



July 12, 2023

San Rafael City Council
1400 Fifth Ave
San Rafael, CA 94901
Mayor Kate Colin
Vice Mayor Maika Gulati
Councilmember Eli Hill
Councilmember Maribeth Bushey
Councilmember Rachel Kertz

Cc: City Manager Cristine Alilovich
City Attorney Robert Epstein
City Clerk Lindsay Lara
Director of Public Works April Miller
Deputy Director of Public Works Rafat Raie
Community Development Director Alicia Guidice
Senior Planner Jeff Ballantine

RE: Lowering the speed limit on Fourth Street between Second Street and Union Street from 25 mph to 20 mph in accordance with AB 43.

Dear San Rafael City Council,

The United States is suffering an epidemic of pedestrians being killed by cars. The number of pedestrians hit, injured, and killed by cars has been going up all across the country, including in San Rafael. Since 2011, over 150 pedestrians and other non-motorized road users have been injured or killed on San Rafael's Fourth Street. We must take immediate action to curb this dangerous epidemic, which disproportionately affects our most vulnerable citizens.

Reducing pedestrian deaths requires a multi-faceted approach encompassing education, enforcement, policy, design, and behavioral modification, many of which are difficult and expensive. However, there is one tool in the San Rafael City Council's toolbox which is readily available, easily implementable, and inexpensive.

That tool is AB 43.

California Assembly Bill 43, passed during the 2021-2022 legislative session, grants California municipalities the right to reduce speed limits on commercial district streets from 25 mph to 20 mph provided that three of the following four conditions are met:

- 1) At least 50 percent of the land use adjoining the street is made up of retail directly fronting the street (i.e. retail that is set back from the street with parking facing the street would NOT meet this condition).
- 2) There is on-street parking on the street.



- 3) Controlled intersections (either traffic signals or stop signs) are spaced no more than 600 feet apart.
- 4) There are crosswalks on the street.

San Rafael's Fourth Street meets all four of the above conditions. Well above 50% of its frontage is made up of retail that directly fronts the street.¹ There is on-street parking throughout the corridor. No two controlled intersections on Fourth Street are spaced more than 600 feet apart. And there are crosswalks located throughout the corridor. According to the text of AB 43, Fourth Street between Second Street is an *ideal* candidate and 100% eligible for a speed limit reduction from 25 mph to 20 mph.

The San Rafael City Council could act immediately to make this change, and the only thing left would be to take down the "Speed Limit 25 mph" signs and replace them with "Speed Limit 20 mph" signs.

Other California municipalities have already implemented commercial district street speed limit reductions based on AB 43. For example, San Francisco reduced the speed limit from 25 mph to 20 mph on a dozen iconic streets such as Market, Mission, Divisadero, and Castro Streets, amongst others.

The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety 2011 report *Impact Speed and a Pedestrian's Risk of Severe Injury or Death* determined that risk of severe injury to the average pedestrian hit by a car traveling at 20 mph is 17%, while that risk increases to 30% when the speed limit is raised to 25 mph.² The risk of death to the average pedestrian hit by a car traveling at 20 mph is 7% and increases to 12% at 25 mph.³

The above risk rates are only for the *average* pedestrian. Certain subgroups of pedestrians such as children, senior citizens, and persons with disabilities are at increased risk for severe injury or death when hit by a car, even at low speeds. For example, a 70-year old pedestrian's risk of severe injury or death if hit by a car traveling 25 mph (60% and 31%, respectively) is comparable to that of a 30-year old pedestrian hit by a car traveling at 35 mph.⁴

Reducing the speed limit on Fourth Street from 25 mph to 20 mph would improve safety for pedestrians and bicyclists. It would also improve the livability and economic vitality of Downtown San Rafael by making the City's "Main Street" a more welcoming environment for non-motorized users. Pedestrians are more likely to stop and shop at Fourth Street's various businesses than people speeding by at 25 mph in their cars.

¹ Figure 2.11 "Analysis of Building Frontages" in the 2020 *San Rafael Downtown Precise Plan*

² Tefft, B.C. (2011). *Impact Speed and a Pedestrian's Risk of Severe Injury or Death* (Technical Report). Washington, D.C.: AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. <https://aaafoundation.org/impact-speed-pedestrians-risk-severe-injury-death>

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.



Reducing the speed limit on Fourth Street from 25 mph to 20 mph would not impose any additional burden on drivers or vehicle circulation general in Downtown San Rafael. The *Downtown Precise Plan* and *General Plan* both designate Second and Third Streets as the two major arterials designed to move cars in the eastbound and westbound directions through Downtown. Moving vehicles was never Fourth Street's intended use. Fourth Street is San Rafael's "Main Street." When the City holds special events Downtown, it is Fourth Street where they are held. Fourth Street deserves to be a "Slow Street" every day, not just for special events.

We hope that after reviewing the information laid out above, you will strongly consider reducing the speed limit on Fourth Street between Second Street and Union Street from 25 mph to 20 mph and, in doing so, make Downtown San Rafael a safer, more vibrant, welcoming place to live, work, shop, and visit.

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

Patrick Seidler
WTB-TAM President

Matthew Hartzell
WTB-TAM Director of Planning

From: Angela Kelly [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 12, 2023 1:01 PM
To: Distrib- City Clerk <city.clerk@cityofsanrafael.org>
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Open Public Comment July 17/ AB 43: Lower Speed Limits on 4th Street

Dear SR City Council,

I urge the San Rafael City Council to lower the speed limit on 4th Street to 20 mph using AB 43, a law that allows local governments to set lower speed limits within business districts. 4th Street is heavily used by people walking, biking, and driving, but it poses safety risks to people outside of a car. Numerous traffic collisions and injuries have occurred on this street, highlighting the urgent need for change. Since 2011, over 150 people have been injured walking or biking on 4th Street, two of them fatally.

Our city's plans recognize the importance of 4th Street for pedestrians and bicyclists, and it is crucial to prioritize their safety. By implementing AB 43 and reducing the speed limit, the council can demonstrate its commitment to protecting residents and preventing avoidable crashes, making San Rafael a more enjoyable, walkable and bikeable place to live. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best,
Angela J. Kelly
SR Resident (Sun Valley)

From: Chuck Becker [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 4, 2023 2:04 PM
To: Distrib- City Clerk <city.clerk@cityofsanrafael.org>
Cc: s [REDACTED]
Subject: Open Public Comment July 17/ AB 43: Lower Speed Limits on 4th Street

I urge the San Rafael City Council to lower the speed limit on 4th Street to 20 mph using AB 43, a law that allows local governments to set lower speed limits within business districts. 4th Street is heavily used by people walking, biking, and driving, but it poses safety risks to people outside of a car. Numerous traffic collisions and injuries have occurred on this street, highlighting the urgent need for change. Since 2011, over 150 people have been injured walking or biking on 4th Street, two of them fatally.

Our city's plans recognize the importance of 4th Street for pedestrians and bicyclists, and it is crucial to prioritize their safety. By implementing AB 43 and reducing the speed limit, the council can demonstrate its commitment to protecting residents and preventing avoidable crashes, making San Rafael a more enjoyable, walkable and bikeable place to live. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Chuck Becker
[REDACTED]

From: David Seltzer [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 5, 2023 11:31 AM
To: Distrib- City Clerk <city.clerk@cityofsanrafael.org>
Cc: Susan Nawbary [REDACTED]
Subject: Open Public Comment July 17/ AB 43: Lower Speed Limits on 4th Street

Hello, I'm a San Rafael resident of 9 years and I live on [REDACTED] I really value and enjoy 4th street San Rafael for its great shops and restaurants. That said, I think 4th street can be an even better place to enjoy, as well as a useful part of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure.

I'm fortunate to live about a mile away from 4th street, so I often ride my bike there to go to Red Devil Records, get my haircut at The Shop, have a pint at Pond Farm, get art supplies from Rileystreet, a crepe from Crepevine etc etc. That said, I also know a lot of people that aren't comfortable riding to and along 4th street. This is understandable because 4th is shared with cars which can feel really uncomfortable for less experienced riders and riders with kids as well as present real tangible danger to those biking and walking. This street is a destination in and of itself and should be treated that way, a place to walk, stroll, bike to the different shops and restaurants.

Lowering traffic speeds with the use of AB 43 and investing in traffic calming measures would go a long way to making 4th street an even better place to spend time. It makes it both safer and more pleasant of an environment. Through car traffic already has 2nd and 3rd street. 4th on the other hand is a destination. Additionally, lowered speed limits would help 4th better serve its role as an East - West bike connector. So while making 4th street a better, safer, more pleasant destination, we can also make it a better connector for people walking and biking East - West as well. It's a win win!

So I urge the San Rafael City Council to lower the speed limit on 4th Street to 20 mph using AB 43, a law that allows local governments to set lower speed limits within business districts. 4th Street is heavily used by people walking, biking, and driving, but it poses safety risks to people outside of a car. Numerous traffic collisions and injuries have occurred on this street, highlighting the urgent need for change. Since 2011, over 150 people have been injured walking or biking on 4th Street, two of them fatally.

Our city's plans recognize the importance of 4th Street for pedestrians and bicyclists, and it is crucial to prioritize their safety. By implementing AB 43 and reducing the speed limit, the council can demonstrate its commitment to protecting residents and preventing avoidable crashes, making San Rafael a more enjoyable, walkable and bikeable place to live. Thank you for your time and consideration.

-David Seltzer

From: Jana Zanetto [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 10, 2023 5:47 PM
To: Distrib- City Clerk <city.clerk@cityofsanrafael.org>
Cc: Susan Nawbary [REDACTED]
Subject: Open Public Comment July 17/ AB 43: Lower Speed Limits on 4th Street

We are writing to urge the San Rafael City Council to lower the speed limit on 4th Street to 20 mph using AB 43, a law that allows local governments to set lower speed limits within business districts. 4th Street is heavily used by people walking, biking, and driving, but it poses safety risks to people outside of a car. **A distressing number of** traffic collisions and injuries have occurred on this street, **which** highlightS the urgent need for change. Since 2011, over 150 people have been injured walking or biking on 4th Street, two of them fatally. By reducing the speed limit on 4th Street, drivers will be given more time to notice and react to the presence of other user groups on this heavily-used main street of our city's business district.

San Rafael's plans recognize the importance of 4th Street for pedestrians and bicyclists, **so** it is **incumbent on the city council** to prioritize their safety. By implementing AB 43 and reducing the speed limit, the council can demonstrate its commitment to protecting residents and **acting to** prevent avoidable crashes, making San Rafael a more enjoyable, walkable and bikeable place to live. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Janet and Jeff Zanetto
San Rafael

From: Liz Bernstein [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 5, 2023 9:34 AM
To: Distrib- City Clerk <city.clerk@cityofsanrafael.org>
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Open Public Comment July 17/ AB 43: Lower Speed Limits on 4th Street

I urge the San Rafael City Council to lower the speed limit on 4th Street to 20 mph using AB 43, a law that allows local governments to set lower speed limits within business districts. 4th Street is heavily used by people walking, biking, and driving, but it poses safety risks to people outside of a car. Numerous traffic collisions and injuries have occurred on this street, highlighting the urgent need for change. Since 2011, over 150 people have been injured walking or biking on 4th Street, two of them fatally.

Our city's plans recognize the importance of 4th Street for pedestrians and bicyclists, and it is crucial to prioritize their safety. By implementing AB 43 and reducing the speed limit, the council can demonstrate its commitment to protecting residents and preventing avoidable crashes, making San Rafael a more enjoyable, walkable and bikeable place to live. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Thank you,
Liz Bernstein
MCBC

-----Original Message-----

From: Nathan Cohen [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, July 10, 2023 10:54 PM
To: Distrib- City Clerk <city.clerk@cityofsanrafael.org>
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Open Public Comment July 10/ AB 43 Lower Speed Limits on 4th Street

I urge the San Rafael City Council to lower the speed limit on 4th Street to 20 mph using AB 43, a law that allows local governments to set lower speed limits within business districts. 4th Street is heavily used by people walking, biking, and driving, but it poses safety risks to people outside of a car. Numerous traffic collisions and injuries have occurred on this street, highlighting the urgent need for change. Since 2011, over 150 people have been injured walking or biking on 4th Street, two of them fatally.

Our city's plans recognize the importance of 4th Street for pedestrians and bicyclists, and it is crucial to prioritize their safety. By implementing AB 43 and reducing the speed limit, the council can demonstrate its commitment to protecting residents and preventing avoidable crashes, making San Rafael a more enjoyable, walkable and bikeable place to live. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Nathan

From: Nimalan Mahendran [REDACTED]

Sent: Thursday, July 6, 2023 7:33 AM

To: Distrib- City Clerk <city.clerk@cityofsanrafael.org>

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: Open Public Comment July 17/ AB 43: Lower Speed Limits on 4th Street

I urge the San Rafael City Council to lower the speed limit on 4th Street to 20 mph using AB 43, a law that allows local governments to set lower speed limits within business districts. 4th Street is heavily used by people walking, biking, and driving, but it poses safety risks to people outside of a car. Numerous traffic collisions and injuries have occurred on this street, highlighting the urgent need for change. Since 2011, over 150 people have been injured walking or biking on 4th Street, two of them fatally.

Our city's plans recognize the importance of 4th Street for pedestrians and bicyclists, and it is crucial to prioritize their safety. By implementing AB 43 and reducing the speed limit, the council can demonstrate its commitment to protecting residents and preventing avoidable crashes, making San Rafael a more enjoyable, walkable and bikeable place to live. Thank you for your time and consideration.

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Nimalan

-----Original Message-----

From: Philip Mooney [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 5, 2023 8:48 AM
To: Distrib- City Clerk <city.clerk@cityofsanrafael.org>
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Open Public Comment July 17/ AB 43: Lower Speed Limits on 4th Street

I urge the San Rafael City Council to lower the speed limit on 4th Street to 20 mph using AB 43, a law that allows local governments to set lower speed limits within business districts. 4th Street is heavily used by people walking, biking, and driving, but it poses safety risks to people outside of a car. Numerous traffic collisions and injuries have occurred on this street, highlighting the urgent need for change. Since 2011, over 150 people have been injured walking or biking on 4th Street, two of them fatally.

Our city's plans recognize the importance of 4th Street for pedestrians and bicyclists, and it is crucial to prioritize their safety. By implementing AB 43 and reducing the speed limit, the council can demonstrate its commitment to protecting residents and preventing avoidable crashes, making San Rafael a more enjoyable, walkable and bikeable place to live. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sent from my iPad

-----Original Message-----

From: Robert Jupe Jr [REDACTED]

Sent: Wednesday, July 5, 2023 8:59 AM

To: Distrib- City Clerk <city.clerk@cityofsanrafael.org>

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: Open Public Comment July 17/ AB 43: Lower Speed Limits on 4th Street

While I think that lowering the speed limit on fourth Street is a great idea and a beginning step I also believe that closing off fourth Street in segments to create pedestrian islands might be a better step. Closing fourth Street from Mission to A Street is a good consideration to begin with. I urge the San Rafael City Council to lower the speed limit on 4th Street to 20 mph using AB 43, a law that allows local governments to set lower speed limits within business districts. 4th Street is heavily used by people walking, biking, and driving, but it poses safety risks to people outside of a car. Numerous traffic collisions and injuries have occurred on this street, highlighting the urgent need for change. Since 2011, over 150 people have been injured walking or biking on 4th Street, two of them fatally.

Our city's plans recognize the importance of 4th Street for pedestrians and bicyclists, and it is crucial to prioritize their safety. By implementing AB 43 and reducing the speed limit, the council can demonstrate its commitment to protecting residents and preventing avoidable crashes, making San Rafael a more enjoyable, walkable and bikeable place to live. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sent from my iPhone

-----Original Message-----

From: STEVEN FRIEDMAN <[REDACTED]>

Sent: Tuesday, July 4, 2023 12:31 PM

To: Distrib- City Clerk <city.clerk@cityofsanrafael.org>

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: Open Public Comment July 17/ AB 43: Lower Speed Limits on 4th Street

I urge the San Rafael City Council to lower the speed limit on 4th Street to 20 mph using AB 43, a law that allows local governments to set lower speed limits within business districts. 4th Street is heavily used by people walking, biking, and driving, but it poses safety risks to people outside of a car. Numerous traffic collisions and injuries have occurred on this street, highlighting the urgent need for change. Since 2011, over 150 people have been injured walking or biking on 4th Street, two of them fatally.

Our city's plans recognize the importance of 4th Street for pedestrians and bicyclists, and it is crucial to prioritize their safety. By implementing AB 43 and reducing the speed limit, the council can demonstrate its commitment to protecting residents and preventing avoidable crashes, making San Rafael a more enjoyable, walkable and bikeable place to live. Thank you for your time and consideration.

I've biked and walked there alone and with family and often do not feel safe.

Sent from my iPhone

From: Seth [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, July 5, 2023 9:26 AM
To: Distrib- City Clerk <city.clerk@cityofsanrafael.org>
Subject: Open Public Comment July 17/ AB 43: Lower Speed Limits on 4th Street

My wife and I were hit while parking our car on 4th street by a speeding vehicle, passing over the double yellow line. The speeding and aggressive driving on 4th street needs to be reigned in through new traffic measures in that area.

I urge the San Rafael City Council to lower the speed limit on 4th Street to 20 mph using AB 43, a law that allows local governments to set lower speed limits within business districts. 4th Street is heavily used by people walking, biking, and driving, but it poses safety risks to people outside of a car. Numerous traffic collisions and injuries have occurred on this street, highlighting the urgent need for change. Since 2011, over 150 people have been injured walking or biking on 4th Street, two of them fatally.

Our city's plans recognize the importance of 4th Street for pedestrians and bicyclists, and it is crucial to prioritize their safety. By implementing AB 43 and reducing the speed limit, the council can demonstrate its commitment to protecting residents and preventing avoidable crashes, making San Rafael a more enjoyable, walkable and bikeable place to live. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Seth Harris
[REDACTED]
San Rafael, CA 94901

-----Original Message-----

From: Susan Nawbary [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, July 13, 2023 9:52 PM
To: Distrib- City Clerk <city.clerk@cityofsanrafael.org>
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Open Public Comment July 17/ AB 43: Lower Speed Limits on 4th Street

I urge the San Rafael City Council to lower the speed limit on 4th Street to 20 mph using AB 43, a law that allows local governments to set lower speed limits within business districts. 4th Street is heavily used by people walking, biking, and driving, but it poses safety risks to people outside of a car. Numerous traffic collisions and injuries have occurred on this street, highlighting the urgent need for change. Since 2011, over 150 people have been injured walking or biking on 4th Street, two of them fatally.

Our city's plans recognize the importance of 4th Street for pedestrians and bicyclists, and it is crucial to prioritize their safety. By implementing AB 43 and reducing the speed limit, the council can demonstrate its commitment to protecting residents and preventing avoidable crashes, making San Rafael a more enjoyable, walkable and bikeable place to live. Thank you for your time and consideration.

In addition, please confirm the receipt of the 11+ emails regarding this issue, sent between July 4 to today.

Sent from my iPhone