From: Peggy Hanley
To: Steve Marshall
Subject: [External] Fwd: Redraft of Letter to the City
Date: Monday, September 28, 2020 10:35:42 AM

Dear Sir or Madam, Members of the City Council

A week ago I received a letter proposing rezoning my property at 7505 and 7515 Redwood Blvd. I am ardently opposed to this. I appreciate the time, energy, and thought that went into the study, and approve of many of the conclusions, especially where the Birkenstock building is involved. Indeed, many of the reasons for not rezoning the Birkenstock building apply elsewhere, including my property.
While, in theory, the existent businesses could continue operating as "non-conforming," my buildings (and several other garages) are designed strictly for automotive use. To change them into retail stores, shops, restaurants, or housing would require demolishing the buildings entirely and creating new structures.

The vague details provided say that 15 parcels would be rezoned away from Automotive use. I could not find specific addresses in any documentation. I did, however, go looking at all the businesses along the Redwood Corridor. Over half of them would be operating as "Non-Conforming," and over a third of the businesses were Automotive.

Another consideration is "Where are these businesses supposed to go?" The loss of critical jobs, especially for those freshly graduating from high school, would also be an unfortunate consequence of this decision.
There is a reason that this area has been automotive for so long (in the case of my buildings, over 75 years) and so many businesses in the area are automotive: there is a need and demand for them. There is obviously enough demand to support all those businesses where they are.

If more residential property is needed, perhaps rezoning some of the office buildings would be a better choice? We already have a glut of unoccupied office space, and that's just the Fireman's Fund building. There are plenty of better ways to handle the housing shortage than shutting down profitable, successful, necessary businesses.

As the rezoning plan itself notes, this is a time of upheaval and uncertainty. Between national politics, international politics, technological changes, and the disruption of the corona virus, way too much is uncertain and unstable. Perhaps it would be better to leave matters and zoning as is for the next ten years, when we all have a better idea of what the people and community actually need?

Let the owner of the property bring forward the motion to rezone, when he or she is ready to undertake the demolition and construction burden, and then judge and evaluate the request on a case by case basis. Before making changes, include the owners of the properties you want to rezone Down Town into the discussions and hear their concerns about changes.

Sincerely,
Margaret Hanley for Margaret Hanley Trust

From: David Price Jones
To: Steve Marshall
Subject: [External] Mondays Planning Commission meeting
Date: Friday, September 25, 2020 2:37:56 PM

Pursuant to our telephone conference this morning, following is citizen input I want to present to the Planning Commission at its Monday meeting regarding necessary changes to the city's Zoning ordinances to make every effort to preserve its "Downtown"-Grant Avenue(businesses owned by Novato residents as distinguished from our shopping centers- Costco, Safeway, Target owned largely by chain stores.)

I speak from knowledge and experience gained as a member of the Novato City Council and being Mayor during the first half of the 1970's and owning the two story building at 823 Grant Avenue, Novato(Grazie restaurant tenant) for the last approximate 38 years. During the last approximate 15 years, we Grant Avenue property owners have financially committed through increased property tax payments to the funding of (carefully designed by City staff) substantial street improvements making our downtown an inviting place to shop and bring it into the 20th century.

The problem is that the zoning ordinance model for all city downtowns our size also adopted by us around the 1960's only permits restaurants, real estate offices, and retail stores in the ground floors of buildings and in-store retail shopping has decreased by about 80% which is now done quickly and efficiently on line and will substantially continue that way into the future. No way Grant Avenue can remain a vibrant shopping area on restaurants and real estate offices alone. On Grant Avenue over 70 % of the leasable space will be vacant, the buildings will be reappraised at about 40% of current value, and the funds Novato and other public bodies receive from property taxes will be drastically reduced. Like in so many other communities, our downtown could shut down and all business locate in large shopping centers,

If the first floor is good enough for real estate offices, why not other offices?

I understand, these issues could be dealt with under your Land Use Program 8a and Land Use Policy 8. I have always found your City staff very knowledgeable and helpful when contacted and I greatly appreciate the time you spent with me today clarifying the issues involved.

Will you please share this statement of my input prior to Monday's meeting with the Planning Commissioners. Thank you. David Price Jones

Marin Audubon Society

P.O. Box 599 | Mill Valley, CA 94942-0599 | marinaudubon.org

September 24, 2020

City of Novato Planning Commission
922 Machin Avenue
Novato, CA 94945
smarshall@novato.org

RE: Comments on Novato General Plan 2035(?) DEIS and Plan

Dear Commissioners:

Marin Audubon appreciates the opportunity to submit some additional comments on the EIR responses to comments and the Plan. We appreciate the responses to our earlier comments on the DEIR. We continue to have some concerns as expressed below.

1. Response to comment 2.9 concerning the Industrial Park MPA in Bel Marin Keys Industrial – is incorrect. Arroyo San Jose extends through the Industrial Park. It flows past the Humane Society property and behind the structures and parking lots between Digital Drive and Commercial Blvd. Marin Audubon owns a section of this creek (AP#s 1576-421-17 and 18) extending east from Bel Marin Keys Blvd. The banks of this entire section and beyond are vegetated with a diversity of riparian vegetarian including mature native trees. Pacheco Pond is along the eastern boundary of the Industrial Park. It must also be remembered that this Industrial Park was developed on an extensive riparian wetland that is now consolidated into Pacheco Industrial Park MPA Pond and Arroyo San Jose.

The remnant riparian resources will be at significant risk if development, including traffic and parking lot requirements, are expanded. The impacts could be direct habitat loss due to intrusion into existing habitats, degraded water quality due to increased urban runoff, and indirect impacts from more people near and into the habitats. People working in confined buildings will likely want access to the habitats.

The DEIR should address the riparian resources of the Industrial Park Area and make recommendations that would ensure that development of these resources would not adversely impact them. We oppose identification of Industrial Park MPA as a focus area for development until it can be assured that these resources will be protected.

2. Accurately describe the Bahia Lagoon in the EIR and the General Plan. As stated in the Plan, Marin Audubon Society purchased the 635-acre Bahia property. MAS transferred title to the approximately 400 acres of what is now tidal marsh (having been restored to tidal action by MAS) to the CDFW and retained ownership of 60 acres, most of which surrounds the lagoon owned by the Bahia HOA. The Bahia Lagoon is located at the end of Topaz Drive and is actually a muted tidal water body that receives tidal waters through pipes near the Petaluma River.

While the Bahia Lagoon is important habitat for many species of diving birds that rest in the deeper waters, it is the tidal marsh that is habitat for the endangered California Ridgway Rails, as well as special status species San Pablo Song Sparrow and Salt Marsh Yellowthroat.

3. We support inclusion of Special Status Species in Goal 1 of the NGP 2035. These latter species are not in the Special Status Species list and should be added.

4. The DEIR in many responses relies on Mitigation Measures BIO 2, which requires biological studies, and BIO-3, which requires that the biological surveys include avoidance, measures to the protection of wetlands. These measures, along with BIO-1 are positive additions, to Novato's wetland protections.

Surveys and recommendations are important precursors to protecting wetland habitats, but to ensure they are effective, the recommendations in the assessments and surveys must be carried out. To correct this deficiency, BIO 3-should include requirements that the recommendations be implemented.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,

Barbara Salzman, Co-Chair
Conservation Committee

Phil Peterson, Co-chair
Conservation Committee

September 18, 2020

Steve Marshall
Planning Manager
City of Novato – Planning Division
922 Machin Avenue
Novato, CA 94945

Submitted via email to: smarshall@novato.org

RE: General Plan 2035

Dear Steve,

As the property owner of 7514 Redwood Boulevard, and in light of the City's upcoming General Plan update hearings, ROIC would like to update you on the progress of our application. Since our April 6, 2020 letter (attached), we have officially submitted our proposed mixed-use redevelopment to the City and are diligently pursuing the approvals for the project. On August 27th we held the required Neighborhood meeting, and on October 7th we are scheduled to be in front of the Design Review Committee.

Given that our proposal is now formalized, we would like to again take this opportunity to offer our comments regarding the City of Novato's Draft General Plan 2035. Our mixed-use development proposal will include new quality retail spaces along Redwood Boulevard, as well as a multi-family residential component that will serve as the catalyst to finally redevelop this long-underutilized site. The current draft General Plan carries over what we feel is an outdated concept of 100% commercial usage at the property.

For this reason, we encourage the City to consider inserting aspirational language into the General Plan that will provide some future flexibility to consider a viable mixed-use project, as we are now proposing. Specifically, in section LU 32 of the updated General Plan, we ask the City to consider adding the following language on page 2-34 under the "Preferred Land Use Concept" subheading for sites 5a and 5b:

> *"Consider expanding the Downtown Core General Plan designation north to Site 5a to facilitate new commercial uses along Redwood Boulevard in conjunction with transit-oriented residential development."*

This aspirational language doesn't approve or change anything, but at least looks towards the future, which is even more important in light of our now-formal application. Of course, as part of our approval process, we fully expect to undergo thorough environmental review pursuant to CEQA.

We thank you again for considering this request.

Sincerely,

Stuart Tanz
President and CEO
Retail Opportunity Investments Corporation (ROIC)

April 6, 2020

Steve Marshall
Planning Manager
City of Novato, Planning Division
922 Machin Avenue
Novato, CA 94945

Submitted via email to: smarshall@novato.org

Dear Steve,

As the property owner of 7514 Redwood Boulevard, ROIC would like to take this opportunity to offer our comments to the City of Novato's Draft EIR of the General Plan 2035. As various city and community stakeholders are aware, we are currently in the early stages of submitting a mixed-use development plan to build out the vacant portion of our site. This will serve to strengthen and enhance the economic vitality of the existing 20,000 square foot Village at Novato shopping center that is currently anchored by Trader Joe's. Our mixed-use development proposal will include the addition of thoughtfully designed retail spaces along Redwood Boulevard as well as a multi-family residential component that will serve as the catalyst to finally redevelop this long-underutilized site.

For these reasons, we encourage the City to consider inserting language into the General Plan that will provide much-needed flexibility and a stated openness to a viable mixed-use project as we are intending to propose. Specifically, in section LU 32 of the updated General Plan, we ask the City to consider adding the following language on page 2-34 under the "Preferred Land Use Concept" subheading for sites 5a and 5b:

"Consider expanding the Downtown Core General Plan designation north to Site 5a to facilitate new commercial uses along Redwood Boulevard in conjunction with transit-oriented residential development."

We thank you for considering this request. ROIC looks forward to working with the City of Novato over the course of the application process for 7514 Redwood Boulevard.

Sincerely,

Stuart Tanz
President and CEO
Retail Opportunity Investments Corporation (ROIC)