

From: [Cerise Mayo](#)
To: [Planning Public Comment](#)
Subject: Northgate Mall Study Session - Bike Network Comments
Date: Tuesday, November 29, 2022 12:15:02 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.

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.



November 29, 2022

Chair Previtali and Members of the Planning Commission,

We at the Marin County Bicycle Coalition and WTB-TAM are excited to see the Northgate Mall Redevelopment Project continuing apace. This project represents an excellent opportunity to revive a struggling mall and welcome more neighbors to Marin at the same time. As we know all too well, Marin's housing shortage forces many people employed here to live outside our county, forcing them into long, tiring commutes and putting pressure on US 101 and the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge. Opening up our county to over a thousand new households, or letting existing residents downsize to a smaller, more walkable community, can have massive benefits.

At the heart of the issue is that the City of San Rafael has a single opportunity to take a nearly-blank slate and develop a truly modern housing project. We urge the City to imagine the needs of the future, not the past, one where people are walking and biking for a large number of trips, and driving is safe and still common, but not required for all travel.

Our comments on the March 14, 2022 site plan are as follows:

Pedestrian Network

Narrow Sidewalks

The street cross sections in pages 18 through 20 of the Landscape drawings show a 5' sidewalk for all internal pedestrian circulation, outside of the multiuse path. While this does meet the *minimum* standard, it is hardly a comfortable width. When two couples cannot pass one another without walking single file, a sidewalk is too narrow. We all learned this in the early months of the pandemic, that when a lot of people are walking, narrow sidewalks are a pain, especially for those pushing strollers or using mobility devices.

Large Curb Radii

The site plan shows gentle, sweeping curves at all points where the internal streets meet an external road. Such a configuration, while perhaps sensible on a freeway ramp, has absolutely no place where pedestrians will be common. This configuration will cause drivers to enter the site at higher speeds, rather than being compelled to slow down and enter with caution. By sharpening the corners (reducing the curb radius) pedestrian safety will be enhanced.

Raised Crosswalks & Traffic Calming

The current plan mentions traffic calming, but nothing is depicted in the site plans we reviewed. We strongly recommend substantial traffic calming be a part of the internal circulation, including but not limited to raising the crosswalks to the level of the sidewalk. While not yet widely employed in Marin, raised crosswalks are broadly used in the rest of the developed world. They

serve to calm traffic and increase yield rates for pedestrians. They have the added benefit of easing travel for wheelchair users and mobility-impaired travelers, who no longer have to use a ramp to enter and leave the street.

Overwide Automobile Lanes

There is no reason for internal travel lanes to be 11' wide. These streets are intended to be low-volume, low-speed, and not used by transit or heavy trucks. The National Association of City Transportation Officials [recommends no more than 10' of width](#) for urban streets. An 11' per lane configuration will lead to more speeding and increase the exposure for pedestrians crossing through the street.

Bicycle Network

No Meandering Paths

The current site plan show the multiuse path from Merrydale Road meandering back and forth between Los Ranchitos Road and the Town Square. While this may look pleasing to the eye of a landscape architect, it is a cardinal sin in bicycle planning. No one wants to weave back and forth while riding. Bicyclists want to travel in clear, straight lines, just as do people traveling in automobiles.

West Side Access

There are no bicycle accommodations for people accessing the site from the west, the driveway south of Kohl's or south of Lot 9. While the Kohl's driveway appears too narrow for 11' lanes and 5' bike lanes, it could accommodate 10' auto lanes and 5' bike lanes. The Lot 9 entrance configuration is even more confusing, apparently providing 19' automobile travel lanes. This is far too wide and will encourage speeding, rather than the careful driving required in a neighborhood such as this.

Set Back the Shared Use Path Crossings

The point at which the shared use ring path crosses the Merrydale Road driveway and Street B (or "Geiser Street") should be set back from Las Gallinas Road, mirroring the configuration of the crossing immediately to the north at the Rite Aid. By pulling the crossing back from the street, it ensures that drivers will have a clearer view of crossing bicyclists. This is standard practice in bicycle planning.

Put Bikes Above the Curb

It is disappointing to see that the internal circulation of the project puts all riders into the street with cars, no matter their age or comfort. A better configuration would be remove the Class 2 lanes from the street, narrow the street by 10' and widen the sidewalks to provide multiuse paths on both sides of the street. This would provide a truly all-ages-and-abilities network where grandmothers and grandchildren would feel safe riding from home to the movies, rather than worrying about whether the driver of a four-door pickup truck can actually see a 10-year-old on a bicycle.

Connection to SMART

Though this is a future project to be developed by the City of San Rafael, the proposed connections to the SMART station are frankly confusing. They show an 8' multiuse path, which is narrower than standard given its lack of a landscape buffer, plus a bike lane below the curb. It would be much simpler to merely continue the SMART pathway to the mall with a 10-12' multiuse path. There's no reason to put bicyclists in the roadway, forcing them into conflict with cars.

Overabundance of Parking

We are deeply concerned about the massive amount of parking that will characterize this project, under the current plans. Between the 1,402 public spaces and 2,233 resident spaces (a total of 3,635 parking spaces), the full project represents an *increase* of parking over the existing mall by over 700 parking spaces.

Public Parking vs. Public Park

One of the large revisions between the initial site plan and the 3/14/2022 plan was the expansion of the Town Square from half an acre to roughly one acre. While this seems like a lot, it pales in comparison to the nearly 10 acres of surface automobile parking being provided (setting aside the structured parking entirely). In a place where public green space is at a premium, why provide ten times as much public parking as public park?

Parking Increases Driving

[Peer reviewed research has demonstrated](#) that, the more parking people have at their home, the more likely they are to drive for most trips. If we are concerned about the traffic impacts of this project, why not provide *less* parking? This would cater to carless and car-light families, and would encourage families moving to the development to bring, at most, one car.

Parking Minimums No Longer Apply

Thanks to a recently-passed bill, [AB 2097](#), the City of San Rafael's parking mandates do not apply to this project, because it is entirely situated within one half-mile of the Civic Center SMART Station. Given that there are clear benefits to providing less parking than currently proposed, and no legal requirement to provide over 3,000 spaces, we encourage the project team to bring that total down and use the space for greater public amenities. People don't visit places because of the parking, they visit because there's something to do there.

Sincerely,



Warren J. Wells, AICP
Policy & Planning Director
Marin County Bicycle Coalition



Matthew Hartzell
Director of Planning
WTB-TAM



Responsible Growth in Marin

November 29, 2022

San Rafael Planning Commission
14 Fifth Avenue
San Rafael, CA 94901

RE: Northgate Town Square Study Session, November 29, 2022 – FOR PUBLIC RECORD

Honorable Planning Commissioners,

Apologies for sending this so late but we believe this visual will assist you as you gain perspective regarding the numerous changes proposed for North San Rafael in the near future. As the largest project, Northgate Square is of enormous concern for our community but so are the other significant projects and the cumulative effects on Parks and Recreation spaces and transportation coordination.

We request that you take a holistic view when considering the needs of the community and strongly consider all of the projects in the pipeline when discussing the plans for Parks and Recreation spaces (including where to prioritize in-lieu fees) and transportation connections including bike lanes, walkable pathways, bus lines, connections to the SMART train station and connections between these projects to the Town Square. We hope this image will help you visualize the impact and importance of getting this right.

Respectfully,
Claire Halenbeck, Community Vision Team Co-Leader, RGM



- 1. LOS GAMOS 212**
UNITS ALL RENTALS
- 2. NORTHGATE WALK**
138 UNITS ALL RENTALS
- 3. 245 NOVA ALBION WAY**
87 TOWNHOUSES OWNERSHIP - TOWNHOMES
- 4. NORTHGATE MALL, TOWN SQ.**
1422 UNITS
85 OWNERSHIP - TOWNHOMES
1337 RENTALS
- 5. 350 MERRYDALE**
45 TOWNHOUSES UNITS OWNERSHIP - TOWNHOMES

Diagram prepared by: Kuth Ranieri Architects

From: [Phillips, Galen](#)
To: [Planning Public Comment](#)
Subject: A Vote In Favor of the Northgate Redevelopment
Date: Tuesday, November 29, 2022 6:02:46 AM

Good morning,

My name is Galen Phillips. I am an Assistant U.S. Attorney in San Francisco, who currently rents a townhouse next to the Northgate Mall. I am writing in support of building affordable housing there.

I was born in San Diego, graduated law school in Los Angeles, where my now 19-month-old son was born, and moved to San Rafael after accepting my dream job as a federal prosecutor in the Northern District of California.

I have been attending open houses for the better part of my career as an attorney, which began in 2015. I have dreamed of home ownership for longer, believing that providing a stable home would be beneficial to the family I intend to raise. I have submitted multiple offers on homes and felt the sting of rejection each time, as it leaves me wondering why I bother spending valuable weekends with my son showing him places he will never live. It also leaves me asking a question I have struggled with most of my adult life: Can I afford to raise my family in my home state?

Housing is an investment. Existing stakeholders benefit from maintaining a limited supply. It results in the astronomical price growth we have seen for the last few years. And the recent hike in interest rates will not change that pattern, given the existing demand waiting in the wings for the rates to reverse course. Given this trajectory, it is no surprise that investors—not families—make up a greater and greater share of homebuyers

The mall has some nice uses, I will admit it. I have shared laughs and drinks in the outdoor space. My son received all his Covid vaccinations there within minutes of his arrival and without a reservation as no one else was there. And my son and I occasionally ride my bike together in the almost always vacant parking lot, doing circles and counting the tree. These perks are certainly not worth keeping if the alternative is providing what this state badly needs—affordable housing.

I hope this project passes. Our state badly needs it and others like it throughout the cities and communities I have called home for the better part of my life.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Galen Phillips

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Galen Phillips


From: [Lindsay Lara](#)
To: [Leslie Mendez](#)
Subject: Fw: Project at Terra Linda Mall
Date: Monday, November 28, 2022 6:04:53 PM

FYI

Lindsay Lara, CMC, CPMC | [City of San Rafael](#)

she/her/hers

CITY CLERK

1400 5th Avenue, Room 209

San Rafael, CA 94901

w - 415.485.3065

c - 415.827.3806



From: Elke Reinhardt [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, November 28, 2022 11:54 AM
To: Lindsay Lara <Lindsay.lara@cityofsanrafael.org>
Subject: Project at Terra Linda Mall

To Whom it may Concern,

I am saddened and appalled and the proposed scope and design currently being considered for the North Gate Mall in Terra Linda.

I had hoped that it would have a human appeal and be a welcoming place for the entire community here. Instead we have tall, boring, overpowering mass housing. There isn't a single inviting thing for the neighborhood. Perhaps a couple of fast food restaurants if you're into that. Obviously the entire goal here is mass housing. This is a small community. WE pride ourselves in visiting local businesses.

We were hoping for more public gathering places, perhaps a musical stage around some finer small restaurants w outdoor seating (this will have to be around for a while...), a children's playground, a wine bar, walking paths, a music or open mic area, a convenience store, a fountain w public seating.

This just feels like a huge dump on Terra Linda w our area being used for mass housing requirements.

Ask yourselves; would you want that across the stree from your driveway? Heck No! Neither

do we.

I does nothing to serve the community, only to make your numbers.

I'm very dissappointed by the people involve to dump such an ugly monster in my back yard. Have so class like every other city that has new developments. Look at Greenbrae mall, it's a wonderful and appealing public place with lots to offer for everyone. Look at downtown San Anselmo, Igancio Mall is very appealing, downtown Mill Valley.

This is not a poor or even middle class area. Townhouses are a million dollars and houses close to 2 million. Please don't soil your nest and make a decision that you will be proud of for years to come.

--

Best,

Elke Reinhardt

From: [Evan Tschuy](#)
To: [Planning Public Comment](#)
Subject: Northgate Mall Study Session - Bike Network Comments
Date: Tuesday, November 29, 2022 11:58:31 AM

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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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.

Evan Tschuy

From: [Carolyn Lenert](#)
To: [Tricia Stevens](#); [Planning Public Comment](#)
Subject: FW: Marin IJ Article; "North Marin Water District warns of housing strains on system"
Date: Tuesday, November 29, 2022 11:29:59 AM
Attachments: [mFFhD0kW63Nj9qV.png](#)
[N0ZqBDF9jv1bRCA2.png](#)

FYI, see below.

Carolyn S. Lenert

From: Sharon Rushton [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, November 29, 2022 11:09 AM
Subject: Marin IJ Article; "North Marin Water District warns of housing strains on system"

There is an insufficient water supply for the housing and population growth allowed by Marin's Housing Elements



Hi Sustainable TamAlmonte Friends,

It is absolutely incredible that most likely Marin County and many cities in Marin will approve their Housing Elements, even though the County doesn't have enough water. This is on top of many other extremely harmful and dangerous potential significant adverse unavoidable impacts that would result from implementation of the Housing Element(s).

Below is an excerpt from the 2022 Marin County DRAFT Housing Element DRAFT Environmental Impact Report (DEIR). The DEIR finds that an Insufficient Water Supply is a "**Significant Adverse Unavoidable Environmental Impact**" (SU) for areas served by the North Marin Water District and the Marin Municipal Water District during times of drought. This means the impact can NOT be mitigated within the time frame that the housing is supposed to be built. Please remember that there are 14 other Significant Adverse **Unavoidable** Environmental Impacts that would result from implementation of the Marin County DRAFT Housing Element too.

The 2007 Countywide Plan's EIR, which planned for less growth than the 2022 DRAFT Housing Element, found that Insufficient Water Supply for MMWD areas would be a "Significant Adverse **Unavoidable** Environmental Impact", even during normal rain years. We are uncertain why the two EIRs differ.

Please note that the 2022 Marin County Housing Element EIR left out the fact that MMWD gets 25% of its water from the Sonoma County Water Agency and, therefore (like NMWD), MMWD would not receive its full annual entitlement from Sonoma due to drought impacts.

EXCERPT FROM THE 2022 MARIN COUNTY DRAFT HOUSING ELEMENT DRAFT EIR:

"Impact 19-2b: Project and Cumulative Water Supply Impacts: North Marin Water District and Marin Municipal Water District:

Parts of the unincorporated County are served by North Marin Water District (NMWD), the majority of whose supplies are dependent upon water purchased from Sonoma County Water Agency and piped into the County. Other parts of the unincorporated County are served by Marin Municipal Water District (MMWD), the majority of whose supplies are dependent upon water stored in Marin County reservoirs. When these Districts have access to full annual water entitlements and full reservoir capacity, they are able to accommodate population growth as indicated in their "2020 Urban Water Management Plan for North Marin Water District" and "MMWD Water Resources Plan 2040."

However, due to drought impacts in Sonoma County, NMWD is not able to receive its full annual entitlement from Sonoma County Water Agency and has adopted an ordinance imposing moratoriums on new connections in order to work within its restricted supply. Additionally, until recently MMWD had imposed restrictions on due to water shortages in its reservoirs as a result of multiple years of less than average rainfall. MMWD's restriction on irrigation connections was lifted in 2022 because large storm events in the winter of 2021-2022 filled the reservoirs. Because there is uncertainty in the future about the amount of water that would be available for the Districts to supply to customers during the current, ongoing drought, and the Districts are in the early stages of seeking alternate water sources, possible multiple new connections proposed in the Project and cumulative (Project and Districts' commitments outside of the Project) scenarios could result in demands in excess of available supply during dry and multiple dry years, which would be a potentially significant impact.

Mitigation Measure:

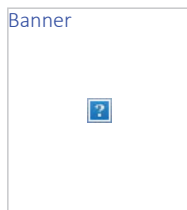
No feasible mitigation is available. This impact would remain significant and unavoidable."

Please read the below article entitled; "**North Marin Water District warns of housing strains on system**"

Best regards,

Sharon

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Sharon Rushton

President | [Sustainable TamAlmonte](#)

[tamalmonite.org](#)

<https://www.marinij.com/2022/11/25/north-marin-water-district-warns-of-housing-strains-on-system/>

North Marin Water District warns of housing strains on system

By RICHARD HALSTEAD | rhalstead@marinij.com | Marin Independent Journal

PUBLISHED: November 25, 2022



Managers at the North Marin Water District are cautioning that the cost of building water supply infrastructure necessary to accommodate new housing mandated by the state could make some of the housing infeasible.

The warning is contained in a letter commenting on a report that evaluates the environmental impacts of building 3,569 new dwellings in

Marin's unincorporated areas from 2023 to 2031 as ordered by the state.

The environmental impact report (EIR), which is scheduled for certification by county supervisors and planning commissioners in January, identifies 15 effects that are significant and unavoidable. In addition to water supply, the impacts include air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, transportation, visual character, wastewater treatment, noise and tribal resources.

"Some housing sites identified in the proposed Housing Element Update would require substantial infrastructure improvements (e.g., utility pipelines, pump stations, water tanks, expanded wastewater treatment plants), the construction of which would cause environmental impacts," the report says.

In its letter, the North Marin Water District wrote that the district "generally does not have distribution infrastructure in place for areas north of the city of Novato limits."

"New housing development proposed north of this extent will require substantial distribution infrastructure to be constructed to allow water service by NMWD," the letter said.

The letter stated that infrastructure needs identified in the EIR "carry approximate costs upwards of several million dollars, which may be cost prohibitive for the size of developments being proposed."

For example, the letter notes that at a site owned by the Buck Institute for Research on Aging north of Novato where some 250 residences are proposed, it would be necessary to build a 400,000-gallon, stainless steel storage tank that would measure 45 feet in diameter and stand 35 feet tall.

The tank would be installed on the eastern slope of Mount Burdell and would be situated about 110 feet higher than the highest existing structure.

The letter also states that a 200,000-gallon tank with a diameter of 35 feet and standing 35 feet tall would need to be constructed on the Cherry Hill Ridge line to provide water to 147 dwellings proposed along Atherton Avenue.

Language in the EIR seems to acknowledge the problem. "It is also possible that the necessary infrastructure improvements would affect the economic feasibility of housing construction on these sites, and therefore reduce the likelihood of their development," the report says.

The EIR includes two project alternatives, one of which is designed to mitigate impacts on water and wastewater service providers that lack the capacity to serve the level of new development proposed.

The EIR notes that the North Marin Water District is under an emergency water conservation ordinance that prohibits new water service connections except under limited conditions, and that the Bolinas Community Public Utility District has had a moratorium on new water connections in effect since 1971.

The alternative proposes relocating housing sites from areas served by NMWD to areas in the city-centered/baylands corridor, which the EIR states are served by Marin Municipal Water District. The North Marin letter, however, contains additional information that casts doubt on the effectiveness of such a strategy.

The EIR states that the Marin Municipal Water District serves cities and towns along the county's city-centered corridor from the Golden Gate Bridge to the southern border of Novato and that North Marin provides service to Novato and parts of West Marin.

However, Eric Miller, North Marin's assistant general manager, said the district attempted to point out in its letter that the district's service area extends further south than indicated in the EIR and includes adjacent unincorporated areas of the county.

Don Dickenson, a county planning commissioner, raised this issue when the Board of Supervisors and the Planning Commission held a joint public meeting to discuss the EIR on Nov. 16.

"The EIR seems to miss the fact that while the Sonoma County water tie is significant for North Marin, 25% of the MMWD water comes from the Sonoma County water tie," Dickenson said.

"All of the service connections north of Puerto Suello Hill get their water from Sonoma County because of the way the piping system is set up," Dickenson added. "That doesn't seem to be clear in the water section of the EIR. The same issues that apply to NMWD also apply to a lesser degree to MMWD."

Adriane Mertens, a spokeswoman for the Marin Municipal Water District, said, "The amount of water the district receives from Sonoma

County Water Agency fluctuates depending on conditions and time of year. Under normal conditions, it can be between 20% to 25% of our daily total water supply.”

Mertens added that the estimate assumes dry conditions. She wrote that during times when more water is available, such as wet winters, MMWD might get as much as 80% to 90% of its water from Sonoma.

Both of the project alternatives contained in the EIR recommend relocating housing sites to three locations: a 33-acre parcel at 2 Jeannette Prandi Way in Lucas Valley near Marin County Juvenile Hall; two parcels totaling about 234 acres in the Novato area along Redwood Highway, which are owned by the Buck Institute for Research on Aging; and three parcels totaling about 315 acres at the St. Vincent’s School for Boys site in San Rafael.

It is unclear whether these sites would be any less reliant on Sonoma County water than the sites currently recommended for housing.

“I understand that for those sites that may not have adequate water in west Marin the option is to move them to east Marin and assume that MMWD will be able to provide the water,” Supervisor Stephanie Moulton-Peters said.

“That is a concern that MMWD is being asked to provide additional service to cities and towns along the 101 corridor,” she said. “Have they weighed in on whether there is adequate water to accommodate additional units being moved from West Marin?”

None of the county planners participating in the meeting responded to Moulton-Peters’ question.

Mertens said MMWD has submitted no comments for the environmental impact report.

Sarah Jones, assistant director of the Marin County Community Development Agency, said, “We’ll be addressing all the comments in the final EIR, including the MMWD and NMWD water supply issues.”

“The cost of infrastructure is going to be a consideration for Marin regardless of housing development, since there are needs just to serve existing residents,” Jones wrote, “but it will also come into play for developers calculating the feasibility of projects in Marin.”

From: [Justin Phillips](#)
To: [Planning Public Comment](#)
Subject: In support of northgate mall redevelopment
Date: Tuesday, November 29, 2022 9:49:59 AM

I'm very much in support of redeveloping the northgate mall project in it's current form. I'm a 37 year old father of two children less than five in age. My wife and I have been in the bay area for over a decade and in marin for three years. We are both advocates of transit oriented development and this project could not be a better example of that!

The smart train, the lincoln bike path, the downtown san rafael bus terminal are all within a stones throw of this space. The space at northgate today is underutilized, I don't think anyone could argue that. Just check out the empty parking lot [crater](#) any day or night of the week.

As I look towards the future, both for myself and my family, I am optimistic that the car focused lifestyle many americans leave today will be a relic of the past looked upon the same way we look at rotary telephones. Functional, but wildly inefficient and slow.

- Justin Phillips - slow biker with children in tow all smiling

From: [Kevin Gammon](#)
To: [Planning Public Comment](#)
Subject: Northgate Mall Study Session - Bike Network Comments
Date: Tuesday, November 29, 2022 11:38:08 AM

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.

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Thank you for your time and consideration.

—Kevin Gammon

From: [Matt Farber](#)
To: [Planning Public Comment](#)
Subject: Northgate Mall Study Session - Bike Network Comments
Date: Tuesday, November 29, 2022 11:57:17 AM

Chair Previtali and Members of the Planning Commission,

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Thank you for your time and consideration.

From: [braydan young](#)
To: [Planning Public Comment](#)
Subject: Northgate Mall redevelopment
Date: Tuesday, November 29, 2022 8:34:45 AM

I'm supporting the project 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!

--

Braydan Young



From: [Tristam Coffin](#)
To: [Planning Public Comment](#)
Subject: Northgate Mall Redevelopment
Date: Tuesday, November 29, 2022 11:25:55 AM

Good afternoon,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

I'm supporting the Northgate Mall Redevelopment project 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
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- 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!

Thank you,

Tristam Coffin
San Rafael Resident

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Tricia Stevens](#)
Cc: [Planning Public Comment](#)
Subject: Northgate Town Square Project, meeting 11/29/2022
Date: Monday, November 28, 2022 11:12:59 PM

Dear Planning Commission,

As a resident of San Rafael I want to share with you my concerns about the Northgate Town Square Development Plan

Height of buildings

The buildings are too high. They are out of character for a residential suburban area. Residence building height should be about 3 or 4 stories high at most, not 6 or 7 stories high. Also tall residences along the side walk are out of place, & not appealing. To me, those tall buildings are not attractive.

Density and recreation space

Density of population is stressful in and of itself. There should be less people per square foot in a residential area. There should be more nature area, spaces for mini parks, in addition to a bigger community park, more benches, walking paths and recreation for the residents. Also the dog park should be designed away from seniors and children who can be toppled by dogs who get loose. The developer should make a reasonable profit, not a killing, and the community should like the aesthetics of the development. The development should feel homey to the people who like there.

The proposed Northgate should be a development the community and residents are proud of. Please take the time to get it right. Cutting corners, building out-of-place really big apartment blocks that do not fit the surroundings, and skimping on recreational open space needed by thousands of residents does not achieve the required goal.

Thank you for your consideration of above,

Ruth R. Harris

San Rafael, Ca.

From: [Wendy J](#)
To: [Tricia Stevens](#)
Cc: [Planning Public Comment](#); [Distrib- City Clerk](#); [Leslie Mendez](#)
Subject: Northgate Town Square Redevelopment Project
Date: Monday, November 28, 2022 10:49:47 PM

To Whom It May Concern,

Please consider my comments regarding the Northgate Town Square Redevelopment Project.

Yes, eliminate the indoor mall!

1320 residential units is much too many! Please don't create a monster at the mall.

The increased traffic would be horrible.

The proposed development is much too dense, uninteresting and blocky, resembling "the projects" or a prison, rather than a modern "village".

Also, too tall buildings would block local views & the shadow would be significant and dreadful.

Smaller clusters would look better.

Modern design is appropriate, but brick is not a common local style. Neutral colors (with colorful accents) would be best, to create a less jarring eyesore.

Low- or no-water native plants, including blooms, should be used primarily or exclusively.

Reclaimed water should be avoided, for the sake of wildlife. Open space should be maximized, to benefit all. Perhaps the design of outdoor spaces could be streamlined, to avoid looking fussy or over designed.

I'm a native of Terra Linda. My parents bought their Eichler home (new) in 1960, before the mall was built. I've seen the changes to the mall and Terra Linda over the years.

I'm also a U.C. Berkeley trained artist and designer. I feel it's unfair to ruin the T.L. neighborhood with an overly dense, oversized redevelopment of the mall, for the profit of mall ownership, and to satisfy requirements for new housing in one fell swoop.

Sincerely,

Wendy Janet

[Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android](#)

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Planning Public Comment](#)
Cc: [Tricia Stevens](#); [Mayor Kate](#)
Subject: Northgate Town Square--FOR PUBLIC COMMENT
Date: Monday, November 28, 2022 7:01:20 PM

November 28, 2022

To: Planning Commission of San Rafael

Subject: For The Public Comment on Plans for the Northgate Town Square

Dear Honorable Commissioners,

I would like to direct my comments about the development of the Northgate Town Square under its current proposal towards you. I have lived and worked in San Rafael since 1990 and I currently live within a short walking distance to Northgate Mall.

We now have a once in a lifetime opportunity to make this site an attractive place for all—with retail, entertainment and housing that would have a sensible environmental impact. However, the developer's plan includes an enormous, seven story building along Los Ranchitos and Northgate Drive. Buildings of this height and mass are completely out of character for our neighborhood. This proposal, as is, will make this center a congested, unsightly mess for all who live close by. Furthermore, the overall amount of open space that is proposed for the town square is inadequate and will not be a welcoming place for the residents of Terra Linda. Rather, with the height and size of the buildings that are planned for that area—the whole complex will appear more like a fortress than anything else. Few people will want to go there.

Honorable Commissioners, you have a duty and responsibility to make this 20-year project an inspiring example of mixed-use development that enriches the community. Please make the most of it! The city has the responsibility of making this site a welcoming place for the community-at-large by following the guidelines of GP 2040. Skimping on recreational open space by introducing out-of-place enormous apartment buildings is a big injustice to all who live here and for the future.

Please, let's make things right! No one should feel so pressured by development forces--both private and state-- that by cutting corners make this part of Terra Linda into a Terra Feo—ugly and uninviting.

The Northgate site could become a jewel and source of pride to the city. Let's give pragmatism a pause to reconsider OUR future.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter. We are counting on you.

Sincerely,

Ken Dickinson

[REDACTED], San Rafael, CA

From: [Parker Day](#)
To: [Planning Public Comment](#)
Subject: Northgate Mall Study Session - Bike Network Comments
Date: Tuesday, November 29, 2022 11:41:32 AM

Chair Previtali and Members of the Planning Commission,

While I support the Northgate Mall redevelopment, I have some specific concerns about bicycle and pedestrian safety. This project has the opportunity to follow traffic safety best practices, ensuring safety, a pleasant walking/biking/rolling environment, and more accessible space for all.

Some key points of the project that need addressing are:

- The indirect, meandering pathways. Pedestrians should have direct pathways that respect their time, are wide, and easy to navigate, especially for users with different abilities.
- There is no safe bicycle access on the entire west side of the site. This is unacceptable and shows that safe bicycle access is a secondary consideration in the design.
- The multiuse path on the east side needs better protection from cars. There should be hardened, physical separation to be accommodating of all types of cyclists, not just those who are comfortable using paint-only bike lanes. Paint does not offer protection.
- Finally, the amount of parking is really concerning. Parking minimums for projects near transit were eliminated in state law. It's obscene to add so much parking to a project this size.

I will say there have been some improvements in the bicycle network since the last draft, however, this is a big opportunity that should not be squandered. Let's build for the future and make truly safe, accessible, accommodating space that improves the area and looks to the future.

Thank you,

Parker Day


From: [Becky Rosales](#)
To: [Planning Public Comment](#)
Cc: [Alissa Chacko](#)
Subject: Public Comment: Northgate Townsquare Study Session
Date: Monday, November 28, 2022 6:31:51 PM

Dear Planning Commissioners,

We wanted to share some great news about our community. Our student population is finally growing again after the pandemic. In fact, according to new data commissioned by the Miller Creek School District, our student population is expected to grow at 4% through 2030. The birth rate in 2021 and 2022 are among the highest in the last few decades. After the instability presented by COVID, we can finally start to get a clear picture of what the future has in store for our community and this District.

This District is enthusiastically in favor of building new housing in our community. It is a serious challenge for the District to recruit and retain talented staff when they can't afford to live there. We also want to be sure that families that currently reside here can afford to stay.

Having said that, we as a community need to be flexible and creative with solutions to be sure that our expanding enrollment does not impact the student experience that our families have come to expect from the District. Given that our enrollment is growing, and new housing units are being constructed, there are going to be a lot more students added to the Miller Creek community. In fact, our most recent projection is that just from new developments, we will be adding 456 students in the next 8 years representing a 29% percentage increase.

We look forward to working with you in the coming months. The Northgate Townsquare Project is about to start work on their Environmental Impact Report. We want to be sure this data is included in that report.

We are optimistic about the future in this community. To that end, we need to be sure that as we are facing enormous growth, our leaders work with the development community to ensure that enrollment growth does not diminish the education of our new and existing students.

District Data:

- [Development Impact Presentation, 10/11/22](#) and [Development Impact Report, 10/18/22](#)
- [Strategic Facilities Plan Presentation, 11/12/22](#)

Sincerely,



Becky Rosales

Superintendent

Miller Creek School District

<http://www.millercreeksd.org>

415-492-3706

My email address is brosales@millercreeksd.org.

The information contained in this correspondence is intended only for the individual or entity named above, and may contain information that is privileged and confidential. Dissemination, distribution or copying without the prior approval of the sender is strictly prohibited. If you think that you have received this message in error, please delete it and notify the sender.

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The information contained in this correspondence is intended only for the individual or entity named above, and may contain information that is privileged and confidential.

Dissemination, distribution or copying without the prior approval of the sender is strictly prohibited. If you think that you have received this message in error, please delete it and notify the sender.

November 28, 2022

Re: 11/29/22 Northgate Town Square Project – FOR PUBLIC RECORD

Honorable commissioners:

As you deliberate on the Northgate Town Square Development Project, I request you consider the enormous detrimental impact that 1,422 housing units will have on suburban Terra Linda.

I believe that the Northgate Town Square development should be limited to the 900 units that I believe were originally in the San Rafael General Plan 2040. You need to take into account all the other large projects that are being planned **all within 1 mile**:

- Northgate Town Square – 1,422 units (Includes 85 Townhouses for private ownership)
- Northgate Walk (Four Points Sheraton & gas station) – 136 rental units
- Los Gamos – 192 market rate rental units + 20 BMR units – total 212 units
- 350 Merrydale Road – 45 Townhouses for private ownership
- 245 Nova Albion Way – 87 Townhouses for private ownership (There is a contract to purchase this property, but it is not yet sold.)
- The above doesn't list any of the smaller developments 10 units and under or developments that will be requesting permits during the 20+ years of construction

The Terra Linda community is carrying a disproportionate burden in the number of housing units allocated to us. This will strain our resources and change the nature of our neighborhood.

You must have read the recent IJ article, *NMWD warns of housing strain on system*, this is just the beginning of the water wars to come. You as the Planning Commissioners must PLAN accordingly to accommodate a certain amount of growth without straining the fragile infrastructure:

- Dwindling water resource
- Traffic on single lane roads (safety of children bicycling to school)
- Leaky old sewage pipes
- Dated electric grid
- Single evacuation route
- Limited Police and increasing crime rate
- Impact of additional fire risk

In conclusion, the Planning Commission has a responsibility to make this development an example of good planning, respect the suburban character of our community, and to abide by the principles of GP2040, on which we based our life planning. Thank you for your consideration regarding this important project to our community.

Sincerely,
Adolfo Medved
34-year resident of Terra Linda

CATALINA LOZANO

Attorney at Law

San Rafael, CA 94903-3618

Telephone: [REDACTED]

November 28, 2022

San Rafael Planning Commission
1400 5th Ave., 3rd Floor
San Rafael, CA 94901
Via email to: PlanningPublicComment@cityofsanrafael.org
cc: tricia.stevens@cityofsanrafael.org

Re: Northgate Town Square Meeting
Tuesday November 29, 2022 at 7:00 PM

Honorable Commissioners:

My husband and I have lived in Terra Linda, behind the Northgate Mall, since 1986, and we raised our children here. The purpose of this letter is to let you know that while we do not want the Northgate Mall property to be empty, we and our neighbors have serious misgivings about the Northgate Town Square Development Plans. Among them are the height, location of the main entrance, lack of open space, lack of water, and the impact of the additional traffic.

As just one example, the developer's plans include an enormous, large seven-story building along Los Ranchitos Road next to a six-story building on the corner of Los Ranchitos and Northgate Drive. Buildings of this height and mass are completely out of character for the suburban Northgate area. Housing in the area is mainly single story while commercial buildings close to the streets are three-stories at most. The addition of the 1,400+ residences makes no sense for too many reasons to cite here, but one that is obvious is, where will the water come from? We are in a drought!

As you know, the City has a duty to make this development an example of good planning, and to abide by the principles of GP2040. The present plans do neither.

Thank you for your consideration regarding this important project to our community.

Very truly yours,

CATALINA LOZANO

From: [Janet Shirley](#)
To: [Planning Public Comment](#)
Cc: [Tricia Stevens](#); [Mayor Kate](#)
Subject: Northgate Town Square--FOR PUBLIC COMMENT
Date: Monday, November 28, 2022 4:34:47 PM

November 27, 2022

To: The members of the Planning Commission of San Rafael

Subject: Plans for the Northgate Town Square, FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Dear Honorable Commissioners,

The purpose of this email is to express my feelings regarding the development of the Northgate Town Square as it is being currently proposed. I have been a resident of San Rafael for 25 years and live within a short walking distance to Northgate Mall.

This mall used to be a relatively nice place to go. But the property managers have let this great site deteriorate over the last 20 years and were never interested in making it an attractive environment for local residents. (Even the Bon Air shopping center is a million times more inviting than our site here).

We now have a once in a lifetime opportunity to make this site an attractive place for all—with retail, entertainment and housing that would have a sensible environmental impact. However, the developer's plan includes an enormous, seven story building along Los Ranchitos and Northgate Drive. Buildings of this height and mass are completely out of character for our neighborhood. This proposal, as is, will make this center a congested, unsightly mess for all who live close by. Furthermore, the overall amount of open space that is proposed for the town square is inadequate and will not be a welcoming place for the residents of Terra Linda. Rather, with the height and size of the buildings that are planned for that area—the whole complex will appear more like a fortress than anything else. Few people will want to go there.

Honorable Commissioners, you have a duty and responsibility to make this 20-year project an inspiring example of mixed-use development that enriches the community. Please make the most of it! The city has the responsibility of making this site a welcoming place for the community-at-large by following the guidelines of GP 2040. Skimping on recreational open space by introducing out-of-place enormous apartment buildings is a big injustice to all who live here and for the future.

Please, let's make things right! No one should feel so pressured by development forces--both private and state-- that by cutting corners make this part of Terra Linda into a Terra Feo—ugly and uninviting.

The Northgate site could become a jewel and source of pride to the city. Let's give pragmatism a pause to reconsider OUR future.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter. We are counting on you.

Sincerely,

Janet Shirley

, San Rafael, CA

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, November 28, 2022 5:45 PM
To: Planning Public Comment <PlanningPublicComment@cityofsanrafael.org>
Cc: Tricia Stevens <tricia.stevens@cityofsanrafael.org>
Subject: Plans for the Northgate Town Square, FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Dear Honorable Commissioners,

I am writing in regard to the development of the Northgate Town Square as it is being currently proposed. The developer's plan for a huge seven story building along Los Ranchitos and Northgate Drive is completely out of character for the neighborhood and will create a congested, unappealing eyesore for those of us who live and shop nearby. Additionally, the amount of open space that is included in the plan is wholly inadequate, as it will be completely overshadowed by the enormously high and sprawling buildings of the proposed complex.

PLEASE take your opportunity NOW to make this project a welcoming attractive space for all - with retail, entertainment and housing, by increasing the recreational open space area and decreasing the height and size of the proposed buildings. It's time to make sound decisions that will have a sensible and esthetic environmental impact for the future of our community. Please do the right thing, be forward thinking and make the Northgate Town Square enrich our beautiful area with a more welcoming, attractive and inviting design!

Thank you for your consideration,
Joan Wlodaver
[REDACTED]
San Rafael

From: Wendy J. [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, November 28, 2022 10:48 PM
To: Tricia Stevens <Tricia.Stevens@cityofsanrafael.org>
Cc: Planning Public Comment <planningpubliccomment@cityofsanrafael.org>; Distrib- City Clerk <city.clerk@cityofsanrafael.org>; Leslie Mendez <leslie.mendez@cityofsanrafael.org>
Subject: Northgate Town Square Redevelopment Project

To Whom It May Concern,

Please consider my comments regarding the Northgate Town Square Redevelopment Project.

Yes, eliminate the indoor mall!

1320 residential units is much too many! Please don't create a monster at the mall. The increased traffic would be horrible.

The proposed development is much too dense, uninteresting and blocky, resembling "the projects" or a prison, rather than a modern "village".

Also, too tall buildings would block local views & the shadow would be significant and dreadful.

Smaller clusters would look better.

Modern design is appropriate, but brick is not a common local style. Neutral colors (with colorful accents) would be best, to create a less jarring eyesore.

Low- or no-water native plants, including blooms, should be used primarily or exclusively. Reclaimed water should be avoided, for the sake of wildlife. Open space should be maximized, to benefit all. Perhaps the design of outdoor spaces could be streamlined, to avoid looking fussy or over designed.

I'm a native of Terra Linda. My parents bought their Eichler home (new) in 1960, before the mall was built. I've seen the changes to the mall and Terra Linda over the years.

I'm also a U.C. Berkeley trained artist and designer. I feel it's unfair to ruin the T.L. neighborhood with an overly dense, oversized redevelopment of the mall, for the profit of mall ownership, and to satisfy requirements for new housing in one fell swoop.

Sincerely,

Wendy Janet

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, November 28, 2022 7:01 PM
To: Planning Public Comment <planningpubliccomment@cityofsanrafael.org>
Cc: Tricia Stevens <tricia.stevens@cityofsanrafael.org>; Mayor Kate <Kate.Colin@cityofsanrafael.org>
Subject: Northgate Town Square--FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

November 28, 2022

To: Planning Commission of San Rafael

Subject: For The Public Comment on Plans for the Northgate Town Square

Dear Honorable Commissioners,

I would like to direct my comments about the development of the Northgate Town Square under its current proposal towards you. I have lived and worked in San Rafael since 1990 and I currently live within a short walking distance to Northgate Mall.

We now have a once in a lifetime opportunity to make this site an attractive place for all—with retail, entertainment and housing that would have a sensible environmental impact. However, the developer's plan includes an enormous, seven story building along Los Ranchitos and Northgate Drive. Buildings of this height and mass are completely out of character for our neighborhood. This proposal, as is, will make this center a congested, unsightly mess for all who live close by. Furthermore, the overall amount of open space that is proposed for the town square is inadequate and will not be a welcoming place for the residents of Terra Linda. Rather, with the height and size of the buildings that are planned for that area—the whole complex will appear more like a fortress than anything else. Few people will want to go there.

Honorable Commissioners, you have a duty and responsibility to make this 20-year project an inspiring example of mixed-use development that enriches the community. Please make the most of it! The city has the responsibility of making this site a welcoming place for the community-at-large by following the guidelines of GP 2040. Skimping on recreational open space by introducing out-of-place enormous apartment buildings is a big injustice to all who live here and for the future.

Please, let's make things right! No one should feel so pressured by development forces--both private and state-- that by cutting corners make this part of Terra Linda into a Terra Feo—ugly and uninviting.

The Northgate site could become a jewel and source of pride to the city. Let's give pragmatism a pause to reconsider OUR future.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter. We are counting on you.

Sincerely,

Ken Dickinson

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, November 28, 2022 11:10 PM
To: Tricia Stevens <tricia.stevens@cityofsanrafael.org>
Subject: Northgate Town Square-For Public Comment

Honorable Commissioners,

My husband and I moved here from San Francisco because we were tired of all the traffic, the number of people everywhere, and the noise we had to endure.

We decided to move to Marin, and we feel so very fortunate to be living here.

I realize there is a shortage of housing but to put in 1422 residential units in such a small area is crazy. How in the world will anyone get on to highway 101. We will have loads of pollution. So much for Governor Newsome's carbon neutrality.

I feel compelled to write to you because this area is so very special. After you leave we will still be here. We will have to look at the result.

I agree with the letter RGM wrote and pray that you will take it all under consideration.

Best,
Sharon Navratil

[REDACTED].

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Monday, November 28, 2022 11:12 PM

To: Tricia Stevens <tricia.stevens@cityofsanrafael.org>

Cc: Planning Public Comment <PlanningPublicComment@cityofsanrafael.org>

Subject: Northgate Town Square Project, meeting 11/29/2022

Dear Planning Commission,

As a resident of San Rafael I want to share with you my concerns about the Northgate Town Square Development Plan

Height of buildings

The buildings are too high. They are out of character for a residential suburban area.

Residence building height should be about 3 or 4 stories high at most, not 6 or 7 stories high. Also tall residences along the side walk are out of place, & not appealing. To me, those tall buildings are not attractive.

Density and recreation space

Density of population is stressful in and of itself. There should be less people per square foot in a residential area. There should be more nature area, spaces for mini parks, in addition to a bigger community park, more benches, walking paths and recreation for the residents.

Also the dog park should be designed away from seniors and children who can be toppled by dogs who get loose. The developer should make a reasonable profit, not a killing, and the community should like the aesthetics of the development. The development should feel homey to the people who live there.

The proposed Northgate should be a development the community and residents are proud of. Please take the time to get it right. Cutting corners, building out-of-place really big apartment blocks that do not fit the surroundings, and skimping on recreational open space needed by thousands of residents does not achieve the required goal.

Thank you for your consideration of above,

Ruth R. Harris

San Rafael, Ca.

From: [William P. Bacon](#)
To: [Planning Public Comment](#); [Tricia Stevens](#)
Subject: Strong support for Northgate Town Square
Date: Monday, November 28, 2022 11:59:30 AM

Dear Members of the Planning Commission and Staff,

My name is Bill Bacon and thank you for the opportunity to share my perspective. Thank you as well for your service to our city. I am a millennial resident and homeowner in Terra Linda and I would like to express my strong support for the redevelopment proposal at Northgate Mall and the developer's proposal, Northgate Town Square.

All cities, San Rafael included, must evolve and change over time if they want to remain vibrant and economically active. Sometimes that means existing buildings and uses are replaced with new buildings that better reflect the needs of today's world. The Bay Area is in the midst of a severe housing crisis and it is time for Terra Linda, San Rafael, and Marin County in general to help play a role by opening our community to new neighbors. This project site is an excellent place to start.

This development is a thoughtful project which will help provide homes to over a thousand families that would otherwise have to compete for space in our existing limited housing stock. That this project designates at least 96 of its units as below market-rate makes this an even more critical project to the continued health and vitality of our community. We must take action as a city to help address the housing emergency in the Bay Area and despite some of my neighbors exaggerated concerns as expressed since this project was first proposed, this is as good a location as possible in Terra Linda to add higher density homes.

As a millennial homeowner in Terra Linda I hope our community can take a constructive and forward looking approach to the evolution of Terra Linda by supporting more homes, new businesses, and fresh ideas about how to use the existing developed land in our neighborhood.

I strongly encourage the Planning Commission to continue to support this project and advance it as quickly as possible.

Thank you,

William Bacon


San Rafael, CA 94903

From: [Tricia Stevens](#)
To: [Michaela O'Brien](#)
Cc: [Leslie Mendez](#)
Subject: Fw: Northgate Town Square-For Public Comment
Date: Tuesday, November 29, 2022 7:30:10 AM

Tricia Stevens, AICP
City of San Rafael Contract Planner
Email: Tricia.stevens@cityofsanrafael.org
Phone: (916) 698-4592

From: sharonjean@aol.com <sharonjean@aol.com>
Sent: Monday, November 28, 2022 11:10 PM
To: Tricia Stevens <tricia.stevens@cityofsanrafael.org>
Subject: Northgate Town Square-For Public Comment

Honorable Commissioners,

My husband and I moved here from San Francisco because we were tired of all the traffic, the number of people everywhere, and the noise we had to endure. We decided to move to Marin and we feel so very fortunate to be living here.

I realize there is a shortage of housing but to put in 1422 residential units in such a small area is crazy. How in the world will anyone get on to highway 101. We will have loads of pollution . So much for Governor Newsome's carbon neutrality.

I feel compelled to write to you because this area is so very special. After you leave we will still be here. We will have to look at the result.

I agree with the letter RGM wrote and pray that you will take it all under consideration.

Best,
Sharon Navratil

From: [Alexa Rhoads](#)
To: [Planning Public Comment](#)
Subject: Support for Northgate Mall redevelopment
Date: Tuesday, November 29, 2022 9:02:16 AM

Hi City of San Rafael,

I'm supporting the project in its 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!

Thank you!

Alexa

--

Alexa Rhoads 

From: [Jack Hogan](#)
To: [Planning Public Comment](#)
Subject: Support for the Northgate Mall redevelopment
Date: Tuesday, November 29, 2022 9:09:59 AM

Hi there,

I live in San Rafael with my wife and two kids and I am writing in support of the Northgate Mall redevelopment project. I am also a third generation resident of Marin and love calling this place home. Professionally, I am a civil engineer and I follow regional issues including housing and the Regional Housing Needs Assessment. There are few locations in Marin that are ideally suited for building new housing and meeting RHNA quotas - in my opinion, Northgate Mall is one of these close-to-ideal locations.

I'm also supporting the project 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!

Best regards

Jack Hogan
San Rafael Resident

From: [Responsible Growth Marin](#)
To: [Planning Public Comment; Tricia Stevens](#)
Subject: Alternatives for the Northgate Town Square Project - FOR PUBLIC RECORD
Date: Tuesday, November 29, 2022 10:30:03 AM
Attachments: [11.29.22 PC Mtg.pdf](#)

Honorable Planning Commissioner's,

Apologies for sending the attachment so late. We request that at tonight's study session you consider RGM's alternatives and discuss these and other alternatives with Merlone Geier.

Thank you for your service and your attention to the community's concerns regarding this important project for our community.

Sincerely,
Grace Geraghty, Executive Director
Claire Halenbeck, Community Vision Team Lead
Responsible Growth in Marin (RGM)



Responsible Growth in Marin

Alternatives for Northgate Town Square Development

Optimizing Northgate's position at the Center of Marin's
Community and Housing Grid

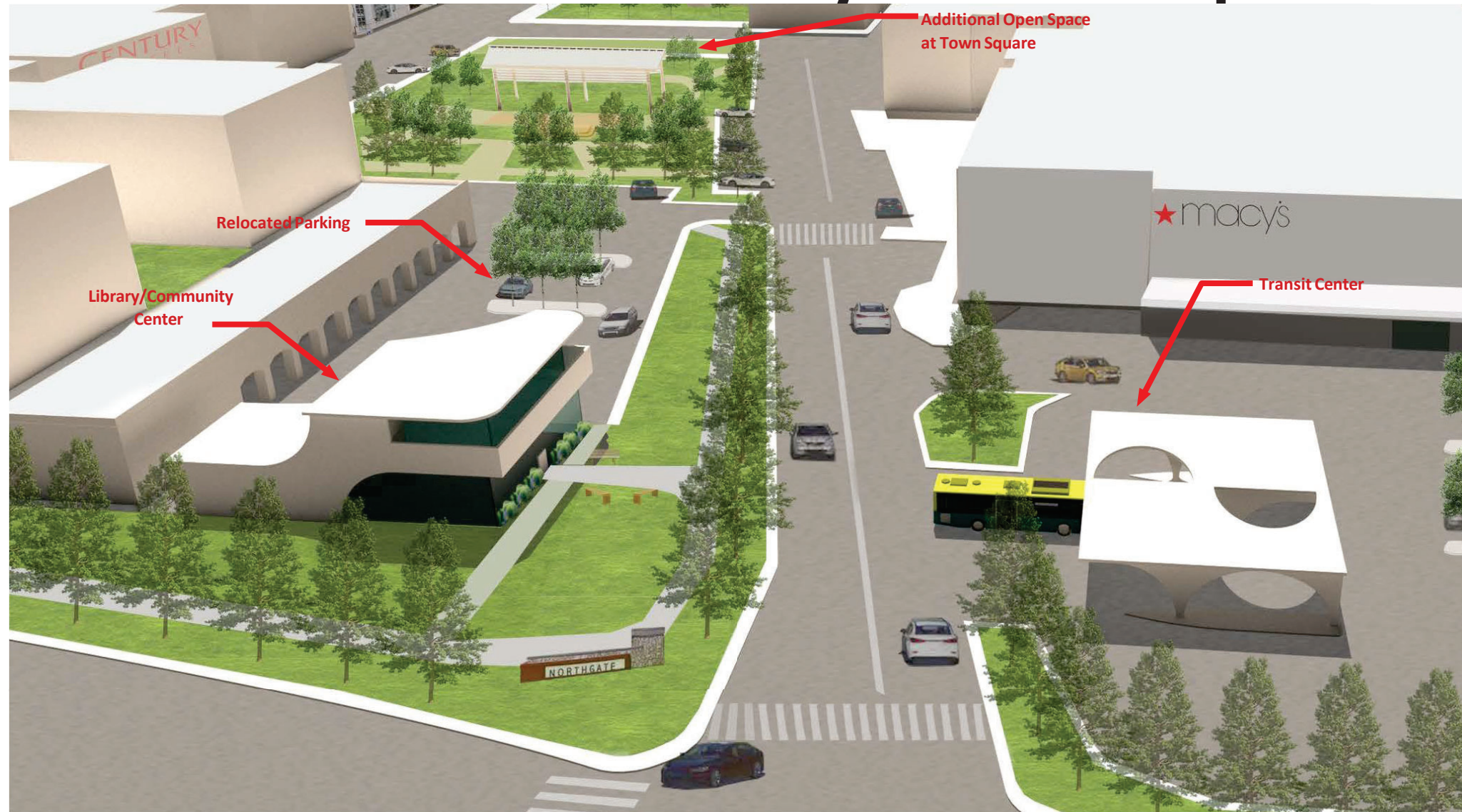
RGM's Alternative

- Optimize tall buildings at the center and northwest near other tall buildings
- Create an inviting grand entrance at Merrydale into the Northgate Town Square
 - Complimented by a library/community center or other amenity on one side and
 - A 21st century mini-transit hub on other
- Create more open space for town square by relocating parking

Make Northgate a “go to” destination for all of Marin to enjoy



Axonometric View of Entry to Town Square



RGM Proposes Alternatives – 3 C’s

Character	Community	Connectivity
Create an attractive, welcoming gateway at the Merrydale entrance	Outdoor spaces that bring new residents and surrounding neighbors together in a healthy environment	Create a coordinated transportation hub near the Merrydale entrance
Draw people into the Town Square that reflects the culture and values of San Rafael	Town Square becomes a civic, social, retail and recreational activity “go to site” as planned for 30+ years	Encourage all modes of transportation that is safe for pedestrians and bicycles in the Town Square area
Reduce height and size of the units along Las Gallinas, relocate some to northwest side	Amenities such as: multi-age play areas, public restrooms, retail, a grocery store, and restaurants	Encircle the North San Rafael Promenade, extending to and from the Town Square and SMART Station



An Inviting Entryway into the Town Square



Comparison of Gateway Entrance to Town Square



MG's current design



RGM proposed alternative design concept



From: [Carolyn Lenert](#)
To: [Tricia Stevens](#); [Planning Public Comment](#)
Subject: Northgate Town Square: Energy, Equity, Environment
Date: Tuesday, November 29, 2022 6:41:53 AM
Attachments: [North San Rafael Vision.pdf](#)

Hon. Electeds, Design Review, Planning and Staff:

I write with my concerns for the Northgate Town Square.

TRAFFIC

1. How will the increased traffic be mitigated? Will the (most dangerous in Marin) Freitas interchange be upgraded?
2. Below market rate housing needs more than one car parking per unit. Residents are working 2-3 jobs and have multiple vehicles, not all of which are working at one time.

ENVIRONMENT

3. How will the developer protect and enhance the existing watershed? There are four blue line creeks under Sears.
4. What other environmental impacts will be mitigated IN THE UPSTREAM GALLINAS WATERSHED? Underground utilities promised 60 years ago? INCLUDING HIGH SPEED WIRED INTERNET WHICH IS SAFER, MORE RELIABLE, LOWER MAINTENANCE. WWW.WHATIS5G.INFO.
5. Will restoration/naturalization of the Freitas Creek (now a creek in a coffin) finally be addressed? Sea level rise impacts?
6. What is the source of potable water (when Sonoma County, with 50,000 new residential units in its plan) takes back the Russian River source)?
7. Will all units have a water meter so that residents can be aware of water conservation?
8. Will the protocols of Dark Skies Initiative be implemented? <https://www.darksky.org/>
9. Will native plants be used? On-site gardening for food?

AESTHETICS. Will the usual Italian guard tower architecture be further promulgated such a short distance from the World Heritage site of the Frank Lloyd Wright civic center? Or can we do better?

ENERGY. What level of LEED certification will be achieved ? Will the project achieve Net Zero? And perhaps provide energy TO the community?

SAFETY

If buildings higher than 5 stories are allowed, how many hook-and-ladder fire trucks will the developer purchase?

With the increased population, will more than one police officer be assigned to the zip code at night?

EQUITY

1. Will the Village Square have a community center including library, computer center, teen center, free room for nonprofit community meetings/civic engagement, employment training, culture/community event space indoors and out?
<https://www.publicspace.org/>
2. How many more teachers and classrooms are needed?
3. Define “affordable” housing (and other nebulous terms).
4. Will the low, very low and lowest income housing be placed in the least desirable units or spread equitably throughout the development?
5. Will the Promenade be completed around the whole property? (TL Recreation Center to Civic Center Lagoon) for multi-modal getting around? E.g. repair Freitas sidewalks.

GENERAL LAND USE

6. Will the North San Rafael Vision be incorporated and how?
7. Will the Planning Academy be restored to enhance staff/citizen engagement and expertise?
8. How does the Project take into consideration what else in 94903 is in the Bull’s Eye of overdevelopment? E.g. hotel site, other failing shopping centers. The Project is not in isolation. Is there the right balance of commerce, recreation, access to Nature, housing, culture. Why isn’t there a post-annexation Community Plan* for the zip code evaluating assets, liabilities, threats and opportunities? What part of the City budget is spent on Terra Linda in relation to its population and revenues? How many City staff have ever been to Terra Linda?

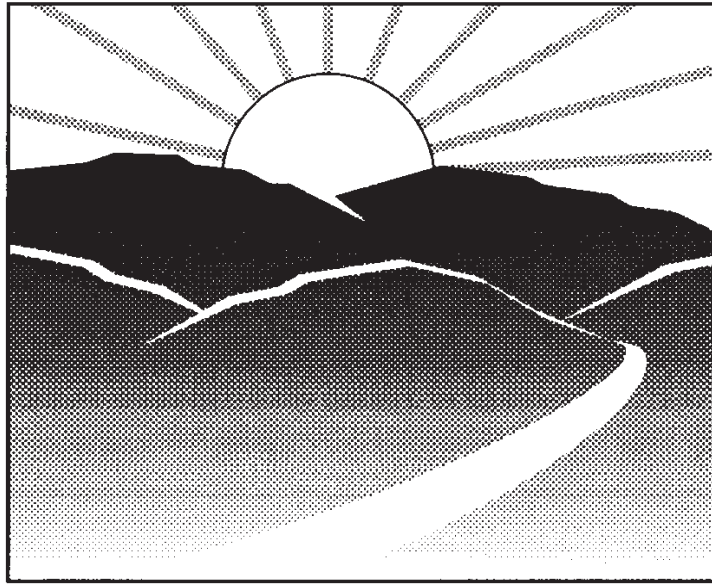
*<https://www.marincounty.org/depts/cd/divisions/planning/santa-venetia>

<https://www.communityventurepartners.org/new-suburbanism>

<https://www.communityventurepartners.org/cvp-larkspur-sap-and-deir-challenge>

<https://patch.com/california/millvalley/resident-proposes-criteria-based-approach-to-housing-policy>

V I S I O N



North San Rafael

November 1997

San Rafael, California

North San Rafael Steering Committee Members

Jim Atchison	Shirley Fischer	Larry Paul
Ida Baugh	Kitty Forde	Gary Phillips
Al Boro	Peter Galli	Lauren Pizzi
Amadeus Colenbrander	Elissa Giambastiani	Joe Shekou
Ann Crew	Rev. Lon Haack	Roger Smith
Carol Dillon	Tom Hinman	Ann Song-Hill, co-chair
Carol Durham	Ben Lowe	Valerie Taylor
Jerry Edelbrock	Ian MacLeod	Pat Webb, co-chair
	Phyllis McGuire	

Consultants

Robyn Anderson, Moore Iacofano Goltsman, Inc.
Jeff Baird, Jeffery Baird & Associates
Paul Tuttle, Moore Iacofano Goltsman, Inc.
Carolyn Verheyen, Moore Iacofano Goltsman, Inc.

City of San Rafael

PROJECT TEAM STAFF

Evelyn Buchwitz, Planning Intern
Jean Hasser, Principal Planner *
Linda M. Jackson, Associate Planner
Bob Leiter, Community Development Director
Bob Pendoley, Planning Director *

* Former

SUPPORTING CITY STAFF

Chantry Bell, Associate Planner
Dave Bernardi, Public Works Director
Tom Boyd, Commander Police Dept.
Sheila Delimont, Principal Planner
Rod Gould, City Manager
Ulla-Britt Jonsson, Planning Technician
Katie Korzun, Senior Planner
Walt Kosta, Police Department Captain
Gail Lockman, Library
Sharon McNamee, Recreation Director
Matt Naclerio, Assistant Director, Public Works
Ken Nordhoff, Financial Services Director
Jake Ours, Economic Development Director
Vaughn Stratford, Library Director
Carey Tate, Planning Intern
Bill Tuikka, Associate Planner
Stacy Wydra, Planning Intern

The Steering Committee is grateful to Ian MacLeod for his illustrations depicting our vision of North San Rafael - may they serve as inspiration to imagine the possibilities.

Vision North San Rafael

November 1997

San Rafael, California

Copies of this document and the Technical Appendix are available from the San Rafael Community Development Department. For a copy, or for information about how you can participate and help to bring this vision into reality, please call (415) 485-3085.

letter from the mayor

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SECTION I
INTRODUCTION

Background and History

In the spring of 1996, the City of San Rafael initiated a community visioning process to plan for the future of city areas north of Puerto Suello hill, an area known as North San Rafael. North San Rafael is home to over 15,000 people, renowned for its beautiful hills, sunny weather, thriving businesses and excellent schools. The last planning effort, fifteen years ago, resulted in the *Northgate Activity Center Plan*. With the success of *Our Vision of Downtown San Rafael* and the *Montecito/Happy Valley Neighborhood Plan*, the City Council and citizens started a similar effort to learn more about what the people who live, work, and play in North San Rafael would like for their community in the year 2010.

Beginning the Process

The community effort began with a Start-Up Committee. During four meetings, the Committee designed a process to provide opportunities for the North San Rafael community to help shape a vision for their future. Members set out to create a fun process with a broad and integrated approach that was realistic and feasible, and had extensive participation.

Guiding the Efforts

In July of 1996, the City Council used an application process to select 25 people to serve on the North San Rafael Vision Steering Committee. Collectively, the members reflect the many interests in our community: residents, business-owners, community and government. Council set the following charge for the Committee:

- Develop a broadly supported vision for the future of North San Rafael that addresses all of the essential elements of community such as: neighborhood identity, values and goals, housing, business and retail development, traffic, pedestrian and bicycle access, schools, recreation, open space, and aesthetics.
- The process will address incorporated city neighborhoods, and involve residents, business interests and property owners.
- The Vision will be the primary basis for updating city policies and programs affecting this area.
- The Vision will establish an environment for collaborative activities by the neighborhood and City government.
- The Vision will be completed within one year.

Profile of North San Rafael

This section presents a picture of North San Rafael in the past, as well as the community today.

The Community in the Past

North San Rafael is rich in history. Below are snapshots of the early settlers.

John Lucas was nephew of San Rafael pioneer Timothy Murphy (Don Timoteo), recipient of the Mexican Ranch Grant of San Pedro, Santa Margarita Y Las Gallinas of which North San Rafael was a part. When Lucas brought his bride to San Rafael in 1855, he found Don Timoteo had died leaving him the Santa Margarita Rancho. Lucas and Maria built a home in North San Rafael, where they lived until Lucas' death in 1896.

Manuel T. Freitas emigrated to California from the Azores in 1853. He became a business leader in San Francisco, as well as Portugal's Consul General. Although Freitas and his wife, Maria, owned a string of six ranches from Marin to Solano counties, they built their mansion and raised their nine children at their 'Home Ranch' in North San Rafael.

Shown here in 1953, the valley had been part of the Freitas Home Ranch since 1896. The ranch was transformed after the end of World War II. Highway 101 (across the lower half) a four-lane country road, became an interstate highway, and St. Isabella's church replaced the Home Ranch (buildings in the middle). Named Terra Linda ('beautiful land' in Portuguese) by Freitas' daughter Rose, the land today is home to 15,000 people.

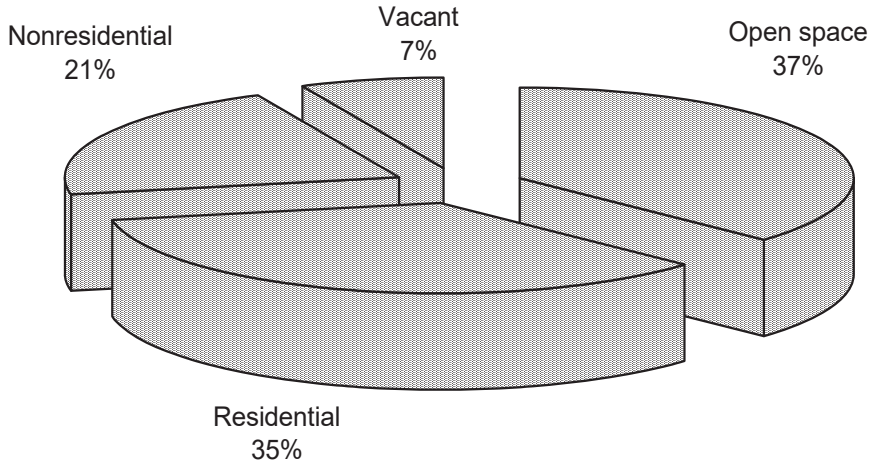
The Community Today

Over the past 40 years, North San Rafael has developed into a complete and well-balanced community. During the 1960s and 1970s the area was annexed into the City of San Rafael. With its variety of housing, shopping centers, corporate headquarters, industrial businesses, protected open spaces and the Marin County Civic Center, North San Rafael is a vital part of Marin County.

Land Use

North San Rafael has a variety of residential, civic, entertainment and business activities. In addition, hundreds of acres of protected open space and parks have been secured for the enjoyment of future generations.

Land Use in North San Rafael

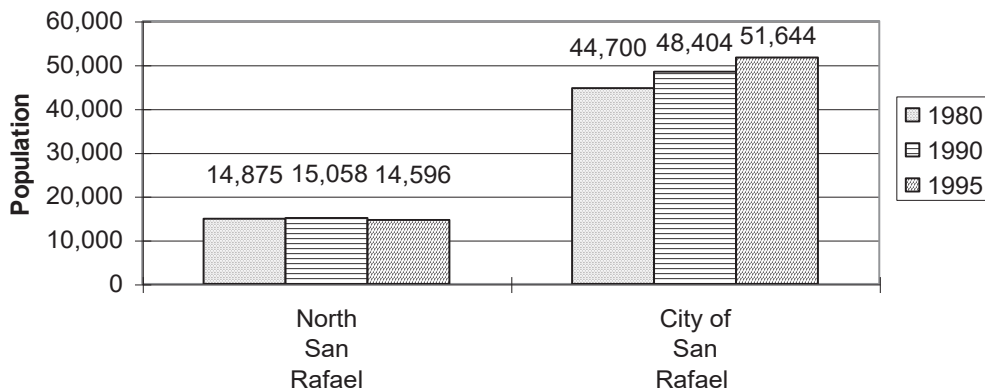


Source: San Rafael Community Development Department, 1997.

Population

Between 1980 and 1990, North San Rafael’s population increased slowly, by only 183 persons. In northern Terra Linda, the population declined by more than 1,000 people as household size decreased and the population grew older. The growth in North San Rafael since 1980 is due to new construction in southern Terra Linda and east of Highway 101. North San Rafael has about 28 percent of the city’s total population of 51,644.

Population, 1980, 1990 and 1995 (est.)

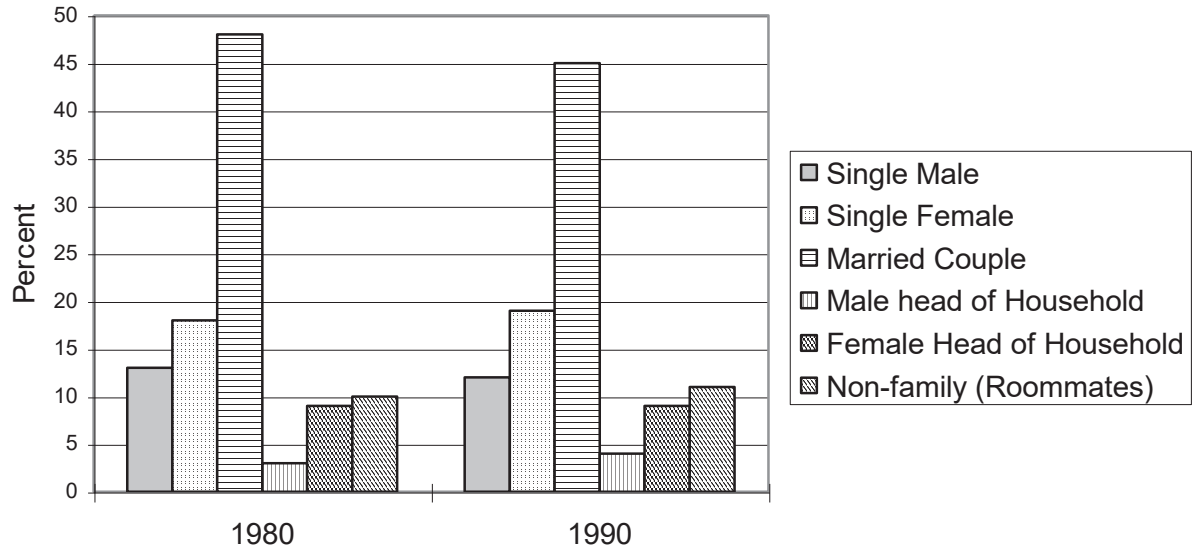


Source: U.S. Census, 1980, 1990, and Claritas, Inc. estimates

Types of Households

Overall, North San Rafael had more husband/wife households and single female households than the city as a whole, and fewer single male or non-family households. However, household types vary greatly by area, depending on the type of housing in the neighborhood.

Types of Household in North San Rafael, 1980 and 1990

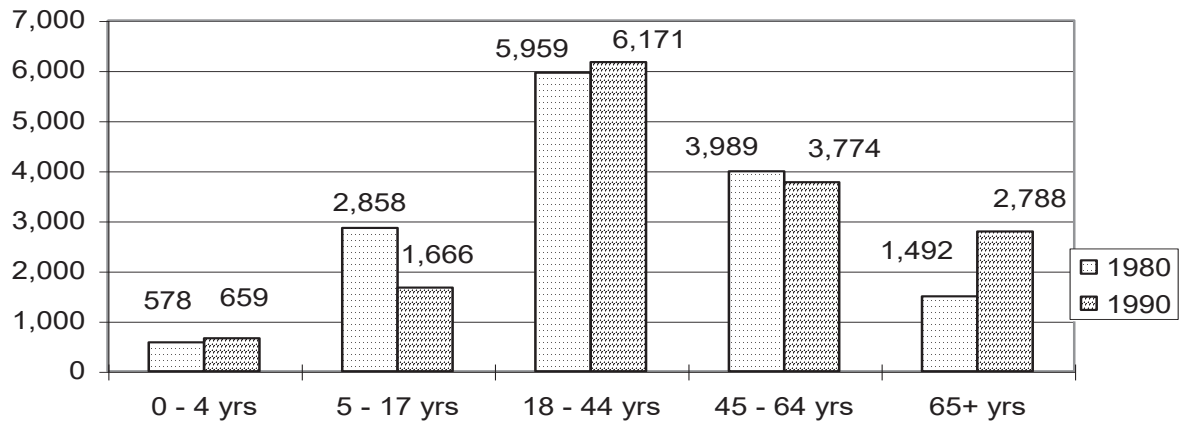


Source: U.S. Census, 1980 and 1990

Age of the Population

Throughout North San Rafael the number of persons over 65 years old increased from 10 percent in 1980 to 25 percent in 1990. Correspondingly, the number of children in North San Rafael declined between 1980 and 1990. The decrease in children aged 0-17 was most striking in Northern Terra Linda, declining from 28 to 19 percent of the population.

Age of Population, 1980 and 1990



Source: U.S. Census, 1980 and 1990

Household Income

In 1990, North San Rafael had higher incomes and fewer lower income households than the City as a whole. Within the community, northern Terra Linda had the most number of households with incomes over \$100,000, while southern Terra Linda had a higher-than-average percentage of households earning incomes less than \$20,000.

Household Incomes by Neighborhood, 1989

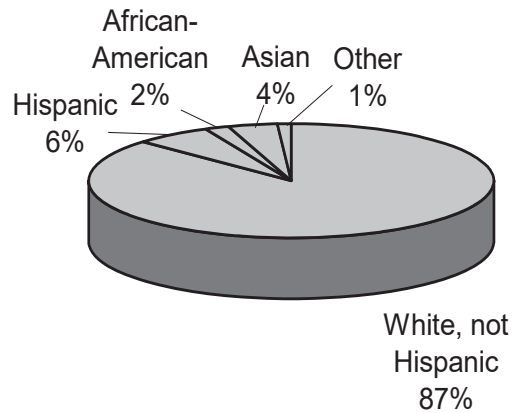
	Less than \$20,000	\$100,000+	Median
North San Rafael	18%	13%	\$46,250
San Rafael	21%	13%	\$41,992

Source: U.S. Census, 1990

Ethnicity

Similar to the City as a whole, ethnic diversity in North San Rafael increased from 1980 to 1990. Overall, however, this area of town remained less diverse than the city.

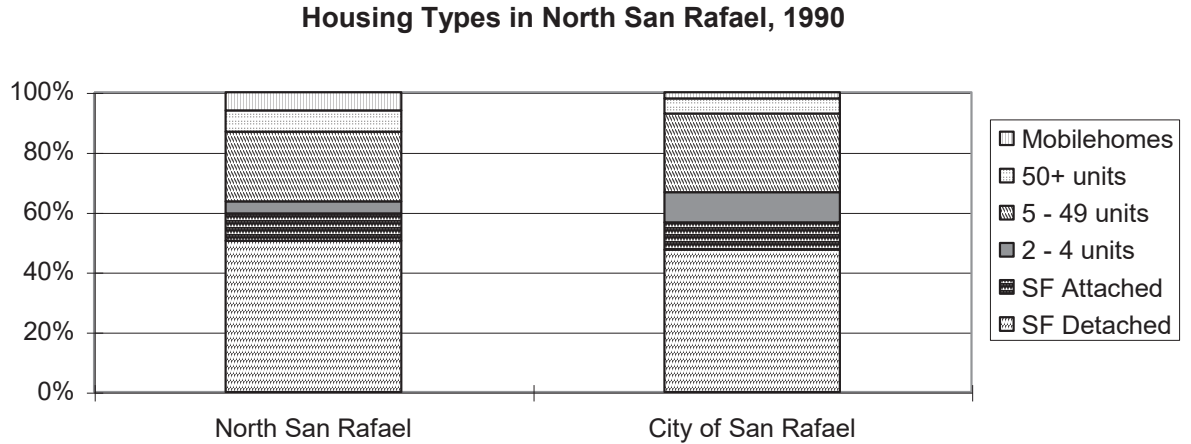
Ethnicity, North San Rafael, 1990



Source: U.S. Census, 1990

Types of Housing

North San Rafael contains a wide variety of housing, similar to the City as a whole. Because North San Rafael developed more recently than other parts of San Rafael and at a time when larger scale subdivisions and apartment complexes were popular, there are few two- to four-unit structures.

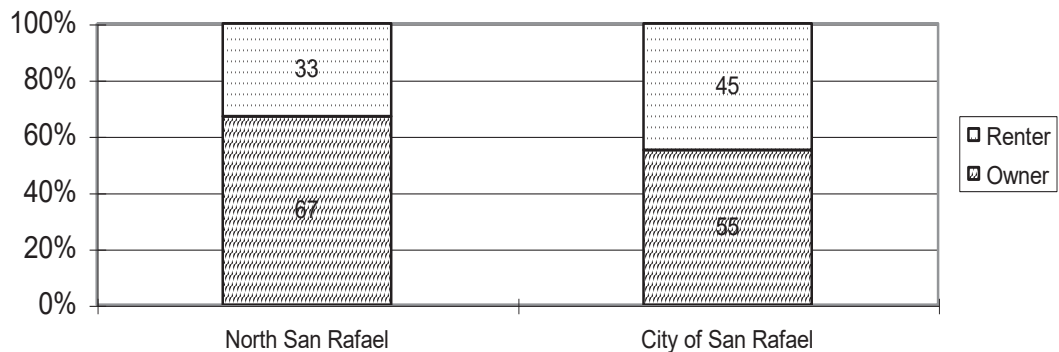


Source: U.S. Census, 1990

Owner and Renter Housing

Overall, North San Rafael contains fewer rental units and more owner units than the city as a whole. Northern Terra Linda, which is largely single-family, had a very high homeownership rate. Rental units tend to provide needed housing for low-income households, young adults, and seniors.

Owner/Renter Percentage of Occupied Units, 1990



Source: U.S. Census, 1990

Crafting *Vision North San Rafael*

Vision North San Rafael is a description of what the community would like North San Rafael to be like in the future. People who live, work, shop or own property in the area helped shape the vision described in this document. The overall response by participants was enthusiastic and supportive, with hundreds of ideas generated.

To “cast the net” and reach as many people as possible, the North San Rafael Steering Committee initiated a widespread community involvement and outreach program. Bold in its scope and approach, the program successfully included more than 1,400 people at a variety of community events, stimulated interest among community members through flyers, newspaper articles and a web-page, and educated the community on issues facing North San Rafael. The Vision process was organized into four phases.

Phase One: Invitation

Early on and throughout the process, the Steering Committee used local newspapers, neighborhood associations, partner groups, and the schools to invite people to participate in community events. Although the focus of the vision process was on the incorporated areas of the city of San Rafael, participation was welcomed from the broader North San Rafael community, including Santa Venetia, Los Ranchitos and Marinwood.

Phase Two: Exploration and Visioning

The purpose of Phase Two was to draft the Vision Statement. A variety of community activities were conceived to reflect on our community in terms of where we are and where we want to go in the future.

- *Partner Groups* are neighborhood, community, civic and governmental organizations who were interested—but may not otherwise participate—in the Vision process. In the fall, over 750 adults and children in Partner Group discussions were asked: “*What do you like in North San Rafael? What don’t you like? What would you like to change? What would you like to keep?*”

In the winter, Steering Committee members shared with their Partner Groups our draft Vision statement. In the summer, members briefed the Partner Groups on preliminary Vision Concepts and invited everyone to the final workshop.

Overall, people appreciate the wonderful qualities of North San Rafael. At the same time, many identified areas of dissatisfaction and a desire to make changes to make the area a better place to live.

- *Schools.* To learn more about what our young people feel about and desire in our community, the Steering Committee invited the schools to participate in the vision process. In the fall, students from sixteen classrooms took part in a school curriculum. Students were asked to name and draw their favorite places, places which were scariest to them, and places which were the ugliest and the most beautiful. Results were displayed at Northgate Mall and City Hall, and during the Vision Festival.
- *The Vision Festival* was an all-day event that included guided bus tours of the area, booths from North San Rafael community and business groups, food, live music, and small group Visioning sessions. Building on the work of the small groups, the Steering Committee drafted a vision statement which reflected the community’s direction that would be revisited and revised throughout the process.

Below is a summary of community comments received during Phase Two, including the Partner Group sessions, school curriculum and the Vision festival.

We like:	We don't like:	Changes we'd like are:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location • Open spaces • Weather • Retail shops and services • Community feeling • Friendly, small town atmosphere • Sense of community • Excellent schools • Beauty of the area • Farmer's Market • Pleasant, clean and quasi-rural ambiance • Proximity to open space • Quiet • Parks and recreation • Feeling of safety • Low traffic levels • Nearby hiking trails • Airport and open space at Marin Ranch Airport 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traffic congestion • The lack of a center, core or heart of the community • Dearth of social spots • Absence of gathering places • Insufficient landscape maintenance • Inadequate teen activities • Scarcity of safe pedestrian and bike ways • Lack of public transportation • Dangerous Freitas interchange • The idea of 'big box' retail on the now-vacant (Fairchild) site on Redwood Highway along the north side of the North Fork of Las Gallinas Creek. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A center to the community which brings us together • More community events • Improved landscaping • A public library • More zoning flexibility for small businesses • Housing which is affordable so that people who work here can also live here • Improvements at the mall • More and better restaurants • More "hangout" places • More pedestrian and bike ways

Phase Three: Directions

The “nuts-and-bolts” of creating a vision began in January 1996 and continued through the winter and spring with a series of eight community workshops. These workshops focused on specific issues that emerged during Phase Two. Steering Committee members hosted the workshops, collecting background information, writing Fact Sheets, and using the results to draft goals and actions.

- *Kick-Off Workshop.* In January 1997, Reverend Doug Huneke was invited to share his thoughts about how a vision can spark a community and how—like a kaleidoscope—the many voices of a community emerge to support shared values and common dreams.

Working in small groups, participants saw the draft Vision statement for the first time, and gave the Steering Committee their feedback. After the workshop, members revised the draft statement to reflect the community's input.

- *Design, Beautification and Maintenance Workshops* focused on the “look” and “feel” of North San Rafael—on the attractiveness of streetscapes and buildings and, in particular, maintenance of public and private spaces.
- *Land Use Workshops* focused on identifying a desirable land use mix (open space, residential, commercial, industrial, and recreational) while at the same time enhancing and conserving the basic community character.
- *Transportation Workshops* focused on the ease of mobility and access, and safety for various modes of transportation. The interrelationship with land use and design was noted as critical.
- *Community Events and Services Workshops* focused on organizing community activities, providing cultural gathering places and assuring excellent services and facilities.

Phase Four: Celebration

The purpose of Phase Four was to present the draft Vision to the community, celebrate our cooperative efforts and begin the process of implementing the Plan.

- *A Community Open House.* The nine vision concepts which emerged during the community workshops were shared with the community during an Open House in July. Overall, participants were pleased with the direction, and enjoyed the opportunity to see and comment on the work-in-progress.
- *Business Focus Groups,* co-sponsored by the San Rafael Chamber of Commerce, brought together nearly 30 business owners to discuss issues affecting the business community, and to share ideas for what could be done to improve the business climate in North San Rafael.
- *Final Workshop.* On September 20, 1997 the Steering Committee held its last workshop. The purpose of the workshop was to present the draft Vision to the community, prioritize the most important Actions and recognize everyone's efforts in working together to create and implement a vision. The **top priority actions** identified at the final community workshop are summarized in the introduction for each of the nine Vision Concepts described in Section IV. Note, however, that the goals and actions under each concept are not ranked in any particular order.

Vision Framework

The Vision is organized into four parts, reflecting the thoughtful process used by the Steering Committee in developing the Vision.

Our Community Values

Our Vision is supported by a statement of community-shared values. These values express how we share our community life and what we hold most important. They define who we are and are the ultimate key to where we want to go.

Vision North San Rafael

Our Vision was written with the community. Over the years our Vision will serve as a catalyst for community initiatives and as direction for improvements in our neighborhoods.

Vision Concepts, Goals and Actions

During the course of the visioning process, several themes emerged as key Vision Concepts. Collectively, these concepts represent our hopes and aspirations for a beautiful, safe and close-knit community. As highlighted within, the concepts are further supported by overall goals and specific actions.

Our Implementation Strategy

Realization of our Vision will be based on our ability to live the values articulated by the community and to pursue our implementing strategies. As we dream about what North San Rafael will be like in the future, we look to the many different ways we can make it happen. Here we work in alliance on projects, bringing together residents, employers and employees, civic groups and non-profit organizations to find ways to make the vision a reality.

SECTION II
OUR COMMUNITY VALUES

Our shared values guide our life together, shaping over time the foundation and character of North San Rafael. As we consider improvements and changes, we rely on the values we hold in common to help us make the best decisions. We value above all the quality of life in North San Rafael as reflected in the following:

Community	Respect for all people Safe, healthy and friendly neighborhoods A diverse population Places where we can gather A sense of belonging A hometown feeling where people know their neighbors
Environment	Natural environment as an integral part of our community Protection and stewardship of our wildlife and our natural areas including the hills, creeks and wetlands
Beauty	Beautiful natural setting from the hillsides to the bay front Attractive architecture and landscaping Well-maintained neighborhoods and business areas
Education	Excellent schools Library services and easy access to information
Resources	Valued and limited lands Our surrounding natural environment People who contribute to our community in various ways
Vitality	Creativity and innovation Cultural, educational, and recreational opportunities Diverse local economy with variety of thriving businesses Variety of housing Ability to move around easily
Partnerships	Participation in making decisions about our future Working together to meet the evolving needs of our community Cooperation between residents, businesses and government

SECTION III
VISION NORTH SAN RAFAEL

A vision is a dream about the future, shared by the community. It paints a picture of the type of place in which we want to live, work and play. Our vision is more than just a description of what we hope to see in North San Rafael. It also describes the legacy we hope to achieve and defines the way we want to work together to create a more livable community.

In the year 2010 ~

We are a balanced, vital and evolving community with a diverse population. We preserve the things that we have so long appreciated—our hills, wetlands and parks, safe and stable residential areas, vital diverse businesses, and convenient shopping and services.

Our entire community is beautiful and well-maintained, with excellent, well-integrated architecture, abundant landscaping, and tree-lined streets. As we come home to our clean and friendly neighborhood, we pass through attractive, distinctive gateways. Getting around our community and out to surrounding areas is easy—whether by foot , bicycle, bus, rail or car.

Our business community continues to be healthy and innovative, supporting entrepreneurship. We are known for economic stability with a full range of employment opportunities. Various vibrant centers provide opportunities for us to meet, interact and reaffirm our sense of community. We enjoy gathering together at local shopping areas, restaurants, cultural attractions and plazas.

We offer a variety of housing options for our diverse and changing population. Our concern for residents of all ages is expressed in excellent schools, libraries, youth activities, senior services, entertainment, recreational and cultural opportunities.

We gracefully adapt to changing needs of residents and businesses while respecting our environment and quality of life. Neighborhoods and businesses work together. Through cooperation, we create a community everyone loves.

SECTION IV
VISION CONCEPTS, GOALS AND ACTIONS

As a result of input received during the community visioning process, the Steering Committee identified nine overall *concepts* which describe the unique opportunities to build upon and enhance the North San Rafael environment and community. These concepts are further supported by *goals*, or statements of direction to realize our vision. The *actions* listed under each goal bring us even closer to seeing our vision become reality by identifying more specific steps to pursue.

The nine Vision Concepts are:

Natural Environment

We will protect the beautiful hillsides, wetlands and creeks for future generations.

Easy to Get Around

We will be a safe and enjoyable community to walk and bicycle,
with convenient transit and smooth traffic flow.

Northgate Promenade

We will establish a new connection from Terra Linda to the Civic Center
where people can walk and ride a bike safely.

Gathering Places

We will have many opportunities for residents and workers to get together
for entertainment, recreation and relaxation.

Town Center

We will create a heart to North San Rafael in the Northgate shopping area
with an active mix of uses and places where everyone comes to shop, visit and celebrate community life.

Business Vitality

We will ensure that our business community is healthy and dynamic.

Homes for a Variety of People

We will have many wonderful places to live for individuals, families,
people who work here and seniors.

Community Services

We will be known for our excellent library and schools,
and a variety of high quality City recreation and public safety services.

Design, Beautification and Maintenance

We will have a beautiful, well-maintained community with
well-designed buildings and abundant landscaping reflecting pride and care.

Protecting our Hillside

By the late 1960s, much of the floor of the Santa Margarita Valley had been developed with housing. Terra Linda residents grew to enjoy the way the hills and the natural environment framed their community. As development began to spread into the hills, people wondered if it would be possible to protect the remaining hillsides.

Over the next few years a core group of residents searched for ways to preserve the privately-owned hills as protected open spaces. Purchase seemed impossible at the beginning, for the hills were extensive and high-priced undeveloped areas. During the early 1970s, there were several attempts to raise money to buy the land, and many negotiations were initiated with property owners to reach acceptable purchase prices. Joining together with immediate neighbors and with the wider Marin County community, residents in the valley voted overwhelming to approve a number of funding sources for open space purchase. These included:

- 1972 San Rafael residents approved a bond issue of \$2,250,000 bond issue to purchase open space city-wide, including parcels in North San Rafael.
- 1972 Marin County residents created and funded the Marin County Open Space District to preserve lands of county-wide importance.
- 1973 Mont Marin neighborhood formed an assessment district to purchase the 184 acre Mont Marin Open Space for \$314,000.
- 1975 Terra Linda residents, with a 76 percent yes vote, established a community services area with a \$1,150,000 bond issue to purchase open space properties. These funds were combined with \$500,000 from the 1972 San Rafael bond and \$500,000 from the Open Space District to buy the Nunes, Freitas, de Long and Turski lands, the semi-circle of ridges around Terra Linda.

The 1,252 acres which make up today's Terra Linda/Sleepy Hollow Divide Open Space Preserve are owned and managed by the Marin County Open Space District. The *Terra Linda, Sleepy Hollow & San Rafael Ridge Open Space Preserve Land Management Plan* (1991) sets out a detailed program for maintenance and improvement of these publicly-owned open space lands.

It took nearly ten years to see the vision of preserved open hillsides become a reality. Thanks to the dream and efforts of a small group of people, everyone today takes great joy and pride in the views of the hills and the protected natural habitat.

Natural Environment

North San Rafael is set in a valley surrounded on the north, south and west by expansive hillsides, undeveloped ridgelines and open space. The San Francisco Bay and waterways with wetlands and other marine habitats create the eastern boundary. Riparian habitats, scattered along creeks, are rich with wildlife, birds and native plants, and are a **valued resource** and integral part of North San Rafael. Retaining the beauty of the surroundings and protecting the wildlife is a high priority for our community.

At the same time, however, people want to enjoy this valuable resource. Access to these areas would be balanced with the sustainability of their natural habitats. **Education and stewardship** are essential factors in protecting our natural environment.

The top priority actions are to protect and preserve surrounding hillsides and habitats and to increase wetlands habitats.

GOAL - A	ACTIONS
<i>Protect, restore and enhance our hillsides, bayfront, wetlands and creeks.</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Preserve and protect the surrounding hillsides and habitat areas.2. Protect hillsides from erosion.3. Remove invasive plants from open space and other public and private lands.4. Repair large eroded ravines off fire roads.5. Protect Russom Park Creek walk by controlling creek and hill erosion onto the trail.6. Ensure hillsides are well-maintained and fire safe.7. Encourage regular fire safety education in schools regarding our hillsides8. Wherever feasible, restore and enhance the natural wildlife habitat, particularly habitat for endangered species, by providing wildlife corridors, adequate buffers along wetlands and creeks and other environmental protections.9. Whenever feasible, seek out opportunities to protect, restore and increase wetlands habitat.10. Restore creeks and incorporate sound flood control practices and riparian vegetation, such as at the large meadow site next to the transit line, the San Rafael Meadows neighborhood and the Valley Baptist Church (the PG&E site).

GOAL - B*ACTIONS*

Assure that environmental considerations are always a high priority in North San Rafael.

1. Promote active community participation in maintaining and appreciating open space, such as supporting volunteer projects to care for the hills, open spaces and trails.
2. Provide innovative ways for domestic and wild animals to cross the freeway or surface roads safely. For example, consider providing a "Duck Crossing" sign on Civic Center Drive to slow traffic to allow these birds to cross safely from the Lagoon to the West side.
3. Encourage the Design Review Board to emphasize and enhance views of the hillsides, wherever possible.

GOAL - C*ACTIONS*

Allow habitat friendly access to open space.

1. Provide opportunities for people to enjoy the natural environment.
2. Allow recreation uses in open space areas only when they are compatible with environmental protection and the sustainability of habitat.
3. Improve signage in public open space and trails.
4. Continue to prohibit motorized vehicles on hillsides.
5. Support the San Francisco Bay Trail project.
6. Retain Freitas Parkway and Del Ganado as cul-de-sacs.
7. Where possible, use bike paths with removable barriers for emergency connectors, instead of building new roads.
8. Work collaboratively with Marin County and environmental organizations to provide access and interpretive center(s) to facilitate the public's enjoyment of wetland areas, where appropriate.

Easy to Get Around

The ease, frequency and safety of getting around are important for our community. Circulation both within North San Rafael, especially east-to-west connections, and to surrounding areas such as Downtown San Rafael needs to be improved. A variety of transportation options can better link us to each other and to places we frequent. Improving the many ways we move about can help combat auto congestion.

Installing and maintaining wider sidewalks and well-landscaped walkways, separate from the main roads, will make the area more **pedestrian-friendly** and safer. If walkways are more inviting and safer, people are more inclined to walk as a way to get to a destination, and for exercise and enjoyment. **Bicycling** continues to be a highly popular way to travel in Marin County, enjoy the outdoors, and get exercise. To accommodate the needs of bicyclists, safe bicycle paths, lanes and parking would be provided throughout North San Rafael. Public **transit** would enable children going to school, commuters and seniors who may not want to drive a car an affordable and reliable way to get around North San Rafael. **Traffic calming** would be a major improvement in the community to reduce speeding and cut-through traffic, and to make the streets safer for all.

The priority actions are to create a local shuttle bus service, and to install hike-and-bike paths throughout North San Rafael.

GOAL - A

ACTIONS

Create safe, convenient, pleasant walkways throughout the community.

1. Connect the Terra Linda Shopping Center and Recreation Center, the Northgate shopping area and the Civic Center with a central promenade.
2. Connect the east and west sides of Highway 101, particularly north of Freitas Parkway, under Highway 101 from Merrydale to Civic Center Drive along the railroad tracks, and possibly along Las Gallinas Creek.
3. Complete landscaped walkways on at least one side of all existing roads. Improvements are specifically needed on Redwood Highway near the Professional Center Parkway, the west side of Northgate between Thorndale and Quail Hill, Los Ranchitos, Lucas Valley Road, and Civic Center Drive.
4. Install walkways on both sides of new streets, where appropriate.
 - Assure sufficient width of sidewalks and pathways, and lighting, so people can walk comfortably.
 - Provide frequent and inviting places to sit and rest, some of which should offer shelter from the rain.
 - Ensure wheelchairs and strollers accessibility (improvements for the walkway at 755 Las Colindas through Penny Royal, Pine, Del Ganado, Bamboo to Monticello).
5. Provide safe, well-landscaped walkways between Northgate One, Northgate Mall and Northgate Plaza.

6. Increase the amount of time at pedestrian crossings at Freitas Parkway intersections, especially at Las Gallinas and Freitas.
7. Design parking lots to minimize conflicts between pedestrian walkways and cars.
8. Create walkways in the area between two rows of parked cars instead of having people walk in the driving area. For example, Northgate should have automobile-free passageways between shopping areas and to the stores.
9. Where possible, locate building entrances so that people do not have to walk across parking lots to enter the building.
10. Avoid multiple driveways across public sidewalks.
11. Provide safe and inviting access from parking lots to shops.

The reorganization and hedge screening of parking on the Old Redwood Highway frontage road could allow installation of a continuous sidewalk with tree planting and undergrounding utilities.

GOAL - B

ACTIONS

Support bicycling as a normal mode of transportation.

1. Form a bicycle advisory committee to promote public involvement and support for bicycle use, create a bicycle master plan, and pursue funding and other implementation initiatives.
2. Create bike lanes wherever possible, especially along major roads, along Nova Albion to the schools, and to the parks.
3. Install hike-and-bike paths along the promenade, and next to the

railroad right-of-way in accordance with the Marin County North-South Bikeway Feasibility Study (1994).

4. Provide a setting conducive to safe and enjoyable bicycling --
 - Provide shade trees where possible.
 - Provide adequate bike lane width, drainage, parking and signage.
 - Separate bike paths and pedestrian paths wherever appropriate.
 - Create a free public bike transportation system with pick-up and drop-off points along the promenade and at major destinations throughout North San Rafael.
 - Provide bike racks and lockers for convenient storage at bus and shuttle stops, park and ride lots, schools, shopping centers, and the recreation center.
 - Remove barriers on sidewalks, pathways, and streets that prevent easy passage by bikes, wheelchairs and strollers.
 - Where possible, provide bikeways separate from the road.

GOAL - C

Create useful, convenient, local bus service, which also connects to Downtown San Rafael.

ACTIONS

1. Create a community advisory team, including youth and seniors, to determine options for providing local bus service, to work with local public and private transportation providers and to seek funding opportunities at all levels of government.
2. Create a local bus shuttle service:
 - Connect neighborhoods to shopping, the Civic Center, the transit center, schools and other major destinations including Downtown San Rafael.
 - Study extending bus hours from 6:00 a.m. to midnight, seven days a week.
 - Where feasible, use small electric or natural gas powered buses (20 - 30 passengers).
 - Provide bus service that accommodates bicycles and wheelchairs.
 - Provide adequate bus pads where large numbers of students wait for buses.
 - Offer, when possible, free or discount youth, senior and/or handicapped fares, and consider weekly or monthly passes.
 - Investigate the possibilities of contracting inexpensive taxi service for seniors, and sharing buses with senior housing and schools.
3. Encourage organizers and producers of large events at the Civic Center to provide shuttle service to the Civic Center from Downtown San Rafael and local park-and-ride lots.
4. Provide safe, comfortable and convenient bus stops:
 - Reroute freeway buses so pedestrian access to bus stops along

Highway 101 is safe and convenient. Do not require pedestrians to cross highway on- or off-ramps in order to board or leave the bus.

- Locate bus stops adjacent to sidewalks for easy wheelchair and pedestrian access. For example, connect the bus stop on Civic Center Drive in front of the Lagoon to a sidewalk.
- Provide benches, preferably covered, at all bus stops.
- Provide a Park-and-Ride lot in the vicinity of Civic Center Drive and McInnis, and re-route the buses from 101 to this lot.
- Ensure safe access from transit stops to businesses along Redwood Highway.

GOAL - D

Preserve and support rail service through North San Rafael.

ACTIONS

1. Preserve the existing rail track for future rail transit service.
Plan for a transit center at the junction of McInnis Parkway and Civic Center Drive:
 - Ensure that new rail service mitigates adverse impacts on adjacent neighborhoods.
 - Design rail stops so patrons can get to the stop safely and conveniently by walking, bicycling, bus or car.
 - Minimize potential vehicular conflicts as pedestrians move through parking lots and cross driveways to purchase tickets and board trains.
 - Design stations and stops so bicyclists can ride to the station and board easily, without unnecessary curbs, barriers or conflict with vehicles, pedestrians, and other bicycles.
 - Provide bicycle racks (preferably rain-proof) close to the main entrance.
 - Provide bike storage on the trains.
 - Where feasible, route autos so they do not cross bikeways and sidewalks.
 - Provide a park-and-ride lot screened from view on the street side with clearly marked safe walkways to the trains.
2. Coordinate bus and train schedules. Where possible, bus drop-off and pick-up areas should be designed to minimize vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle conflicts.
3. Design attractive crossings at the transit line which are safe for pedestrians, bicycles and automobiles.
4. Minimize visual and noise impacts along the rail line.

GOAL - E

ACTIONS

Create livable streets that are safe for children, pedestrians and bicycles, and reduce commuter traffic through our neighborhoods.

1. Slow traffic and improve safety for children, pedestrians and bicyclists. Possible traffic calming tools include:
 - Add landscaping.
 - Calm traffic in neighborhoods surrounding Terra Linda High School.
 - Prohibit widening of Civic Center Drive.
 - Maintain parking by the pond and the lawn of Civic Center Drive.
 - Locate stop signs at critical intersections when warranted (for example, at Yosemite and Smith Ranch Roads).
 - Narrow streets, where appropriate, in order to calm the traffic, increase safety and make it easier for pedestrians to cross at intersections.
2. Redesign traffic circulation adjacent to the Northgate Mall areas. Consider, for example, continuing Del Presidio into the Mall's parking area rather than a "T" configuration.
3. For safety's sake, redesign Freitas Parkway between Highway 101 and Las Gallinas with appropriate signage.
4. Improve, or reduce if possible, traffic flow at North San Pedro Road and Civic Center Drive. Alternatives include an additional exit off Highway 101 at the maintenance buildings directly into the Civic Center, or a second left-turn lane from North San Pedro Road going east to Civic Center Drive.
5. Maintain Merrydale Road and Las Gallinas Avenue in San Rafael Meadows as dead ends with no through traffic.
6. Enforce current traffic regulations to the maximum extent of the law by increasing the number of enforcement personnel and the frequency of the patrols in the critical commute times.

The continuation of Del Presidio Boulevard could create a grand entrance into Northgate Mall and provide an important link in the promenade between activity areas.

Northgate Promenade

Throughout North San Rafael there are many diverse neighborhoods, shopping areas and parks. Because Highway 101 physically divides our community, people find it difficult to get from one place to another by foot or on bicycle. To remedy this artificial separation, a **linear parkway**, or Promenade, would be created to connect the Terra Linda Shopping Center and Recreation Center to the Civic Center. A unifying hike-and-bike path—complete with attractive directional signs, landscaping, public restrooms, places to enjoy a cup of coffee, areas where children can play, public art and transit stops—would bring the community together. Together, people of all ages could stroll, jog, walk or bike, safely removed from traffic.

The Promenade will conveniently link other important destinations, such as Redwood Highway business areas, Terra Linda High School and neighborhoods on both sides of Highway 101 and to the north and south. It will have many benefits: bringing neighbors, workers and visitors together to enjoy the outdoors, helping people get to work or shop safely on foot or by bike, and providing many opportunities for people to meet each other.

The top priority actions are to construct pedestrian and bicycle pathways along the Promenade, and to create safe pedestrian connections across Highway 101.

GOAL - A

ACTIONS

Encourage bicycling and walking along the Northgate Promenade.

1. Construct pedestrian and bicycle pathways along the Promenade.
2. Wherever possible, the pathways should be at least 12-feet wide and allow for drainage, landscaping and signage, and incorporate pocket parks.

GOAL - B

ACTIONS

Provide linkages to other activity centers.

1. Create safe pedestrian connections across Highway 101.
2. Provide convenient and efficient connections between popular destination points, such as Northgate Industrial Park, Vallecito Elementary School and San Rafael Meadows area.

Gathering places, outdoor dining areas, landscaping and signage improvements would rejuvenate the Terra Linda Shopping Center.

Gathering Places

Gathering places provide an essential forum for social interaction and enhance a sense of shared life for the people who work, live and visit our community. Good gathering places are easy to get to and provide opportunities for a variety of activities such as shopping, eating, sitting, socializing and recreation.

Parks are wonderful places for people to get together. These facilities can be improved with picnic and barbecue areas, playgrounds and benches to encourage family events, and children’s play and “hanging out” places. Outdoor music concerts, dances, neighborhood picnics and community fairs would be offered in our parks. One specific improvement many would like to see is restoring water play to Freitas Park. Others would like to have better recreation facilities in the vicinity of Merrydale/Los Ranchitos and North San Pedro Road.

North San Rafael **shopping centers** can also be neighborhood gathering places. This has begun at Northgate One with the addition of a coffee shop and outdoor seating. Our shopping centers would include restaurants and cafes with outdoor eating areas, bookstores and plazas to create places with vitality and excitement. Many people want nighttime activities as well as places to go with friends at the end of the day.

Sports and recreational facilities provide special places for the community to gather and have fun. These facilities could include skateboard parks, dog parks, lighting for evening sports events, and soccer fields—each offering opportunities for the young and old alike—to spend time together and to get to know each other.

The top priority action is to establish a beautiful, viable neighborhood center and gathering place at Terra Linda Shopping Center.

GOAL - A	ACTIONS
<i>Enhance the use of gathering places within walking distance to spark social interaction and sense of community.</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Establish beautiful, viable neighborhood centers and gathering places at Terra Linda Shopping Center, along Merrydale in San Rafael Meadows, and at other neighborhood centers by using incentives to encourage a coordinated site design.2. Create gathering places that include: outdoor eating places, library, schools, parks, community gardens, farmer’s market, museum and transit stops, for example.

GOAL - B	ACTIONS
<i>Use parks, recreation and cultural facilities as fun gathering places to enhance our sense of community.</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Provide daytime “green spaces” which can include multi-use recreation areas, sports fields and sitting areas.2. Improve parks by adding landscaping and amenities such as benches, public art, play equipment, gazebos and bandstands, as appropriate.3. Encourage both daytime and nighttime gathering places, such as cafes, bookstores and restaurants.

Building a Town Square

A town square is more than just a place; it is people and activity, art and festivities, homes and shops. Essential ingredients are:

<i>Mix of Activity</i>	Shops, offices, residential, public (such as child care, a library, and churches), recreation, education and entertainment
<i>Food</i>	Markets, restaurants, cafes, street vendors and other eating places
<i>Events</i>	Celebrations, concerts, fairs, memorials
<i>Public</i>	Open to everyone at all times of the day throughout the year
<i>Visible</i>	Open to view from the streets and buildings for safety and security
<i>Contained</i>	Outdoor room with buildings defining the edges
<i>Connections</i>	Doors, passageways and windows connecting the outdoors to indoor activity
<i>Seating</i>	Places for people to sit and view the action
<i>Recreation</i>	Passive ways for people (especially children) to have fun, a gazebo for music
<i>Art</i>	Cultural identity, a landmark

Town Center

A town center is a focal point where the values and history of the community are expressed and supported, where community identity is strengthened and neighborhood cohesion is fostered. It is a place where residents and workers can gather—formally and informally—to share community life. The Town Center will have public art, a wide variety of unique shops, many places to eat, and a number of entertainment options.

Our town center will be a major destination point on the promenade, a place where everyone feels welcome, something is always happening, and strolling is a pleasure. It will also include one of North San Rafael’s principal gathering places—in the form of a **town square**! Over time, the Town Center would change, expand and evolve to become the heart of the North San Rafael community.

The priority actions for the Town Center are to create a sense of enclosure, pedestrian-scale and easy accessibility and to provide high quality retail stores for local residents as well as the broader community.

GOAL - A

ACTIONS

Create an attractive, thriving heart for the North San Rafael community—a centerpiece of commerce and activity which is easy to get to—with a diversity and synergy of activities for all ages.

1. Create a Town Center with high quality retail stores for local residents as well as the broader community.
2. Allow uses that will enhance the Town Center, including retail, office, housing and community services.
3. Consider providing library services at the mall.
4. Provide planning and financial incentives to establish a Town Center.
5. Assure quality of design.
6. Create a sense of enclosure, pedestrian-scale and easy accessibility.

Outdoor gathering and dining spaces at the retail centers could be encouraged, with storefronts and signage improved to match the quality of the interior spaces.

GOAL - B

ACTIONS

*Establish places for enjoying
community life.*

1. Encourage outdoor public gathering places.
2. Improve access and pedestrian connections between Northgate One, the Mall and Northgate Plaza.
3. Consider the feasibility of providing automobile-free passage ways between shopping areas, i.e. between Northgate Plaza and Northgate Mall, and between the Mall and Northgate One.
4. Redesign traffic patterns adjacent to the Northgate Mall, and consider ways to improve the entrance into the mall.
5. Design parking lots to minimize vehicular, pedestrian and bicycle conflicts.
6. Improve landscaping and maintenance of buildings, and unify the signage and architecture at Northgate Mall.

Business Vitality

North San Rafael has a very healthy, broad-based business community. Northgate businesses are an important part of San Rafael's healthy economy, comprising half of the city's professional services, and a quarter of its retail establishments. Northgate Mall is the city's largest retail shopping center, with more than one million square feet of building area, contributing over \$1 million in sales tax revenue annually.

Two major concentrations of businesses include the Northgate Industrial Park and the Northgate shopping centers. In addition, Terra Linda Shopping Center, Redwood Highway offices and services, Kaiser Hospital, Guide Dogs for the Blind, two major hotels and large office buildings, and several corporate headquarters are located in North San Rafael. These local diverse businesses provide jobs for residents, goods and services for residents, taxes for City services, and donations for local schools and non-profit agencies.

Maintaining business vitality is essential for a **prosperous economy**. We want to keep the competitive edge of the North San Rafael business community, and to continue to enjoy the convenient local shops and employment opportunities.

Residents and workers alike would benefit from retaining homegrown businesses and industrial uses, bringing in more upscale and unique shops, and increasing the number of restaurants and cafes. The Terra Linda Shopping Center holds tremendous potential to be a thriving neighborhood center. The businesses along the Redwood Highway frontage road would benefit greatly from targeted physical improvements. Most importantly, the large vacant site on Redwood Highway where there once stood a big manufacturing plant could be home to a new office/light industrial complex complementing the adjacent Northgate Industrial Park. Of particular delight to the community would be a restaurant located here along the beautiful north fork of Las Gallinas Creek.

Our highest priority is to make our business areas function better with a mix of uses, improvements to make these places more attractive, and changes that support a business-friendly community. It is also important to ensure that environmental, traffic, design, parking and access concerns are met in all business development.

GOAL - A

ACTIONS

Support existing local businesses and help them adapt to the future.

1. Encourage amenities and services to support the business community such as restaurants, outdoor dining, child care and convenience retail.
2. Use incentives to accommodate growth and change of businesses.

GOAL - B

ACTIONS

Support home businesses, new businesses and small businesses.

1. Encourage live/work and home-based businesses.
2. Encourage incubator businesses.
3. Preserve small tenant spaces.
4. Streamline permitting and provide other incentives.

GOAL - C

ACTIONS

Create distinctive businesses and public complexes, and make these areas work better

1. Improve the design and function of business areas.
2. Encourage innovation and public/private partnerships to meet parking needs.
3. Encourage property owners to maintain and remodel commercial buildings.
4. Encourage a new business at the corner of Freitas Parkway and Northgate to enhance the entryway. Appropriate uses could include office, small retail or a sit-down restaurant.
5. Ensure that environmental, traffic, design, parking and access concerns are met in all new business development or when renovation or remodeling occurs.

Homes for a Variety of People

Because of its beautiful setting, moderate climate, accessibility to natural and cultural amenities, and convenient location, North San Rafael is a **very desirable place to live**. Subdivisions such as San Rafael Meadows, Terra Linda and Marin Lagoon provide wonderful, family-centered communities with a reputation for being a great place to raise children and for maintaining excellent schools.

In addition, there is a **range of options** for apartment dwellers, from units that are affordable to low income households to luxury units for higher income households. These are well-established as well as very new condominium developments. Other housing includes a variety of senior housing, a mobilehome park, and group homes for the handicapped.

An adequate diversity of housing is a crucial part of creating a complete and vibrant community. Like many other cities in California, however, housing prices are high in North San Rafael. Consequently, young people starting out cannot afford to live near their families, families share units or are crowded into housing too small for their needs, seniors become “trapped” in homes that are larger than they need and local employees are forced to live in outlying areas and, therefore, become part of the commuter rush.

Providing more housing in North San Rafael is a challenging task. Many residents are concerned about excessive development, unmanageable traffic and the loss of views and privacy. At the same time, the limited housing supply is a major concern for employees and local business owners, parents seeking excellent schools for their children, and elderly residents wishing to sell their homes yet stay in the neighborhood.

The supply of housing may increase by offering more variety in housing choices and by using innovative ideas such as mixed use housing, live/work units, higher density housing close to public transit, and sensitive development of unused or underutilized lands. Above all, new housing must fit in with surrounding development, and must maintain the friendly, safe character of existing neighborhoods.

The top priority action which was reflected in the final workshop was to encourage a variety of housing types, including mixed use and live/work units.

GOAL - A

Provide homes for individuals, families, people who work here and seniors.

ACTIONS

1. Identify opportunities for development of housing on vacant or underutilized land.
2. Encourage second dwelling units, wherever feasible.
3. Encourage housing to be incorporated as part of renovation or redevelopment of property.
4. Promote and build partnerships with other organizations to support housing development.

GOAL - B*ACTIONS**Promote innovative ways to house people.*

1. Allow innovative approaches to combining housing and workspace.
2. Encourage a variety of housing types, including mixed use and live/work units.
3. Where appropriate, encourage housing in gathering places, thereby adding to the vitality of these areas and facilitating the use of public transit.

Affording a Home

Housing which costs 25 - 33 percent of a household's income is referred to as "affordable housing." Income levels vary from one household to another, for example, a large family with one small income would afford a different type of housing than a DINK ("double-income/no kids") household. Income levels are identified by the California Department of Housing and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. In Marin, examples of income levels by household size for 1997 are:

<i>Income Level</i>	<i>One Person</i>	<i>Two People</i>	<i>Four People</i>
Very low income	\$22,550	\$25,750	\$32,220
Lower income	\$31,750	\$35,950	\$44,950
Moderate income	\$54,100	\$61,850	\$77,300

Source: California Department of Housing and Community Development, 1997

A senior citizen with a very low income would typically be able to pay \$470 - \$620 month for housing. A family of four with a moderate income would be able to afford housing costing \$1,610 - \$2,126 a month.

Community Services

North San Rafael is a family-centered, multi-aged community with many different social needs ranging from recreational activities to informational services to neighborhood meeting places. In order to have an enriched and fulfilled community, quality activities, facilities and services are essential.

Living in a **safe** community is critically important to North San Rafael residents, particularly in the neighborhoods and public places. Although North San Rafael is considered very safe, it is important to maintain a high sense of security by assuring excellent public safety services.

People emphasized the need for **communication** of information, whether by library services, computers or information kiosks. Although the Civic Center library is located in North San Rafael, it is difficult to reach for most residents. There are many opportunities for providing a City library in North San Rafael, including possible partnerships with the School Districts, the private sector and the County. A library, located west of Highway 101, would be more accessible to more North San Rafael residents, providing an invaluable community service, evening activities, and a community meeting place.

The Terra Linda Recreation Center with the city's only public swimming pool, the many pocket and neighborhood parks, and the Marin County Civic Center offer a wide range of **recreational opportunities**. Many people would like to improve current facilities, and to make the most of what they have in order to help enhance the sense of community in North San Rafael. The recent acquisition of the Bernard Hoffman playing fields is an example of what is possible when sports organizations, the City and the School District cooperate for the good of the greater community.

Youth in particular have varying interests and would benefit from increased opportunities to pursue these interests without having to travel too far. Our young people would like to have places just to "hang out" and get to know each other. Facilities such as a teen center, a skate park or a technology center would be ideal.

Top priority actions are to provide recreational and entertainment facilities for children and youth, public safety programs and a library west of Highway 101.

GOAL - A

ACTIONS

Provide a public library in North San Rafael west of Highway 101.

1. Establish convenient and accessible library services for everyone in North San Rafael.
2. Form a North San Rafael Library Booster Group of teens, parents, teachers and homeowners associations.

A north San Rafael branch library west of the freeway could be located anywhere that is centrally located and provides adequate parking..

GOAL - B

ACTIONS

Encourage safe places for the young people in our community to gather and use to explore and pursue their interests.

1. Provide and maintain recreation and entertainment facilities for children and youth such as a skate park and a teen center.
2. Encourage a variety of safe gathering places where teens can meet and socialize.
3. Promote and facilitate activities for children and youth.

GOAL - C

ACTIONS

Encourage cultural, entertainment and recreational activities.

1. Establish an annual signature community event to celebrate life in North San Rafael, and create shared memories for residents.
2. Support cultural activities throughout the community.
3. Provide a variety of facilities for cultural activities such as an art gallery, a cultural center, a band shell, or a gazebo for outdoor concerts.
4. Improve and expand equestrian connections from Los Ranchitos to the Civic Center.
5. Seek ways to enhance horseback riding opportunities in North San Rafael.
6. Support the Farmer's Market.

GOAL - D

ACTIONS

Optimize use of all public and private sites for entertainment.

1. Maximize the use of City, religious and school facilities for cultural, educational and recreational purposes.
2. Restore the water feature to Freitas Park.
3. Maintain the restroom facilities at Santa Margarita Park.

GOAL - E

ACTION

Continue to provide and enhance City services for a safe community.

1. Continue to provide and enhance public safety programs that maintain a high sense of safety in the neighborhoods and adequate public safety services, including disaster preparedness and wildfire safety.

GOAL - F

ACTION

Improve communication in North San Rafael about community issues and activities.

1. Encourage information kiosks, a web site, neighborhood newsletters, and informational inserts in the local newspapers.

Design, Beautification and Maintenance

North San Rafael is blessed with a spectacular setting of open hills, large oak trees and views out to the bay. The **beautiful natural surroundings** form a backdrop treasured by residents, workers, and visitors. Apart from the unique Eichler homes and other residential neighborhoods, many of the buildings in North San Rafael are considered bland, isolated and indifferent.

Residents yearn for an **inviting, charming and attractive** community. They want a place that is beautiful to live in and walk around in, one which has grown gracefully into a pretty town. A beautiful community inspires its residents. Where beauty is pervasive, inhabitants share a common pleasure and a sense of civic pride essential to community life.

To create a physical environment that is pleasing and appealing to residents, workers and visitors, the open spaces and buildings must be interesting, complex and diverse. Beautiful buildings create places to go, to see and be seen, and to be exposed to the tangible legacy of those who have gone before us. Areas such as the Town Center, Redwood Highway, Terra Linda Shopping Center, Civic Center Drive and McInnis Drive can be transformed into exciting places to explore with a diversity of buildings, beautiful architecture and landscaping, and delightful pedestrian areas.

Above all, our public and private places need to be **cared for**. We collectively have an investment in the infrastructure of our community. We will begin long-needed maintenance projects and repair our roads and sidewalks, irrigate our landscaping, remove the litter, and use code enforcement to keep our public places and private homes in good and safe conditions.

Many residents have expressed a special desire to improve the appearance to the Del Ganado ditch. Others wish for the overhead wires to be undergrounded. These were priorities reflected in the final workshop.

GOAL - A	ACTIONS
<i>Create attractive community entries welcoming all and lending an identity to our area</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Create a beautiful entryway to North San Rafael at the corner of Freitas Parkway and Northgate.2. Install artistic groupings of landscaping and art on Freitas between Highway 101 and Northgate Drive.3. At all entries and intersections, plant trees, and improve and maintain City medians and Caltrans property (including interchanges, highway frontage and parking lots).4. Develop clear and unified signage at entries and commercial centers (perhaps with the same Mission bell signage theme found in Downtown San Rafael).5. Improve the entry to the Civic Center from San Pedro Road.

Landscaped medians along Del Ganado could not only improve its appearance, but create safer driving conditions.

GOAL - B

ACTIONS

Ensure clean, beautiful and well-maintained public spaces.

1. Improve the appearance of the Del Ganado ditch.
2. Begin a phased undergrounding of overhead power lines as funding becomes available.
3. Maintain roads, sidewalks and lighting.
4. Provide lighting for pedestrian walkways where acceptable to neighbors.
5. Develop realistic funding plans for maintenance and capital improvements.
6. Encourage Caltrans to remove litter from Highway 101.
7. Encourage the County to maintain the Civic Center, the Lagoon and surrounding areas.
8. Encourage the City and County to create a public/private partnership to maintain public plantings.
9. Support and encourage participation in neighborhood clean-up days.

Landscaping could improve the appearance of parking lots in north San Rafael.

GOAL - C

ACTIONS

Improve design and function of our built environment.

1. Promote design standards to unify the community and enhance a sense of connection.
2. Upgrade and unify the architecture and signage along Redwood Highway on the east side of Highway 101.
3. Improve the landscaping and sidewalks along Redwood Highway on the east side of Highway 101.
4. Coordinate design and colors at the Terra Linda Shopping Center. Signs should be removed from rooftops to under the eaves.
5. Establish a tenant identification sign for Terra Linda Shopping Center, consistent with the center's appearance.
6. Provide kiosks and maps of Northgate Industrial Park.
7. Use code enforcement to remove illegal business signs.

GOAL - D

ACTIONS

Improve and expand existing landscaping.

1. Improve the appearance of the northwest corner of Freitas Parkway and Northgate.
2. Provide additional landscaping to Montecillo, Freitas Parkway and along Del Ganado.
3. Provide additional trees and shrubs at Terra Linda Shopping Center.
4. Encourage native trees and plantings in parking lots, bus stops and park-n-ride lots.
5. Improve and maintain landscaping on medians and roadways.
6. Irrigate landscaping, trees and shrubs regularly, using reclaimed water where possible.

GOAL - E

ACTIONS

Ensure that private spaces reflect community pride.

1. Enforce San Rafael Municipal Code regulations relating to maintenance of private property.
2. Maintain the design integrity of the neighborhoods.

SECTION V
OUR IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

North San Rafael is entering a new era. From a time of ranching days, to seeing the latest buildings take form, North San Rafael is transforming into a mature community. Neighborhoods are welcoming new families, schools are bursting with young children, and businesses are enjoying a strong economy. Our Implementation Strategy starts with our vision of a more beautiful and sustainable community, outlining the basic steps which must be taken to see the vision unfold into reality.

Our implementation strategy focuses on **immediate action-oriented** cooperative activities and investments to gain momentum with quick small and large changes. These changes will become the impetus for more improvements. Other more modest **incremental changes** will have a noticeable impact on our appearance and the overall long-term health of our community.

Our strategies assume the alignment of public, private and civil sectors as well as individual commitment. The lead for different projects will come from various levels of the community and the government, and from different sectors of the economy. Separately, individuals, businesses and government are limited in what they can achieve. By sharing our resources and creating partnerships throughout the community we will guide the patterns of change in North San Rafael.

Our Vision contains several projects which are new for San Rafael. The promenade, library and neighborhood beautification depend on new funding. Fortunately, there are a variety of sources to pursue. Through cooperation and partnerships we can find the resources to make a difference in our future. It's the investments we make today that will bring us the results we envision for tomorrow.

While all the actions identified in Section IV, Vision Concepts, Goals and Actions are important, the Implementation Strategy establishes broader priorities for achieving the Vision. These priorities are based on community support and a sense of urgency, manageability, cost effectiveness, feasibility, and positive impact on a goal.

STRATEGY
Community Participation

Organize the community to work together on Vision projects

IMPLEMENTATION

1. Form an implementation committee to serve as ‘guardians’ of the vision.
2. Form volunteer action teams such as the library booster club.
3. Promote local volunteerism, such as Boy Scouts helping with landscape maintenance.

STRATEGY
Financing

Identify ways to finance the improvements in Vision North San Rafael.

IMPLEMENTATION

1. Explore financing options, including a possible assessment or other taxing district, or a bond measure.
2. Pursue federal and state grants, as well as grants from non-profit agencies for capital projects such as traffic calming, entryway, landscaping and promenade improvements.
3. Use traffic mitigation fees to make traffic improvements.

STRATEGY
Maintenance

Maintain community improvements.

IMPLEMENTATION

1. Identify methods for maintaining our public infrastructure.
2. Determine adequate levels of service for maintenance.
3. Seek agreement on maintenance responsibilities

STRATEGY
Feasibility and Coordination

Look for innovative approaches and allow for flexibility in implementing the Vision.

IMPLEMENTATION

1. Ensure that development standards are consistent with *Vision North San Rafael*, including standards for environmental protection, traffic, floor area ratio, density, bonuses and other incentives, design requirements for architectural excellence, and parking.
2. Create a transportation system which acknowledges a balance between our current and future land use patterns and protection of our open space.
3. As new development occurs, address transportation issues, including walkways, bikeways and, where feasible, bus service.
4. The total amount of development in North San Rafael will not cause city traffic to exceed level of service D.

STRATEGY
Partnerships

Coordinate with other organizations, and create partnerships to undertake implementation projects.

IMPLEMENTATION

1. Coordinate implementation both at the staff and at the policy level, with the County, State and federal agencies, as well as with civic and non-profit organizations.
2. Work with the City's Traffic Coordinating Committee to begin a traffic calming program, beginning with a pilot program for Las Gallinas.

STRATEGY
Public Information

Inform the community about our Vision, and implementation projects.

IMPLEMENTATION

1. Simplify ways for the community to learn about local governmental activities affecting our community and the resources available to make things happen.
2. Provide information to the community about issues, events and places to go on an ongoing, regular basis.

STRATEGY
Policy Development

Amend the General Plan, zoning ordinance and other regulations consistent with the Vision.

IMPLEMENTATION

1. Consider flexibility in floor area ratios in order to respond to changing business needs.
2. *Marin Ranch Airport.* Amend the General Plan land use designation to Parks/Open Space, and amend the General Plan policies to be consistent with the covenant.*

* The intent of the Steering Committee's General Plan recommendation is to recognize the unique and valuable recreational and environmental characteristics of the Marin Ranch Airport site. The San Rafael General Plan *Parks/Open Space* land use designation's allowed uses are "Dedicated parks, secured open space, and areas identified as having visual or other natural resource significance that should be protected through the development review process." In addition, the Steering Committee notes that the following uses are listed in the *Declaration of Restrictions* (covenant) for Marin Ranch Airport, and recommends that they be allowed as activities on the site:

- Existing uses consisting of an airport and related uses.
- Public utility uses as approved by the appropriate government agencies, including flood control, sanitary sewer, gas and electric, and public safety facilities.
- Airport and airport related uses.
- Roadways.
- Open space.
- Private and public recreational uses.

3. *Site at 4300 Redwood Highway along the north fork of Las Gallinas Creek (Fairchild site).* Allow office, light industrial, business-serving retail and service, and restaurant uses, and:
 - Prohibit big box retail.
 - Provide creek restoration and widening to handle flooding and improve habitat.
 - Assure quality building design.
 - Provide a pedestrian and bicycle path along the creek with connections to the bike path along the railroad.
4. *Site on the east side of the hill off of Channing Way (Del Gatti property).* Change the General Plan land use designation to clustered low density housing.
5. *Site near N. San Pedro Road and Los Ranchitos (PG&E property).* Change the General Plan land use designation to ensure a mix of housing, neighborhood recreational and environmental protection areas that enhance the community, and seek ways to assure that the character of the development offers a strong sense of community and identity for the site and the neighborhood. This would include the following issues, among any other potential environmental impacts:
 - Improvements to local drainage and flooding potential.
 - Architectural excellence.
 - Provision of a readily accessible, active neighborhood park or green with sports area with a size appropriate to neighborhood.
 - Traffic impacts and access.
 - Potentially hazardous soils conditions.
 - Housing that blends with and enhances neighboring homes.
 - A variety of housing types responding to community housing needs.
 - A preference of clustering of housing in order to maximize environmental and recreational uses.
 - Environmental restoration and enhancement if feasible.
 - Potential school impacts.
 - Safe bicycle and pedestrian connections.
 - Good connections to the Civic Center and Northgate Mall.
6. *McInnis Parkway.* Do not extend to Smith Ranch Road, and create a turnaround area at the existing terminus of the parkway.

Participants

Bruce Abbott	Hermine' Boyadjian	Jim Davies	Kris Geller	Colleen Johnson
Janet Abbott	Robert Boyce	Marilyn E. Davis	Ron Giambastiani	Debra Johnson
Harrv Abernathy	Sandy Boyd	Phil Deckor	Caroline Goff	Greg Johnson
Linda Abernathy	Michael Brant	Reta Diekman	Harriet Goldman	Walt Johnson
Kathy Adams	Anne Laird Branton	Bono Dell'Era	Jose Gonzalez	Margaret Johnston
Irene Ager	Joseph Breen	Dave Dell'Era	Victoria Gonzalez	CJB Joki
Steve Ager	Therese Brenton	Letty Dell'Era	Debbie Goodman	Amy Jones
Pat Alberti	Gerd Breuer	Ron Derenzo	Jim Goodwin	Kathryn Jordan
Clark Allen	Cecelia Bridges	Clyde Van DeVeere	Debbie Gordon	Gil Judson
Diane Allen	Betty Bright	Bob DeYoung	Michael Gordon	Tinker Judson
Kim Allen	Lee Bright	Ken Dickinson	Alice C. Goss	Lenore Junker
The Allen Family	Barbara Brownson	Judy DiGiorgio	Eva Gottheiner	Nicholas Junker
Charlotte Amans	Bonnie Brown	Mary Dinday	Rosaline Gould	Ali Kagawa
Mary Amodio	Sharon Brown	Matt Dinday	L. Graber	Barbara Kain
Kathleen Andrianos	Yvonne Brown	Mike Dobbs	Ken Grady	Nabi Karim
Gregory Andrew	Ron Broyles	Robert Doering	Parker Grant	Roz Katz
Al Angelini	Judy Bruce	Justin Dollar	Gail Grasso	Dil Kazzaz
Lydia Angelini	Tom Bruton	Shaun Donahue	Norm Gravdahl	Jina Kazzaz
Georgia Annwell	Regina Buchanan	Micaela Doyle	Barbara Green	Sheilan Kazzaz
Tony Apodaca	Priscilla Bull	Roger Duba	Caitlin Green	Shwan Kazzaz
Wendy Appel	Paula Bunney	Rafael Duenas	Dave Green	Barbara Kearnan
JoAnne Arakaki	Ruth Bunnell	P. Dugan	Melissa Green	John Kenney
Ruth Arnold	Lynn Burke	Joy Dahlgren	Valerie Green	Damon Kerby
Gracie Artemis	Mary Jane Burke	Nancy Dughello	Deborah Gregor	Kevin Kerle
Brenda Atchison	Mary Burger	Peter Dyson	George Gregor	Mrs. Kerns
Ligin Atkinson	Tom Burger	Warren Edgar	Ann Gregory	Laura Kershaw
Rich Atkinson	Jane Calbreath	Peter Edridge	Don Gregory	Nick Kershaw
Ken Augustine	Joe Caramucci	John Eells	Francisco Grevara	Wendy Kettering
Arturo Baca	Diane Carbone	John Ehler	Cathy Grey	Sally Kibbee
Mary Baca	Cathy Carmedelle	Carolyn Eitel	Dick Grey	Dorothy Kiesman
Tamara Backston	Dale Carrigan	Mike Elgie	Carol Griffin	Alison Kiessling
Barbara Bailard	Sherri Carrigan	Donna Eng	Charlotte Gwinn	Margaret Kiessling
Dan Balan	Ed Carr	Jerry Engel	Miriam Habenicht	Kadi Kiiss
Sharon Bale	Terry Carr	Holly Erlandson	Roy Habenicht	Bill King
Eric Bancroft	Eric Carrere	Inge Erlandson	Arlene Halligan	Helene King
Barbara Barnes	Ranny Carter	Tom Ervin	Jon Hale	Jennie King
Cap Barthel	Gail Caruso	Max Eymann	Mary Hanley	Kathe King
Kathy Barrass	Rich Castagna	Sophie Eymann	Jan Harvey	Donna Kirby
Stan Barrass	Janelle Cavanagh	Ellen Faden	Kim Harrigan	Alex Kirchman
Linda Bartera	Marilyn Chavez	Greg Fama	Vera Hartunian	Jeff Kirchmann
Georgia Barth	Tenley Chavez	Joelle Fama	Leslie Harrington	Sande Kiriluk
Cap Barthel	Sane Chase	Earl Farnsworth	Dennis Hassler	Roger Kirk
Suzanne Barthel	Alan Cherrigan	Lenore Farnsworth	Linda Haumann	Joanne Klain
Dale Bartley	Dart Cherk	Amy Faulkner	Bianca Havel	David Klein
Wayka Bartolacello	Esther Cherk	Bud Ferry	Carole Hayashino	Sandra Klein
Ann Batman	John Chiappolini	Marilyn Ferry	Sarah Haynes	Jerry Allen Kler
Daria Bauer	W. Chipman	Barbara Fewell	Louise Heineman	David Kohle
Thais Zayas Bazan	Shirley Cicero	Tim Fewell	Lorraine Heitichue	Clarence Koop
Darby Beetham	Sue Ciolino	Alfred Fields	David Heldt	Kathy Kopp
Dan Beittel	Paul Cleeremans	Jacqueline Fields	Aleida Helle	Rusty Kostick
Sue Beittel	Rick Coburn	Jane Firpo	Barbara Heller	Clarans Kranse
Chelsea Bellows	Patricia Cochran	Pam Fisher	Marg Henderson	Helen Krause
A. Benert	Sam Cogswell	Sue Fischer	Barbara S. Heron	John Kress
Charles Bennett	Paul Cohen	Doris Fleenor	Lissa Herschleb	Jacqueline Kristensen
Cheryl Berger	Carol Colbert	Dick Fleming	Dave Hill	Theo Kuhlmann
Kip Berger	Patricia Cole	Joanne Fleming	Gerry Hill	Richard Kuhn
Melissa Bernadore	Peggy Colivas	Brian Flynn	Steve Hill	Vicki Kung
Bill Berry	Dorothy Cooney	Claudia Forde	Brian Hinman	Jerome Kuykendall
Susan Berryessa	Vera Cook	Kevin Forde	Alice I. Hobson	Frank Laevron
Bill Best	Dan Copans	Jim Forsell	Jen Hong	Noah LaFayette
Mitzi Best	Lauren Copans	Susan Fox	Ashley Howe	Thomas Lai
Helen P. Blakenlee	Lorri Coppola	Ernie Franzini	Marin Hudobind	Clara Lamers
Evan Blickenstaff	Osbriel Correa	Julie Frank	Mary Hughes	Lawrence Lang
Ed Bloom	Chris Craiker	Jim Frassetto	Heide Hupfeld	Kathy Larson
Jay Bloom	Jerry Craner	Michael Freeman	Gail Hutson	Bill Laughter
Marilyn Boatright	Gloria Creamer	Kelly Funk	Vonne Irish	Judy Laughter
Dick Bobb	Joe Creamer	Terry Funk	Bernardo Iroz	John Lauster
Frank Boehm	Laraine Cunha	Alvin Gabler	Kati Ivancic	MaryJo Lauster
Mary Ellen Bollen	Julia Daerm	Alexey Gairdarzhy	Susan Ivancic	Joyce Lavey
Walter Bollen	Greg Daggett	Karen Gallagher	Marilyn Jacobs	Diana Lawson
Lindsay Bombardier	Marilyn Daggett	Guido Gallo	C.J. Jacobson	Howard Lazar
Nina Bombardier	Patty Dailey	Nancy Gardner-Gmeiner	Jeff Jackson	Patricia Lazar
Bob Bonebrake	Lori Dang	John Garr	Robert Jackson	Deborah Learner
Betsy Bozdech	Bobbie Danz	Ginger Gaskin	Don Jarvis	Peggie Learning
Mike Bosworth	Julie Dashiell	John Gaskin	Craig Jensen	Doug Ledeboer
John Bowman	Diane K. Davies	Ralph Gatto	H.L. Jespersen	Michael Leggett

Karen LeMay	Burnette J. Meismer	Peggy Pitman	Seegerquist	Anise Turina
Carolyn Lenert	Joseph Merola	Anne Plotkin	Robert Selmer	Pete Turnbaugh
Chey LeRoi	Ralph Merola	Nathan Plotkin	Siobhan Semple-Stoddard	Nancy Turner
Henri K. Lese	Ralph Meroint	Keelin Pohl	Matt Sessi	Peter Turnseyl
Chris Lev	Sandy Messinger	Cari Pompanin	Refaat Shalaby	Rich Tuttle
Linda Levey	Cyr Miller	Paolo Pompanin	Eli Shamah	Susan Tuttle
Deborah Levin	Katherine Miller	Ted Posthuma	Scott Shaw	Linda Ullmann
Norman Levin	Ella May Minneman	Carolyn Potter	Trish Shaw	Scott Urquhart
Dan Levine	Peter Montgomery	Maura Prendiville	Stuart Shepherd	Anna Utrilla
Joyce Levine	Marilyn Mori	Sean Prendiville	Lois Sherbert	Bryan Vais
Mark Levine	Dennis Moritz	Sidney Pucek	Val Sherer	Clyde Van De Veere
Trudy Licht	Jason Morris	Peggy Pugh	Uma Sherman	James Van de Voorde
Melanie Limacher	Jay Morse	Sue Quarnstrom	Madeline Shoemake	Sondra J. Van Horne
Rob Limacher	Jim Munson	Michele Quilici	Ana Shuman	Carl Van Nite
Janet Lipsey	Patricia Murison	Manuel Quintana	Gina Silvestri	Eida Van Nite
J Littman	May S. Muroga	Al Ranzani	Jess Simmons	Bor Van Nordstrand
S Littman	Phil Murphy	Mark Reagan	Larry Simmons	Earl Van Note
Jaclyn Loberg	Hilary Namnath	MaryAnn Rechtfertig	Bob Simon	Charlene Vargo
Sandy Lollini	Jon Namnath	Jackie Reese	Catherine Singels	Paul Vasquez
Steven Lonneman	Frank Nelson	Elaine Reichert	Steve Slanac	Alex Vassilion
Maria S. Lorch	Beverly Neuenburg	Ditka Reiner	Vicky Smirnoff	Diane Vattuone
Stephanie Lovette	Len Nibbi	Jeffrey Reiss	Lori Snyder	Janet Vehrimg
Rhys Ludlow	Philip Nittenberg	John Reynolds	Myrna Snyder	Janice Vela
M J Lutzzeier	Kay Noguchi	John Richard	Russ Snyder	Sitaraman Venkataramani
Victoria Lynch	Frances Nunez	Marie Richard	Mr. & Mrs. Soans	Sheldon Vile
Bruce MacDonald	Tom Obletz	Betsy Rick	Elaine Solem	Heidi Vonblum
James Machado	Dick O'Brien	Nancy Riggs	Bob Song-Hill	Sarah Vogt
Nancy Mack	Erminic O'Brien	Carl Ringchop	Robby Song-Hill	Cynda Vyas
Jeanne MacLeary	Sean O'Brien	Janet Ringchop	Robert Sos	Jane Walker
Andrea MacLeod	Margaret O'Hara	Angela Risdon	Leandro P. Soto	Pinard Walker
Shirley MacPherson	Kathy Okom	John Wood Rittenhouse III	Frances Spangle	Steve Wallace
Lea Madison	D. Organ	Ted Robb	Jean Starkweather	Joe Walsh
Goldie Magee	Vivian Orr	Molly Robbins	John Starkweather	Tom Walsh
Euhte Mamet	Jim Orrell	Everil Robertson	Sharon Steckline	Rick Walt
Billy Mannion	Pat O'Shea	John Rojas	Ed Steiger	Peter Walz
Tricia Mannion	Bettie Ott	Mercedes Rojas	Steve Stein	Bernice Wata
Pavlo Manovi	Stan Ott	Barbara Rokoszak	K. Steinbach	Lacy Watson
Cathleen Manovi	Semik Oungouliau	Peter Roodhuyzer	James Stirling	Pamela Wayne
Victor Manovi	Dick Owens	Jack Rookand	Lorraine Stirling	Florence Webb
Francine Marinic	Wayne Paasch	Marie Rookand	Richard Stites	Dawn Weisz
Evan Marks	Betty Pagett	Diane Rosenberger	Gabriela Strant	Trudy Wendt
Pip Marks	Virginia Page	Larry Rosenberger	Don Streepier	Kathy Wernberg
Inge Marrino	Dan Paicopulos	Doug Ross	Bert Strucel	Robert Wernberg
Joe Marrino	Marlene Palatella	Chuck Rosso	Maria Strucel	Albert Wettstein
Don Martin	Linda Patrick	Lynn Rosso	John Sullivan	Beverly White
Hannelore Martin	Ram Patange	Lester Roth	Kathie Sullivan	Julie Whyte
Mikeal A. Martin	Sue Paul	Ted Rowe	Tim Sullivan	JoAnne Wickley
Pete Martin	Jay Paxton	Leonard Rubin	Teri Swanson	Courtney Wildman
Cecelia Martz	Pete Pedersen	Violet C. Ruoff	Laurence Sykes	Lila Wilkins
Dick Matthews	Joan Pensichilli	Patrick J. Ryden	Barbara Tarkington	Jack Wilkinson
Val Matthews	Lynne Pentis	Linda Saldana	Hanna Takashige	Susan Wilkinson
Lee May	Karen Perrino	Bernie Samet	Maggie Takis	Biney Willcutt
Carlene McCart	Tony Perrino	Ian Sammis	Susan Tarran	Barbara Williams
Georgiana McCarty	James Perryman	Sherry Sandberg	Ailene Taylor	Helen Williams
Michael McCrea	Coleman Persily	Sue Sanders	Kirk Taylor	Bethany Wilson
Jeanette McCusker	Pearl Persily	Lois Scanlon	Warren Taylor	Gloria Wilson
Bob McDonald	Mike Peterson	Marve Scavid	Marcy Telles	Tom Woodhouse
Kate McDonald	Ben F. Petrini	David Schemel	Joan Thayer	Sue Woodiblese
Maureen McGeehan	Cookie Pettee	Carol Schmidt	Judy Tipple	Keiko Wright
Nancy McGinley	Fred Pfeifer	Sandra Schonwasser	Mike Tischborn	Alisa Wyad
Kate McGuire	Lynn Pfeifer	Marie Schooley	Wayne Toba	John Yates
Mike McGuire	Linda Pheraroles	S. Robert Schultz	Annegret Topez	Vera Young
Scott McKown	Hugo Phillips	Miriam Schwartz	Elena Torres	John A. Zamberlin
Karen McNeill	Janet O. Phillips	Susan Schweit	John Trimble	Jeff Zane
Mary Mead	Ron Phillips	Bruce Scott	Scott T.S. Trimble	Paul Zensivo
Virginia Mead	Mark Piatti	Tom Scott	Cathy Tucker	Hilda Zoyas

North San Rafael Organizations

*Autodesk
 Catholic Charities
 Christ Presbyterian Church
 Christian Church of San Rafael

City of San Rafael Volunteer Center
 Congregation Rodef Shalom
 Dixie Elementary School
 *Dixie School Board

Environmental Forum
*Fair Isaac
*Federation of San Rafael Neighborhoods
First Congregational Church
*Kiwanis
Los Ranchitos Improvement Association
Lucas Valley Homeowners
Lutheran Church of Resurrection
*Marin County League of Women Voters
*Marin A.I.A. Task Force
*Marin Association of Realtors
*Marin Builders Exchange
*Marin Conservation League
*Marin County Office of Education
*Marin County Parks and Open Space
Commission
*Marin Fellowship of Unitarians
*Marin Lagoon Homeowners Association
Marin County Farmers Market
Miller Creek Middle School
*Miller Creek Middle School Home & School
Club
*Mont Marin Homeowners Association
*North San Rafael Coalition of Residents
*Northgate Industrial Park Business Group
*Northgate Mall
Quail Hill Homeowners Association
Rafael Meadows Improvement Association
Terra Linda Valley Property Owners

*R.U.F.F.S.
St. Isabella's Elementary School
St. Mark's School
*San Rafael Chamber of Commerce
*San Rafael City Council
*San Rafael Downtown Vision Committee
San Rafael Library Board
*San Rafael Park and Recreation Commission
*San Rafael Planning Commission
*Santa Margarita Homeowner's Association
*San Rafael Sunrise Lion's Club
*Santa Venetia Improvement Association
*Smith Ranch Airport Pilots Association
*Terra Linda High School Home & School Club
*Terra Linda Homeowners Association
*Terra Linda Leadership Class
*United Way
*Vallecito PTA
*Vallecito SLT
Vallecito Elementary School
Valley Baptist Church
Villa Marin Homeowners Association
Volunteer Center of Marin
*Y.M.C.A.

* North San Rafael Partner Groups