

Re: No. 5, Special Presentation. San Rafael Transit Center

I write to you as a founding member and former president of San Rafael Heritage, which was formed in 2015 as a direct response to the then existing threat to San Rafael's 1929 Mission Revival Train Depot. Although I no longer live in San Rafael, it holds my heart, and I am as deeply concerned about its past, present, and future as I ever was.

The Depot is an outstanding (and fortunately, still standing) representative of San Rafael's historical development as the main town, and eventually county seat, of Marin. Before the Golden Gate Bridge, the railroad made it possible for goods and people to be transported back and forth to ferries and thence between Marin and the larger city of San Francisco. From the 1800's on, rail made our growth possible. Freight service and commuter rails were the lifeblood of the city. The current Mission Revival Depot which replaced the original station is in itself a historic piece of architecture; it exemplifies a move to give a cohesive identity to many California train stations up and down the state. Many of them have been lovingly preserved and intelligently re-used.

This small, beautiful building continues to bring a strong, meaningful identity to one of the main entrances into San Rafael. I urge the City Council and all agencies who deal with it to respect that identity and our sense of community by preserving more of the 1929 building than is currently shown in the Golden Gate Bridge District's presentation. There is nothing constructive about destruction. San Rafael Heritage has submitted a detailed, intelligent review that should serve as a guide to this issue.

I hope Council members and others can take steps to see that the Depot becomes the preserved asset it should be to the City of San Rafael, not only as an example of the past, but a useful, charming, beautiful, and delightful greeting place for San Rafael travelers of the near future.

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