to SMART - making them easier and more likely to be used and therefore reducing single occupancy vehicle use
- More housing will help make San Rafael a more affordable place to live and I want my friends and kids to be able to afford to live here!

Thanks and thanks for your service,
Dave