

Agenda

Civic Center Station Area Plan Advisory Committee
Wednesday, March 14, 2012; 7:00 – 9:00 p.m.
Volunteer Center, Guide Dogs for the Blind
350 Los Ranchitos Road



Desired Outcomes/Products

- Understand Administrative Version contents and review process for Plan
- Be prepared to Review at April meeting

I. Welcome	7:00
▪ Agenda Review	
▪ Action on Meeting Notes	
▪ Announcements	
II. Open Time	7:10
This portion of the meeting is reserved for persons desiring to address the Committee on matters not on the agenda. Presentations are generally limited to TWO MINUTES.	
III. Vision Statement Revisited Report Out	7:20
IV. Committee Review Process Explained	7:30
V. Station Plan Administrative Version Presentation	7:40
▪ Introduction	
▪ Consultant Presentation	
▪ Committee Questions of Clarification	
▪ Public Questions of Clarification	
VI. Homework for April Committee Meeting – due March 30, by noon	8:40
VII. Public Comment	8:45
VIII. Meeting Evaluation	8:55
IX. Closing	9:00

Next Meeting: Wednesday, April 11

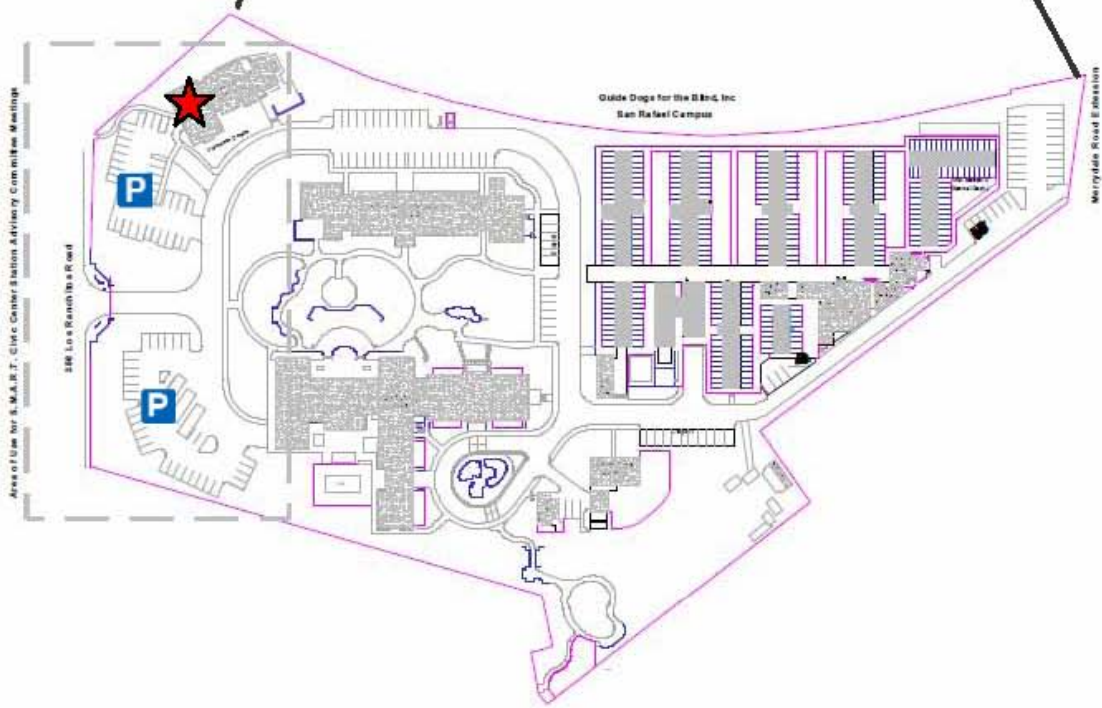
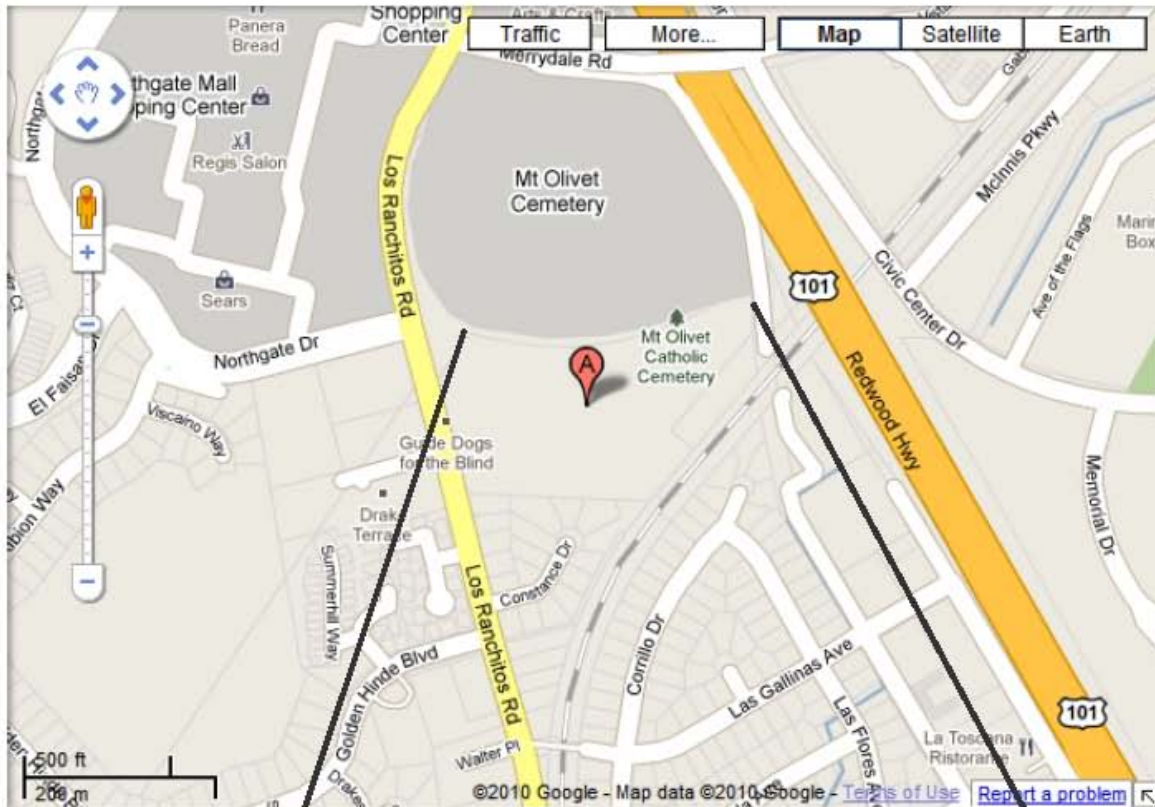
7:00 – 9:30 p.m.

For more information, call 485-3076



The meeting facilities are accessible to persons with disabilities. American Sign Language interpreters and assistive listening devices may be requested by calling (415) 485-3198 (TDD) or (415) 485-3067 (voice) at least 72 hours in advance. Copies of documents are available in accessible formats upon request. Public transportation is available through Golden Gate Transit, Line 45, 49 or 52. Paratransit is available by calling Whistlestop Wheels at (415) 454-0964. To allow individuals with environmental illness or multiple chemical sensitivity to attend the meeting/hearing, individuals are requested to refrain from wearing scented products.

Meeting Location: 350 Los Ranchitos Road, San Rafael, CA 94903



Civic Center Station Area Plan Advisory Committee
Meeting Notes: Wednesday, February 8, 2012; 7:00 – 9:00 pm
Guide Dogs for the Blind, 350 Los Ranchitos Rd.

Attendance

Civic Center Station Area Plan Advisory Committee

Emily Dean	Preston McCoy*	Roger Smith
Mike Fryer	Rich McGrath	Jean Starkweather
Elissa Giambastiani	Brigitte Moran	Tammy Taylor
Nicholas Kapas	Jeff Schoppert	
Casey Mazzoni	Judy Schriebman*	

*Ex officio, non-voting member

**Ex officio alternate

Absent: Barbara Heller*, Marcus Lee, Bob Huntsberry*, Greg Knell, Larry Paul*, Andrew Patterson, Gayle Theard, Craig Thomas Yates

Observers: Patsy White, Stuart Shepherd, Don Magdanz, Greg Andrew, Bill Carney, Kate Powers, Elaine Lyford Nogina, Alisha Oloughlin, Sam Mathare

Staff: Katie Korzun (Economic Development Coordinator, City of San Rafael), John Eells (Consultant to TAM)

Welcome, Announcements and Introductions

Co-chair Jeff Schoppert opened the meeting at 7:05 p.m. noting a quorum present. He said the purpose of the meeting was to adjust the Committee memberships discuss and accept a parking proposal. No changes to the agenda were requested. He asked for a motion to approve the minutes. Emily Dean requested that Committee changes to documents be shown in track changes. Elissa Giambastiani made a motion and Jean Starkweather seconded. Minutes were approved.

Judy Schriebman announced a series of 3 meetings hosted by Sustainable San Rafael on sea level rise, the first to be on February 27.

Schoppert announced that he had attended the tour of the Downtown Station Area, and was very impressed with the Committee work, and noted that the Plan was available on line.

Nick Kapas noted that he had attended the November 19 Workshop and asked that the attendance chart be corrected.

Jean Starkweather noted that she had attended the opening of the new hardware store in the Plan Area, and had found that the on and off ramp congestion was difficult. She felt that this was an example of what would happen if too much development is approved.

Schoppert announced "Open Time" and there were no public comments. .

Committee Adjustments

Civic Center Station Area Plan Advisory Committee
Draft Notes for 02/08 Meeting

Schoppert stated that the Committee Guidelines directed that committee members are considered resigned if they have 3 unexcused absences in a row and that 3 members were in that situation. He has spoken with Greg Knell who had found that other commitments required his attendance on Wednesday evening. Korzun noted that she had spoken with Marcus Lee who also had business commitments on Wednesdays, and that she had spoken to Gayle Theard who had expressed her intent to attend tonight. Schoppert thanked Knell and Marcus for their efforts and participation in the process, and accepted their resignations. Schriebman asked if that opened up positions for new members, and Schoppert said that appointments were made by the City Council.

Parking Proposal

Korzun presented the parking proposal and said the recommendation based on information gathered from the background report, the second community workshop, a review of best practices, and in consultation with the City's Parking Manager. The intent is to identify issues and propose strategies to address each issue. Many of the strategies are derived from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's handbook. The proposal is available in the agenda packet.

Schoppert asked if the Committee had questions.

Kapas asked if people wanting to use the train could not find parking and drove around looking for open spaces would cause traffic problems. Korzun responded that the SMART EIR evaluation of traffic would have addressed this situation.

Dean asked if high tech solutions to finding and reporting open parking spaces and thus reduce the driving around to find open spaces had been considered. Korzun responded that the technology existed, but due to the high cost of the infrastructure, the Parking Manager had not considered it feasible.

Roger Smith asked if developers were routinely asked to provide on site parking and that the proposal suggested on street parking for SMART. Korzun said yes, that was the case. Smith noted that parking is essential to the success of SMART and that they needed to provide enough.

Schoppert opened the meeting for public comment on the parking proposal.

Public Comment

Greg Andrew said that the Goal statement should reference all development, not just new. He appreciated the inclusion of neighborhood parking permits as that was a request of his neighborhood and he is glad their concern was heard. He agrees that it should be implemented only if a problem arises. He noted that the San Rafael Coalition of neighborhoods supported the use of the Marin Storage lot for parking. He noted that the confusion between requirements and needs was explained in the staff presentation. The Coalition is also supportive of unbundled parking when it is designed as an incentive to live car free. He stated that these parking ideas are new and will catch on in the future. In his opinion, parking on Merrydale is used and the County parking is used so that parking coordination between public agencies is necessary.

Bill Carney said he had submitted a letter to staff earlier in the day. Sustainable San Rafael liked the tools proposed. The purpose of a Station Plan is to create a walkable community so more parking should be added only if needed after the operation of the Train showed that it was needed. There are alternatives such as feeder buses. North Merrydale's priority use should be for the Promenade. There is a difference between parking needs and requirements and he urges that reducing requirements should be in the Plan.

Schoppert asked for Committee discussion.

Civic Center Station Area Plan Advisory Committee
Draft Notes for 02/08 Meeting

Preston McCoy stated that North Merrydale should be used for the promenade, not parking. Bike parking is needed close to the Station and Merrydale would be a good location. He wanted bike parking to be mentioned in the Plan.

Dean said residential development needed bike parking too.

Schriebman said that commercial development needed bike parking.

Kapas said that if there was too much parking, people would park here and take the train to other stations that had less parking. The Civic Center should not become the mecca for SMART parking in North Marin.

Starkweather said that too much parking was not the problem, that there is not enough parking for train users.

Smith stated that the underlying issue was that the Committee did not accept SMART'S estimate of parking need. He pointed out that it is removal of parking to build a building is reasonable, but that buildings are not removed for parking. He suggests that the northern part of the Christmas tree lot be used for parking.

Mike Fryer agreed with Smith that until SMART is in operation, the parking need will not be known.

Schoppert asked for Committee action on the Report on Parking Issues and Recommendations. Consensus was reached with the following changes:

Parking issues

Parking-related issues that have been identified include:

- **How much SMART parking is needed**
- Commuter parking in residential areas
- Additional parking for SMART patrons
- Parking requirements for new development
- Parking coordination
- **Secure bike parking throughout the Plan Area is needed**

Additional parking for SMART patrons

Recommendation:

- Three additional parking opportunities have been identified for SMART commuter parking. This will be public parking and therefore they will be open to non-SMART users as well. They are:
 - McInnis Parkway, approximately 80 on-street parking spaces
 - Merrydale North, approximately 65 on-street spaces (depending on how the roadway is configured **and without compromising the proposed extension of the Promenade**)
 - Vacant parcel northeast of station, approximately 32 spaces (can include some ADA parking for SMART **and bike parking**)
- **If more parking is needed beyond these lots, the City, County and SMART should pursue the use of public and private lots for additional parking**

Parking needed for new development

Recommendation:

- *Reduce parking needs.* If coupled with other strategies such as transit incentive programs, carsharing, unbundled parking, **shuttles**, and shared parking, new development may need less parking than the current ordinance requires. ~~Reductions in parking requirements can be considered project-by-project through discretionary review.~~

Civic Center Station Area Plan Advisory Committee
Draft Notes for 02/08 Meeting

Parking Coordination

Recommendation:

- *Coordination of parking **controls**. Successful parking **strategies** will require extensive on-going coordination between the County of Marin, SMART and the City of San Rafael.*

Preparation for Draft Plan

Korzun said that the draft Vision Statement which was last worked on in October 2011 needed to be re-visited for consistency with the work that has been done in the interim. She asked for a Subcommittee that could meet very soon as the Consultants needed the Vision to work on the Plan. A Subcommittee of Schriebman, Mc Grath, Kapas, Smith, Giambastiani, and Dean volunteered.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Meeting Evaluation

+	-
Handled dissent very well!	

Closing

Schoppert closed the meeting at 9:10 p.m.

Civic Center Station Area Plan Advisory Committee
 Draft Notes for 02/08 Meeting

Attendance

	9/22	10/13	10/16	11/10	12/8	1/12	2/9	3/9	4/13	5/11	6/8	7/13	8/10	10/12	11/9	12/14	1/11	2/8		
		(tour-optional)					(workshop)						(workshop)							
Damon Connolly* (CC)	E	√		√	(Brockbank)	(Brockbank)	√	√	(Brockbank)	-	√	√	√	√	-	-	Reappointed			
Emily Dean	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Michael Fryer	√	E		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	E	√	√		
Elissa Giambastiani	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Barbara Heller* (CC)																	Appointed	-		
Bob Huntsberry* (DRB)	-	√		-	√	√	√	√	√	-	-	√	E	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Nicholas Kapas	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Stanton Klose* (GGBPAC)	√	√		√	-	-	√	-	√	E	Resigned									
Greg Knell	√	√		-	√	√	√	√	-	-	√	-	E	-	-	E	-	Resigned		
Klif Knoles	-	√		-	-	Resigned	-													
Marcus Lee	E	-		√		√	E	√	E	E	√	-	√	√	E	-	-	Resigned		
Preston McCoy* (BPAC)	(Powers)			√	√	-	√	√	√	√	-	(Powers)	√	E	√	√	√	√	√	
Casey Mazzoni						Appointed	√	-	√	√	E	-	√	√	√	E	√	√		
Rich McGrath	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Brigitte Moran	√	E		√	√	√	E	√	E	√	-	E	√	(Ann Hussman)	√	-	√	√		
Larry Paul* (PC)	√	-		-	-	E	√	√	E	(Wise)	-	-	√	√	-	√	√	-		
Andrew Patterson	√	√		√	√	√	√	E	√	√	√	√	√	E	√	√	√	√	-	
Jeff Schoppert	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Judy Schriebman* (LGVSD)	√	E		√	-	-	√	√	√	√	√	√	(Loder)	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Roger Smith	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	E	√	√	√	√	√	
Jean Starkweather	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	E	√	√	E	√	√		
Tammy Taylor	√	√	√	√	√	-	√	√	E	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	
Gayle Theard	-	√		-	√	√	√	√	√	-	-	√	√	E	-	-	-	-		
Craig Thomas Yates	√	-		E	√	-	√	-	√	-	-	-	√	√	√	-	√	-		

*Ex officio, non-voting member
 E: excused
 BPAC: Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee
 CC: City Council

DRB: Design Review Board
 LGVSD: Las Gallinas Valley Sanitation District
 PC: Planning Commission

GGBPAC: Golden Gate Bicycle Pedestrian Committee

Meet me at the station!

It's 2035, over twenty years after the completion of the Civic Center Station Area Plan. This area is a vibrant and popular destination for North San Rafael residents and visitors. The station is a central hub for connecting to a wide variety of local activities, cultural and natural, including the seat of Marin County government at the landmark Frank Lloyd Wright Civic Center building, Veterans' Memorial Auditorium, lagoon and grounds.

The train station fits well into its niche below the freeway and adjacent to the surrounding neighborhoods. Connecting paths, sidewalks and streets are comfortable, beautifully landscaped and artfully well-lit. There are places to park cars, scooters and bicycles, charge electric vehicles, and rent a bike. People are waiting in comfort for a train or bus, or just enjoying a cup of coffee and the great views of the distinctive rolling hills. There is housing nearby for people who work in the community. A public plaza near the station is a lively local gathering place.

With respect for Marin's landscape, the area is planted with a wide variety of native plants and trees. A small fork of Gallinas Creek that flows through the station delights everyone with its ever-changing parade of wildlife. The whole area feels open and park-like; it's easy to tell that the natural environment is appreciated and important to the community.

The station is at the center of a culturally and economically **thriving** diverse community. **The new jobs in the transit oriented development are filled by employees who walk, bike and take the train to work and no longer have to drive.** The Marin Farmer's Market has grown into a full-scale daily shopping market, where fresh, locally grown organic produce, crafted cheeses, and quality goods of all kinds can be quickly picked up on the way home from the train.

While the station area is bustling with activity **and land uses have become more intensive** it still maintains a hometown feel. **New development has been carefully constructed to enhance sightlines and views of the Civic center campus and the surrounding hills and co-exist with established neighborhoods.** ~~. Buildings are not so tall that they block the views of the hills and the new buildings complement the existing homes and natural areas.~~ There are shops, coffee houses, restaurants, and convenience stores in the station area. Residents and businesses both benefit from having people and needed services within walking distance.

It is safe and easy to get from place to place. Multiple ways to travel are fully integrated and cars no longer dominate. Frequent bus and shuttle services help keep distant areas connected. Bikes, moms with strollers, and pedestrians enjoy easy access to their destinations thanks to thoughtful design changes. The North San Pedro Road underpass, the Merrydale overcrossing, and the station crossing are all pleasant places to experience views of the community and the hills.

To the west, the completed Promenade **is an important connection for pedestrians and cyclists from the Station to the Northgate Mall and on to the heart of Terra Linda.** ~~now~~ allows graceful walking and biking along to the Northgate mall and beyond. Folk of all ages enjoy stopping to relax and watch the steelhead salmon that have returned **to the beautifully restored Gallinas Creek.** To the east, walkways and bikeways stretch all the way to the Civic Center.

The area also offers a variety of housing types for all incomes including housing affordable for the local workforce. The simple, elegantly-designed affordable units have allowed young people to ~~return to~~ **remain in** Marin, bringing a new vibrancy into the social fabric. Seniors also find these smaller homes near services and transit especially convenient and desirable.

The changes made to this neighborhood center around North San Rafael's new train center have transitioned the area into an exceptionally enjoyable place.

DRAFT

Plan Review Process

Administrative Version (March-April)

This document is for Committee review and discussion. The Committee will develop this document into a Draft Plan for public review.

Draft Plan (May-July)

The Draft Plan will be presented to the Design Review Board, Planning Commission, interested partner agency boards (County of Marin, TAM, Marin Transit, SMART, Golden Gate Transit), and any other interested stakeholders (home owner associations, advocacy groups, etc.).

The public may comment on the draft plan via:

- Written comments by email or mail
- At any of the meetings noted above
- At the June Committee meeting

All public comments will be presented to the Committee for consideration. The Committee will provide direction to staff on how to revise the Draft Plan into a Final Plan.

Final Plan (August)

The Committee will make a recommendation to the City Council that they accept the Final Plan.

Tips on How to Review This Document

You will get a paper copy of the document at the meeting so you do not have to print all, or any, of the 80+ pages.

The purpose of our March meeting is to understand the content of the Administrative Version. In April, you will focus on consensus, and we will have a process to help you thru that review. After hearing the Consultant's presentation, March is your opportunity to ask staff and the consultants "What does this mean? How does this work?" So for this meeting:

- Read it through once without marking or noting anything. Just look at it.
- Focus your attention on the Recommendations. Remember, it is the recommendations that are implemented, not the text.
- Go back and note where you have questions on content, NOT whether you agree.
- Don't wordsmith, correct grammar, or note typos. We have people to do this.



February 8, 2012

Civic Center Station Area Plan Citizens Advisory Committee
San Rafael City Hall
1400 5th Avenue
San Rafael, CA 94901

Greetings:

Sustainable San Rafael has participated in the planning efforts for the Civic Center Station Area for several months and welcomes the opportunity to comment, as the drafting of a plan begins in earnest. We have also commented on the Downtown draft plan and note that, while the overall goal of achieving a sustainable and low-carbon future for San Rafael are the same, each area has its unique issues and concerns. The Civic Center planning area contains a substantial neighborhood of single-family homes that requires full consideration of the Plan's impacts. If done carefully, this area could benefit greatly.

Heights and density – SSR agrees with the draft land use element's call for increased density and heights, particularly the recommendation for 5-story buildings in the vicinity of Northgate (Area A). Several large buildings already exist in this area without obvious negative impacts. We are more concerned with the area south of the station on the west side of the freeway (Area D), where 3 and 4 story limits are proposed. The success of this area will depend on careful and nuanced architecture and design, but given those ingredients, a 4-story limit throughout the area between Redwood and Merrydale could be accommodated with little impact on the neighborhood to the west. An adequate buffer for Rafael Meadows exists with the creek and Merrydale, if sensitively designed.

Sense of Place – Area D is at the core of the station area and presents the best opportunity to achieve the goals of compact, pedestrian-friendly, transit-oriented development. Ideally, the area should be designed as a unit rather than piecemeal, and we are hopeful that the Plan will include development prototypes that will help the community visualize this potential. With its underutilized land and proximity to the station, this area in particular calls out for signature design elements establishing a strong visual identity and “sense of place”—for instance, a focal public space in a village-like setting attractive to both commuters and residents.

Parking – The need for parking is difficult to anticipate, given unknown transit ridership and uncertain phasing of development. Adequate commuter parking for the initial train service

appears to exist on the east side of the freeway and along Merrydale north of the station. Since the primary goal of both SMART and the Station Area Plan is to reduce driving by the use of transit, and since parking facilitates ease of driving, providing additional parking needs to be very carefully considered in light of actual conditions in the field and of alternative non-auto solutions such as shuttles. However, concerns about potential commuter parking in existing neighborhoods are justified, and for that reason the option of residential parking permits should be included in the Plan. For new development, we strongly support the concepts of unbundled parking, reduced parking requirements, transit passes and car-sharing, which are all consistent with the goals of providing a living and working environment that is less auto-dependent.

Bike and Pedestrian Coherence – We also strongly support the development of a distinctive multi-use path or promenade connecting the station to Northgate Mall (along North Merrydale) and to the Civic Center. If well designed, this improvement could provide the unifying theme so needed to tie together the disjointed visual character of the Plan area. Pedestrian and bike access also needs to be extended across the tracks at the west end of the station to link in the Merrydale area and connect with the multi-use path to downtown San Rafael. Funding for such purposes may be available from MTC as part of their Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS). We understand that 70% of this funding is earmarked for Priority Development Areas (PDA's), and that the Civic Center and Downtown Station Areas are the only two such PDA's in Marin.

Sea Level Rise – Sea level rise is a phenomenon that needs greater attention, given warnings from local agencies such as BCDC and reports that it is occurring more rapidly than originally predicted. BCDC's 2009 report, "Living with a Rising Bay," and other scientific studies, indicate that the Bay is likely to rise by 11 to 18 inches by mid-century and by 23 to 55 inches by 2100. The Plan should identify portions of the Plan area that may be subject to this sea level rise, and possible ways of reducing impacts in accordance with San Rafael's Climate Change Action Plan. A companion issue is wetlands protection, including the creek by Merrydale and running parallel to the tracks. Enhancement of the natural system in these areas could both ease flooding hazards and strengthen the visual character of the area.

Sustainable San Rafael commends the hard work and careful thought of the committee, and we look forward to a draft Plan that can serve as a model for transit-oriented development in Marin.

Sincerely,

Jerry Belletto
Secretary