



November 7, 2022

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

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RE: Proposed 101/580 Interchange in San Rafael

Honorable Mayor and Council Members,
Sustainable San Rafael has been following the connector project as part of the Stakeholder Working Group (2020-21). The project was defined at that time as a connector from NB 101 to EB 580, relocating the commute currently on Sir Francis Drake to the San Rafael valley. We appreciate that the City Council is hearing an update on this project tonight.

Previously, Sustainable San Rafael questioned the early decision to not improve the portion of Sir Francis Drake between the two freeways as a landscaped parkway. This would be a less expensive and more appropriately scaled and located improvement, since the traffic on this reach of Drake consists largely of commuters between Southern Marin and the East Bay. In addition, we questioned the cost of a larger freeway compared to needed investments such as protecting I-580 and east San Rafael from sea level rise. We supported the Council's goals for an improved Bellam Avenue connection, however, these improvements do not address the bi-directional freeway interchange now being suggested.

Sustainable San Rafael had asked for clarity about the intentions regarding a WB 580 to SB 101 connection. We now note the recent addition of a new objective to TAM's online of project objectives for the connector project: "Consider construction of a westbound I-580 to southbound US 101 connector for a future project." In fact, a 2018 environmental document for Plan Bay Area 2040 states: "Study includes 580 westbound to south US 101."

This bidirectional freeway interchange (including a high-impact flyover from WB 580 to SB 101) has apparently been planned for central San Rafael for nearly five years, without informing the City Council and the larger community.

It is time for the leaders of San Rafael to ask questions:

- Is TAM's huge multilevel freeway interchange mainly bringing East Bay commuters to jobs in Southern Marin actually beneficial for the Canal Neighborhood and for San Rafael?
- Why aren't the City Council, County Supervisors, and TAM's Board questioning the equity of building an

interchange over one of Marin's lowest-income and most ethnically diverse neighborhoods?

- What will be the impact of having a large, noisy, and polluting freeway towering over the residences of some of San Rafael's strongest economic contributors?
- Wouldn't a better use of a half billion dollars be to elevate SMART through downtown? Or deal with sea level rise in east San Rafael? Or simply create a beautiful Sir Francis Drake parkway serving the same commuters in both directions?
- When will the San Rafael community be told about this multilevel freeway interchange in the heart of San Rafael--and asked whether they approve of the idea?

The Working Group was told that there are 'off ramps' to the final go-ahead decision. Today, some are saying that the project is a done deal. It's time that questions are asked and answered about what is ultimately planned here, and how that expanded project will impact the larger community.

Thank you for your leadership on behalf of San Rafael.

Sincerely,

William Carney
SSR President