



STAFF REPORT

MEETING

DATE: January 7, 2013

TO: City Council

FROM: Robert Brown, Community Development Director

PRESENTER: Robert Brown

SUBJECT: **North Redwood Boulevard Corridor Study and Rescinding Moratorium**

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REQUESTED ACTIONS

1. Consider providing direction to staff on land use and design options for redevelopment of properties within the North Redwood Boulevard Corridor for inclusion into the Draft General Plan and associated environmental impact report, and
2. Consider introduction and first reading of an ordinance repealing Ordinances 1578 and 1580 establishing interim restrictions on development within a portion of the Redwood Boulevard Corridor and finding that the ordinance adoption is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Provide direction to staff on desired land use and design criteria and development projections for inclusion into the Draft General Plan and associated Environmental Impact Report, and
2. Adopt the attached ordinance.

BACKGROUND

The North Redwood Boulevard Corridor (NRBC) is considered one of the last major re-developable areas in Marin County, and with its proximity to Highway 101 and a new SMART rail station, the corridor could be very attractive for new investment and revitalization. Two of the major land uses in the corridor, Shamrock Materials and Dairymen’s Milling, have generally ceased operations and wish to sell their properties for redevelopment.

2009-2010 Study

The City initiated planning for the NRBC in 2009 as part of an update to the General Plan. An Issues and Options Report was prepared by a consultant in February 2009, and two community workshops were held on March 5 and May 27, 2009. In early 2010 the Chamber of Commerce hosted a forum to examine economic aspects of redevelopment along Redwood Boulevard. The General Plan Update Steering Committee discussed options for the corridor and forwarded its recommendations to the Planning Commission, which held an initial hearing on possible zoning changes on June 21, 2010. At that time, the City Council suspended work on the corridor study to focus efforts on completion of the update to the City’s Housing Element.

The following provides a very high-level summary of the 2009 community workshops, the Chamber forum and the June 2010 Planning Commission workshop:

March 2009 Community Workshop

- Make Redwood Blvd. more pedestrian friendly, either by reducing the width of the right-of-way or creating a multiway boulevard.
- Support for a medium-scale “lifestyle center”
- Support for mixed-use development at “suburban” or “village” intensities (15-20 or 20-30 units/acre)
- Housing-only development might be appropriate on the Atherton Ranch site, the site east of Trader Joes and the existing hotel site.

May 2009 Community Workshop

Most groups favored:

- Narrowing Redwood Boulevard
- A Corte Madera-style “lifestyle center”
- Townhomes on the Atherton Ranch site

February 2010 Chamber of Commerce Forum

- Provide for a critical mass of 200,000-250,000 sq. ft. of retail (in the entire Redwood Blvd. corridor from Grant north).
- Mandate that retail occur prior to, or in conjunction with housing.
- Allow housing, perhaps by providing density bonuses.
- Mandate community amenities such as plazas, medians, public art and pedestrian/bicycle connections to Grant Avenue and the SMART station.

June 2010 Planning Commission Meeting

The Commission endorsed two new land use districts:

- Mixed Use: Retail/Commercial west of the RR tracks allowing 0.4 FAR (floor area ratio) for retail/commercial uses, with additional 0.4 FAR for office or housing.
- Light Industrial/Commercial between the RR tracks and freeway allowing 0.4 FAR for service commercial, light industrial plus local or regional serving retail, hotels and entertainment.

Moratorium

In early 2013 the City received two applications for development on North Redwood Boulevard. The first, submitted by Retail Opportunities Investment Corp. (ROIC), proposed 54,500 square feet of retail space in three buildings surrounding a parking lot on the vacant site located at 7530 N. Redwood Boulevard, adjacent to the Trader Joes/Starbucks development. The second was a proposal for a Sprouts Market on the Dairymen’s site at 7546 N. Redwood.

In response to the submittal of these two applications, the Novato Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Development Advisory Committee recommended the imposition of a moratorium on processing of development applications to allow the completion of the NRBC Study.

At its meeting of May 14, 2013 the City Council adopted an urgency ordinance establishing a development moratorium on the area between Olive Avenue and San Marin Drive and between Redwood Boulevard the U.S. 101. At their meeting of June 18, 2013 the Council extended the moratorium until May, 2014. Councilmembers indicated that their objectives for the NRBC were to achieve coordinated development, pedestrian-oriented development and higher quality retail uses.

Study Area

In 2009-2010, the NRBC Study examined Redwood Boulevard from De Long Avenue to San Marin Drive. The current NRBC Study is limited to the area covered by the moratorium plus on the west side of Redwood Boulevard the vacant remaining portion of Atherton Ranch and the two commercially developed parcels at the northwest corner of Olive Avenue and Redwood. The reasons for the more limited Study Area is that these properties have the most immediate redevelopment potential and there was general agreement among participants in the 2009-2010 study for mixed use zoning along the Redwood frontage between the downtown and Olive Avenue.

The 30-acre Study Area is identified in the adjacent diagram. The sizes of individual parcels can be seen in Exhibit 1.

Study Parameters

As part of the public input process, staff suggested the following parameters be applicable to the NRBC Study:

Study Area

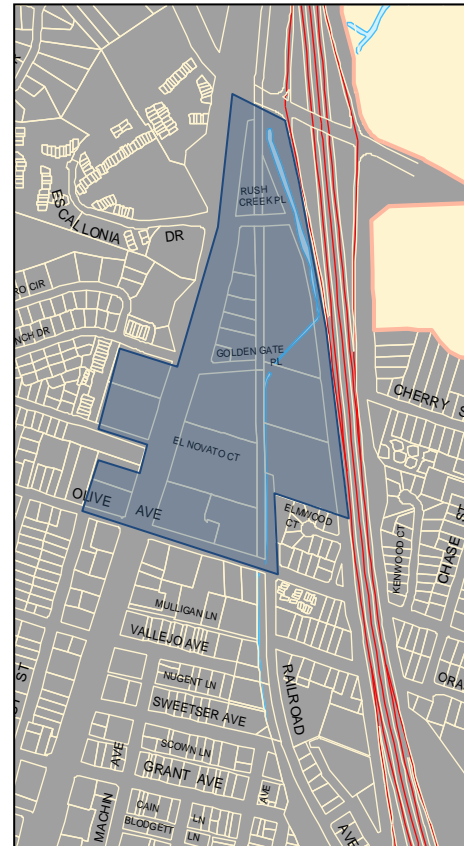
- Properties may be developed incrementally. The Plan should include design criteria for coordinated development.
- Water District and GGHBD bus yard sites available only if the existing uses are relocated within Novato. The Plan should consider these sites as optional.

Economic

- City's Fiscal Sustainability Plan anticipates increase in retail sales and property tax from additional commercial development in Novato.
- The Plan should provide for economically viable uses for the property owners.

Housing

- Draft Housing Element establishes a maximum density of 23 units/acre for condos/apartments and 30 units/acre for senior housing.
- 1.75 acre site behind Trader Joes is a housing opportunity site, anticipating 40 units, which can be relocated within the Study Area (except the vacant Atherton Ranch site).



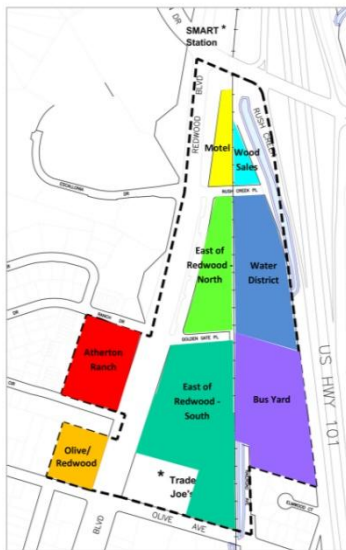
Circulation

- The SMART station location is set.
- Redevelopment funding is gone – major changes to Redwood Blvd. would have to be funded by new development and occur incrementally.

Public Process

To facilitate informed public input into the desired redevelopment of the NRBC two community workshops were held on September 14 and 28, 2013. Approximately 120 persons attended each workshop. The first workshop entailed presentations on the local real estate market, circulation options and definitions of various development “place types” to facilitate discussions in small groups. Attendees then divided into small groups of 10-12 people and discussed desired land uses and design character for each subarea, ultimately preparing a land use map. This feedback was synthesized into three different land use schemes and design priorities which were provided to fourteen volunteer architects who prepared preliminary sketches. These three design schemes were shared with the public at the September 28 workshop, and were evaluated in small group discussions and through written surveys.

The statistical results of the 94 written surveys received are shown in Exhibit 2, but are summarized below for the various subareas:



East of Redwood – South
(ROIC and Dairymen’s)

73% favored a lifestyle retail center*, with 20% desiring a mixed use development (retail/housing)

East of Redwood – North
(Shamrock, recycling, landscape materials)

68% favored either lifestyle retail* or mixed use. Other ideas included residential (12%), medium-box retail (7%) and recreation (5%).

Motel

47% believe the lodging use is appropriate, but wish for an upgraded facility. 32% thought it could be a residential use.

Wood Sales

This parcel is difficult due to its small size and location. 44% felt that a service commercial use is appropriate, and 10% hoped that a feedstore could relocate here.

Water District/Bus Yard

Many believe that it will be difficult to relocate the existing uses in Novato and that the area will remain as is (35%). 43% supported large or medium-box retail and 11% suggested a recreational use. The area was not felt to be a good location for housing.

Atherton Ranch

Most supported housing – 50% indicating apartments/condos and 26% senior housing. 17% recommended mixed use.

Olive/Redwood

A wide range of uses were suggested: mixed use (31%), senior housing (24%), apartments/condos (23%), community commercial (13%) and medium-box retail (7%).

* “Lifestyle Retail” was defined as a mix of retail, restaurant, entertainment and recreational uses with public gathering places and a pedestrian-oriented feel.

The purpose of the three schemes prepared by volunteer architects was to assist the public in evaluating possible redevelopment ideas, and to identify the various aspects of the concepts that were widely supported. None of the schemes was expected to represent the ultimately desired redevelopment, but to help generate and refine public feedback.

The three design schemes and summaries are shown below:

Scheme 1

Lifestyle Retail:	58,000 sf
Medium Box Retail:	67,000 sf
Large Box Retail:	70,000 sf
Mixed Use (retail/office):	50,000 sf
Townhouses:	50-70 units



- A. Retains the Dairymen’s building (or portions thereof) as part of a small lifestyle retail center (small artisan shops and restaurants) around a public plaza.
- B. Places medium box retail buildings across from Trader Joes and north of the lifestyle retail.
- C. Includes a larger box retail between the railroad and freeway, such as a home improvement store with garden center.
- D. Adds townhouses on the vacant site west of Redwood Blvd.
- E. Includes a mixed use (office over retail) at the corner of Olive and Redwood.
- F. Narrows Redwood Blvd., adding land to the west to create a wide pedestrian/bicycle promenade.

Scheme 2

Lifestyle and Medium Box Retail:	110,000 sf
Townhouses/Apartments:	160 units



- A. Creates a mix of retail spaces up to 20,000 sf around Trader Joes, with a restaurant/plaza focal point.
- B. Second story recreational use (gym/club).
- C. Adds housing to the north and west.
- D. Includes a roundabout on Redwood Blvd.
- E. Improves the wide median on Redwood Blvd., adding landscaping, seating, pedestrian/bike path, etc.

Scheme 3

Lifestyle and Medium Box Retail:	105,000 sf
Recreational Facility:	40,000 sf
Townhouses:	50-70 units
Senior Housing:	40 units



- A. Retains the Dairymen’s building (or portions thereof) as part of a small lifestyle retail center (small artisan shops and restaurants). Retains the structural framework of a portion of Dairymen’s for a plaza/entertainment space.
- B. Adds medium box retail buildings around Trader Joes.
- C. Includes a recreational use (club/gym) to the north.
- D. Adds townhomes west of Redwood Blvd.
- E. Adds senior housing at the corner of Olive and Redwood.
- F. Leaves the Water District offices and bus yard as-is.
- G. Narrows Redwood Blvd. median, includes angled parking along retail frontage.

In terms of design character of future development there were clear preferences for:

- Public gathering places, plazas and outdoor dining,
- Substantial landscaping, including large shade trees,
- Location of buildings near the street, with visibility of parking minimized,
- Wide sidewalks and bike paths along Redwood Boulevard,
- Convenient connections to the SMART bike/pedestrian path linking to the downtown and SMART station, and
- Utilizing components or the design character of the Dairymen’s Mill building.

In addition to feedback from the workshop, the three design schemes were posted on Open Novato, requesting that viewers provide input into their preferences. The results can be seen at: http://www.ci.novato.ca.us/index.aspx?page=1987#peak_democracy.

Next Steps

The NRBC Study is being conducted as part of the larger update of the 1996 General Plan. Completion of the Draft General Plan and its associated EIR will likely take two to three years, so property owners in the Study Area may choose to file applications for new development and associated environmental review in advance of the adoption of the new General Plan and should be assisted in proposing projects likely to be successful by knowing the public input and City Council direction provided by the NRBC Study. These applications, in advance of the City initiated zoning changes, will likely take the form of individual Planned Developments, which adds a legislative action along with the typical design review.

ANALYSIS

The North Redwood Boulevard Corridor is the first of four Focus Areas that will be studied in the General Plan update process. The City Council is being asked to provide the following direction to staff for each Focus Area:

- A **Vision Statement** for inclusion in the Draft General Plan which will concisely describe the desired character and expectations for the future redevelopment of the area, and can be used to evaluate any future requests to amend the adopted zoning regulations,
- **Design Guidelines** that will more specifically describe desired design components such as building placement and orientation, public spaces, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, etc., that will be used in future decisions on development proposals, and
- **Zoning Parameters and Development Forecasts** that will be used in the preparation of the Draft EIR for analysis of impacts of anticipated development such as traffic, air quality, noise, etc.

Trade Offs

All land use decisions involve tradeoffs and the careful weighing of potential benefits and consequences. The following are some issues which should be considered:

Flexibility versus Certainty

The results of the two recent community workshops were generally consistent with those expressed by the community at the 2009 workshops. There is a well-expressed desire for retail uses with public gathering places, but with a unique design character and good pedestrian and bicycle access. The question becomes how specific and rigid should the resulting regulations be to assure that the projects ultimately approved meet these expectations? Previous City policy documents, such as the Downtown Specific Plan, contain such specific criteria for certain properties that legislative changes are needed in many cases for projects to conform to all the requirements. Staff suggests the listing of Design Guidelines for the Focus Areas in the General Plan, but with language that allows an applicant to propose design deviations to decision-making bodies without having to also amend the General Plan.

Economic Effects

The recently completed Retail Market Analysis identified retail leakage from Novato of approximately \$170 million annually. Novato's per capita taxable sales are \$13,001, lower than Corte Madera (\$53,299), San Rafael (\$24,781), Sausalito (\$19,767), Mill Valley (\$15,459) and Larkspur (\$14,915).

Depending upon the total square footage of development and the type of retail mix that could be attracted to a lifestyle retail center, sales and property tax revenues for the City of Novato would range between \$560,000 and \$800,000 annually. A home improvement store of approximately 80,000 sf. on the East side of the railroad between Olive Avenue and Rush Creek Place would additionally generate between \$400,000 and \$550,000 in sales and property tax revenue for the City. Full build-out of North Redwood Corridor would create around 180 FTE jobs with an annual payroll of \$15 to \$18 million and increase local spending by around \$26 million annually.

Impacts on Downtown

The panel of economists/real estate experts who spoke at the September 14, 2013 workshop all agreed that retail is changing due to the switch of purchases to the internet and home delivery.

Successful retail is now appealing to the desire of people to shop in more vibrant centers that feature outdoor dining and gathering places, entertainment, farmers markets, etc. This type of development is known as a “lifestyle center”, similar to those existing at Town Center, Corte Madera (which is about twice the land area as available in the NRBC Study Area); Fourth Street, Berkeley or The Barlow in Sebastopol which is oriented towards local artisans, wineries and organic foods. Based on public feedback at the two workshops, many members of the community also expressed a desire for this type of development.

In discussing the types of development might occur on North Redwood that would benefit and not compete with the Downtown, it was suggested by panelists that larger floor area uses could be incorporated into the North Redwood Corridor, such as Trader Joes, that can draw shoppers to the lifestyle center, which would constitute a different draw than the Downtown. Popularity of the development along North Redwood would likely have positive spinoff benefits to the Downtown.

Traffic Impacts

As noted previously, the environmental impacts of the potential redevelopment in the Focus Areas will be evaluated in the future EIR to be prepared on the Draft General Plan. The NRBC is located just south of the San Marin Drive/Redwood Boulevard/U.S. 101 interchange, which is projected to have increased congestion with future growth and will eventually warrant a major improvement of the interchange and intersection. During the upcoming community workshops on the North, North Redwood Corridor (north of San Marin Drive, up to the Olompali State Park) staff will present some early traffic modeling results incorporating both the Council direction on the NRBC and land use/development options for the properties north of San Marin Drive.

Proposed Vision Statement

The following language is proposed as a Vision Statement for the NRBC:

“The North Redwood Corridor provides an opportunity for the City to address its historic retail sales leakage and address community needs by creating a vibrant retail center with a unique design character, featuring inviting gathering places with restaurants and entertainment. New commercial development should be pedestrian-oriented with an active street frontage and convenient pedestrian and bicycle connections to the Downtown and the SMART station. New residences are encouraged, both on the remaining Atherton Ranch site and on the vacant site east of Trader Joes. Redwood Boulevard should be improved with landscaping, pedestrian/bicycle paths and wide sidewalks.”

Design Guidelines

The following are proposed Design Guidelines for the various subareas of the NRBC:

<i>Subarea</i>	<i>Design Criteria</i>
E. of Redwood – South	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create a retail development composed of smaller shops and medium-sized retailers of 20,000-30,000 square feet each along with restaurants and entertainment facilities. ▪ Allow for second and/or third story office or recreational space, if practical and if a minimum 0.3 Floor Area Ratio of retail space is provided in this subarea. ▪ Provide for public gathering places and outdoor seating. ▪ Incorporate extensive landscaping with shade trees. ▪ Provide pedestrian and bicycle connections between retailers and public spaces to the bicycle/pedestrian facilities along the SMART corridor and along Redwood Blvd. ▪ Attempt to incorporate portions or design features of the Dairymen’s Milling building into the retail development. ▪ Create wide pedestrian sidewalks and a bicycle path along the Redwood Blvd. frontage. ▪ Locate buildings near the Redwood Boulevard frontage, with shop entries and/or display windows facing the street and gathering places. ▪ Minimize views of parking areas from Redwood Boulevard, typically by locating parking behind buildings.
E. of Redwood – North	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Create a retail development composed of smaller shops and/or larger retailers of 20,000-40,000 square feet each. ▪ Allow for second and/or third story office or recreational space, if practical. ▪ Incorporate extensive landscaping with shade trees. ▪ Provide pedestrian and bicycle connections between retailers, to development on the E. Redwood South subarea to the south, to bicycle/pedestrian facilities along the SMART corridor and along Redwood Blvd. ▪ Create wide pedestrian sidewalks and a bicycle path along the Redwood Blvd. frontage. ▪ Locate buildings near the Redwood Boulevard frontage, with display windows and shop entries where practical facing the street. ▪ Minimize views of parking areas from Redwood Boulevard, typically by locating parking behind buildings.
Motel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Allow for continued motel/hotel use, or residential. ▪ If redeveloped, project architecture should reflect the prominence of the site as a gateway or focal point at the northern end of the North Redwood corridor.
Wood Sales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Allow for retail or light industrial/service commercial uses.
Water District/Bus Yard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Allow for larger retail or recreational development in addition to light industrial/service commercial uses. ▪ Provide pedestrian and bicycle connections between retailers, to development on the E. Redwood subareas and to bicycle/pedestrian facilities along the SMART corridor. ▪ Improve the appearance and habitat value of Rush Creek if permissible.

Atherton Ranch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Allow for either residential development or for residential with ground floor commercial space. ▪ Residential units along the Redwood Boulevard frontage should have individual unit entries facing the street, ideally as individual rowhouses with balconies or stoops at the ground floor level unless commercial space is located on the ground floor. ▪ Incorporate a landscaped view corridor through the new development to the linear park behind. ▪ Housing units adjacent to the linear park should have unit entries facing the park. ▪ Minimize the visibility of parking from Redwood Boulevard and from existing housing which surrounds the site. ▪ New development should expand the existing linear park if feasible.
Olive/Redwood	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Allow for retail, office, residential or mixed use development. ▪ Minimize the visibility of parking from Redwood Boulevard. ▪ Locate buildings near the Redwood Boulevard and Olive Avenue frontages, with display windows and building entries facing the street to the extent practical.
Circulation/Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve Redwood Boulevard in conjunction with redevelopment in the Study Area. If necessary and as permitted by law, initial development may be required to fund full infrastructure improvements with a reimbursement agreement where appropriate for contributions from future development in the Study Area. ▪ Improvements to Redwood Boulevard should either enhance the existing landscaped median with additional landscaping, seating areas and possibly a pedestrian/bicycle path, with retention of existing cork oak trees, or may propose reducing the right-of-way width with land area added to properties on the east side of Redwood Boulevard, with the former right-of-way used for a generous, landscaped pedestrian/bicycle path, wide sidewalks, outdoor seating areas and some retail space. Consideration will need to be given to the location of existing gas distribution lines, and to the value of any vacated right of way. ▪ Install the SMART bicycle/pedestrian path in conjunction with redevelopment in the Study Area, if these improvements are not in place or scheduled to be installed by SMART in a reasonable time frame to coincide with new development. If necessary and as permitted by law, initial development may be required to fund the full infrastructure improvements with a reimbursement agreement, where appropriate, for contributions from future development in the Study Area or from SMART. The City should also pursue possible grant funding for path installation. ▪ The City may consider allowing diagonal parking along the east side of Redwood Boulevard in the public right-of-way or permitting the use of a portion of the existing right-of-way for redevelopment. Consideration will need to be given to design, safety, value of any vacated right of way and costs associated with any bicycle and pedestrian improvements along the Redwood frontage, SMART right-of-way or for improvements to the Redwood Boulevard median. ▪ The City should explore and implement, where feasible and as opportunities arise over time, additional pedestrian/bicycle connections to downtown, such as connection of Machin Avenue to Olive Avenue. ▪ If feasible, consider relocation of high-voltage overhead utility lines along the Redwood Boulevard frontage.

Zoning Parameters and Development Forecasts

The following are recommended draft development regulations for the various subareas:

Subarea	Acres	Existing Zoning				Draft Proposed Zoning			
		Zoning Dist.	FAR	Coverage	Height	Allowable Uses	Floor Area Ratio	Coverage	Height
E. of Redwood – South	6	CG	0.4	40%	35'	Retail, office, housing, recreation, entertainment, restaurants, hotel (maximum 25,000 sq. ft. for grocery sales)	0.4 for commercial + 0.2 for office/recreational mixed use on upper floors Min. 0.3 FAR of retail/entertainment/restaurant prior to office or recreational uses	40%	35' (except for modifications to Dairymen's building – 53')
	3	CI	1.0	40%	35'				
E. of Redwood – North	3	CI	1.0	40%	35'	Retail (except grocery sales), office, housing, recreation, entertainment, restaurants, hotel	0.4 for commercial + 0.2 for office/recreational mixed use on upper floors	40%	35'
Motel	1	CI	1.0	40%	35'	Hotel, housing, office	1.0	40%	35'
Wood Sales	0.5	CI	1.0	40%	35'	Light industrial/service commercial	0.4	40%	35'
Water District/Bus Yard	11.5	LIO	0.4	60%	35'	Light industrial/service commercial, retail, office, recreation	0.4	40%	35'
Atherton Ranch	3.5	PD Mixed Use	0.45	25%	45'	Housing or mixed use	n/a (if housing)	40%	35'
Olive/Redwood	2	CG	0.4	40%	35'	Retail, office, restaurant, housing	0.4 for commercial + 0.2 for residential/office mixed use	40%	35'

It should be noted that the zoning parameters reviewed by the Planning Commission in June, 2010 recommended a floor area ratio (FAR – the ratio of building square footage to land area) of 0.4 for retail and an additional 0.4 for mixed use (housing or office above). Staff has calculated the parking needs for development having an FAR of 0.8 and structured parking is required. At this time it seems unlikely that proposed development in the NRBC would warrant the cost to build structured parking. Staff therefore recommends a maximum FAR of 0.6 for mixed use, which will also result in less potential traffic impacts at the San Marin/Redwood/U.S.101 intersection and interchange to be analyzed in the General Plan EIR.

The following table identifies the maximum potential development under the proposed zoning parameters and compares that with a more likely redevelopment scenario of vacant or underutilized properties, with and without relocation/redevelopment of the Water District offices and corporation yard and the Golden Gate Transit bus yard. The development forecasts are also compared with prior assumptions of development contained in the City's traffic model from the existing General Plan.

<i>Subarea</i>	<u>Maximum</u> Dev. Potential from Proposed Zoning	<u>Estimated Likely</u> Near-Term Development Potential from Proposed Zoning		Traffic Model Alt 1 (1996 GP buildout)	Traffic Model Alt 2 (1996 GP + NRBC 2010 Study)
		Without Water District and Bus Yard Redev.	With Water District and Bus Yard Redev.		
E. of Redwood – South	157,000 sf retail plus 78,000 sf office (40 du possible on AHO site)	130,000 sf retail	130,000 sf retail	103,000 sf retail 53,500 sf office	200,000 sf retail
E. of Redwood – North	53,000 sf retail 26,000 sf office	45,000 sf retail	45,000 sf retail	36,000 sf office	
Motel	42,400 sf motel/hotel, office or housing	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Wood Sales	8,700 sf service commercial	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Water District/Bus Yard	200,000 sf retail	n/a	100,000 sf retail	203,000 sf office	130,000 sf office
Atherton Ranch	80 du	70 du	70 du	70,500 sf office	54 townhomes
Olive/Redwood	35,000 sf retail plus 17,500 sf office OR 18 du	17,000 sf retail 15 du	17,000 sf retail 15 du	n/a	70,000 sf hotel
TOTAL	445,000 sf retail 130,200 sf office 17,400 sf motel/hotel 8,700 sf service commercial 80 du (+ 130 du if 130,200 sf office eliminated)	192,000 sf retail 85 du	292,000 sf retail 85 du	103,000 retail 363,000 sf office	200,000 sf retail 130,000 sf office 70,000 sf hotel 54 du

Property Owner and Community Response to Staff Recommendations

Staff has received responses from two property owners within the Study Area – ROIC (owners of the Trader Joes shopping center and vacant parcels to the north and east) and the Prado Group (owners of the vacant remaining portion of Atherton Ranch). ROIC has requested consideration of a number of specific revisions to the staff proposals (see Exhibit 3 for a summary and Exhibit 4 for a copy of their October 30, 2013 letter). The major requests include increasing the maximum allowable size of a retailer to 50,000 square feet (from a staff proposed maximum of 30,000 square feet), allowance for expansion or relocation of the existing grocery (Trader Joes) and several edits to proposed design criteria. The Prado Group requests an increase in the maximum building height limit to 45 feet from the staff recommendation of 35 feet.

Staff continues to recommend limitations on the size of individual retailers on the East of Redwood North and South subareas of 40,000 and 30,000 square feet respectively. It was clearly the intent of the public at our community charrettes to focus retail development in this area on smaller individual users, while allowing some larger retailers to support the smaller “lifestyle” retailers and as a transition from the Trader Joes facility. By way of comparison, the following are sizes of local or nearby medium box stores:

- Staples/Mancini’s (Novato) 24,000 sf
- Best Buy (San Rafael) 35,000 sf
- Macy’s Furniture (Novato) 40,000 sf
- Bed, Bath and Beyond (Larkspur) 40,000 sf
- Safeway (Novato, on Diablo) 41,000 sf
- Toys R-Us/Babies R-Us (prototypes) 30,000-70,000 sf

Staff supports an allowance for some expansion of Trader Joes or a subsequent grocery use to retain the competitiveness of this retail space, but wish to limit grocery sales since this retail sector is already well represented in Novato. Staff therefore suggests an allowance of up to 25,000 square feet for grocery sales in this subarea, which would allow essentially a doubling of the existing Trader Joes space.

Staff does not support the other language changes to the design criteria proposed by ROIC with the exception of item #8 in Exhibit 3 which addresses the orientation of shop windows and entries towards Redwood Boulevard and internal gathering places. It was clear from the charrette that attendees favor a “pedestrian friendly” design with interesting retail displays visible from public vantage points. Staff also recognizes that it is often difficult to design retail spaces with dual entries facing both the parking area and the public realm since these often pose security and staffing impacts to retailers. Staff has therefore proposed modifying the original wording to locate “shop entries and/or display windows facing the street and gathering places,” which makes the location of business entries facing the street or gathering places optional.

Staff also believes that a 35 foot height limit is reasonable for a two or three-story residential project on the Atherton Ranch site, which is consistent with the height of the existing attached houses in this project.

Based on the public input received in response to staff’s initial recommendations it appears that the issue of greatest interest is the appropriateness of additional housing in the Study Area. At the September workshops two land use/design options were discussed regarding possible housing development: “vertical mixed use” and “horizontal mixed use.” Vertical mixed use typically involves commercial use on the ground floor and housing above. Local examples include the Millworks and Tresch Galleria (Redwood at Sweetser). As was mentioned at the community workshops by local real estate experts, vertical mixed use is currently more difficult to obtain financing for in suburban locations since many new suburban mixed use projects experienced financial difficulties during the recession. Vertical mixed use projects are also somewhat more challenging in terms of construction codes and costs and provision of parking. Horizontal mixed use refers to development of commercial-only and residential-only projects in close proximity to one another.

In the Study Area there are two sites currently designated for housing development. The 3.5-acre Atherton Ranch site is zoned for Mixed Use but has not been developed due to inability to finance a mixed-use project. The Housing Element has assumed the potential for 54 housing units on this site as part of a mixed-use development. At the community workshops there was strong support (76%) for residential-only development of this site. An R-10 rezoning of the property would allow up to 20 units per acre, equating to a maximum development of approximately 70 units.

The 1.8-acre site east of Trader Joes is commercially zoned, but has been designated as a housing opportunity site in the recently adopted Housing Element and was rezoned to have an Affordable Housing Overlay District (AHO) applied to it which would retain the underlying commercial zoning and allowable land uses, but also permit multi-family housing with a minimum of 20% units deed-restricted for affordable housing (the same as the city-wide affordable housing requirement). The Housing Element assumed maximum development of 40 units on this site. If the site is developed for commercial uses or not developed to the assumed density the City would have to designate and rezone an alternate site to accommodate the unmet housing units. However, in the forthcoming preparation of the next Housing Element, due to be adopted by the

City Council by the end of 2014, it will be possible to consider shifts in the identified affordable housing opportunity sites or to forego the necessity to designate alternate sites if one of the adopted AHO sites is underdeveloped with housing since the City's RHNA housing allocation will decline by two-thirds for the next housing element cycle. If redevelopment is proposed in advance of the adoption of our 2014-2022 Housing Element at the end of 2014, the Council would have to rezone another site as AHO that could accommodate the 40 assumed units. The AHO rezoning could be applied to any of the alternate housing opportunity sites considered in the certified EIR for the Housing Element, or could be applied to another site. The only additional site that staff can identify that might accommodate this shift without placing it in proximity to other neighborhoods might be a portion of the East of Redwood – North subarea (between Golden Gate Place and Rush Creek Place), which would necessitate additional, site-specific environmental review.

The staff recommendation to allow residential mixed-use on properties east of Redwood Boulevard has been questioned. It was clearly the desire of attendees at the September workshops to see a lifestyle retail center developed on the East of Redwood – South subarea, with supportive development (retail, office, commercial recreation, entertainment or housing) on the East of Redwood – North subarea. For this reason staff recommended that a minimum retail/entertainment/restaurant development equating to a 0.3 Floor Area Ratio (ratio of site area to building area) be achieved prior to allowing office or residential use, most likely on upper stories. This would assure a “critical mass” of retail uses of 94,000 square feet on the ROIC and Dairyman's parcels, or 117,500 square feet if the ROIC parcel east of Trader Joes is included.

Staff included an option for the addition of office or residential mixed use on the East of Redwood – South subarea and for housing on the East of Redwood – North subarea to increase flexibility for future redevelopment. There was a substantial proportion of workshop attendees that favored mixed use development (20% for the South subarea and 30% for the North subarea), and our volunteer architects supported the option for residential mixed use in selected locations to provide some additional building scale where warranted.

While staff has recommended an option for residential mixed use in the East of Redwood - South subarea for flexibility of future redevelopment/design, it is probably unlikely that mixed use housing would be proposed due to the financing challenges noted above, but also because development much beyond the mandated 0.3 FAR retail space would probably require structured parking which significantly increases project costs. This issue was discussed by the Planning, Design Review and Economic Development Advisory Commissions, summarized below.

It should also be noted that the attached submittal “North Redwood Boulevard – Room for Residents and Retail” was prepared for the previous NRBC study in 2009/2010. The submittal contends that additional retail space, to be successful, requires an increase in local population. The City's Economic Development Manager responds that the recent Retail Market Analysis indicates an existing retail leakage that warrants additional retail offerings independent of future population increases.

Planning Commission and Design Review Commission

The Planning and Design Review Commissions met in a joint work session on November 20, 2013 (draft minutes attached as Exhibit 5). The Commissions focused on five specific issues:

1. Mixed Use on East Side of Redwood Boulevard

Commissioners agreed that mixed use is unlikely to occur in the near-term on parcels on the east side of Redwood Boulevard due to challenges with financing such a development type in the foreseeable future and the likely additional cost of structured parking. This is consistent with feedback from the economic panel at the September 14 charrette. Of the twelve commissioners present, only two supported retaining an allowance for residential mixed use. Based on the Commission feedback, staff has eliminated the proposal for residential mixed use for the East of Redwood North and South subareas in the tables above.

2. Water District and Transit District Parcels

Commissioners discussed the appropriateness of flexible zoning to allow a broad range of land uses, including retail. Their unanimous recommendation was to retain the range of potential land uses recommended by staff.

3. Incorporation of Dairymen’s Building Design Features

Some of the DRC members discussed whether the staff proposed design criteria language to “attempt to incorporate portions or design features of the Dairymen’s Milling building into the retail development” was too limiting in terms of future design options. It was suggested that possibly use of the word “encourage” was preferable to “attempt to incorporate,” although no specific revision to the staff-proposed wording was voted on. Staff would note that the use of “attempt” seems more appropriate, since all of the action verbs in this section (“provide”, “create”, “locate”, “minimize”) are directed at future applicants, and not the City. Use of the word “encourage” would relate to City actions and would be inconsistent with the format of the remaining design criteria. Staff has therefore retained the originally recommended language.

4. Residential Development of the Remaining Atherton Ranch Parcel

All Commissioners agreed with the proposed change from Mixed Use to a Medium Density Multifamily designation for this site.

5. Modifications to Redwood Boulevard

Commissioners discussed the design options for this portion of North Redwood Boulevard – whether to “activate” the existing wide median for public use or to somewhat narrow the median (retaining the cork oak trees), increase landscaping and allow a portion of the right-of-way on the east side for angled parking and/or pedestrian/bicycle/outdoor dining space. The Commissioners agreed on the latter option, indicating that encouraging public use of the median could cause safety problems and would likely not be an enjoyable place to gather between traffic lanes. Planning Commissioner Dawson, who is a transportation planner, suggested that diagonal parking would serve to slow the easterly traffic lane, which would be appropriate adjacent to a retail development, while allowing the inbound lane (next to the median) to function for through traffic at higher speeds. Design Review Commissioner MacLeamy suggested that the DRC members might volunteer their time to help refine a schematic design for Redwood Boulevard that staff could then obtain preliminary cost estimates for.

Economic Development Advisory Commission

The Economic Development Advisory Commission reviewed the staff recommendations at their meetings on October 31 and November 21, 2013. After discussion the Commission agreed with

the proposed revisions suggested by the Planning and Design Review Commissions. In addition, the EDAC recommended inclusion of diagonal parking on the east side of Redwood Boulevard for the benefit of retail development. The Commission also discussed the request by ROIC to increase the maximum allowable size of individual retailers, but did not recommend a change to the staff proposals. Finally, the Commission asked that the Vision Statement include a reference to the economic importance of the study area to address the City's limited retail offerings. Staff has revised the Vision Statement to incorporate this thought.

FISCAL IMPACT

As described above under Economic Effects, the proposed land use changes for the North Redwood Boulevard area have the potential to significantly improve the City's retail sales position and fiscal sustainability.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Endorse the recommendations from the staff, Planning Commission, Design Review Commission and Economic Development Advisory Commission;
2. Direct staff to make desired revisions to the proposed vision statement, design criteria, zoning parameters and/or development forecasts; or
3. Direct staff to provide additional analysis and recommendations.

ATTACHMENTS

- | | |
|------------|--|
| Exhibit 1: | Ordinance rescinding moratorium |
| Exhibit 2: | Study Area Parcel Sizes |
| Exhibit 3: | Survey Results from 9/28/13 Community Charrette |
| Exhibit 4: | Requested Modifications to Staff Recommendations from Property Owners |
| Exhibit 5: | November 20, 2013 Draft Minutes of the Planning Commission and Design Review Commission joint work session |
| Exhibit 6: | Public Input Received |

ORDINANCE NO. _____

AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NOVATO REPEALING URGENCY ORDINANCE NO. 1578 WHICH ESTABLISHED AND URGENCY ORDINANCE NO. 1580 WHICH EXTENDED INTERIM RESTRICTIONS ON DEVELOPMENT WITHIN A PORTION OF THE REDWOOD CORRIDOR PENDING THE CONSIDERATION AND STUDY OF ZONING AND OTHER LAND USE REGULATIONS PERTAINING TO SUCH AREA AND DEVELOPMENT AND FINDING THAT THE ADOPTION THEREOF IS EXEMPT FROM THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA), PURSUANT TO CEQA GUIDELINES SECTION 15061(B)(3)

WHEREAS, on May 14, 2013, the City Council of the City of Novato did adopt Urgency Ordinance 1578 pursuant to California Government Code Section 65858 prohibiting the establishment of new development or land uses within the North Redwood Corridor area, as identified therein, pending the consideration and study of permanent regulations governing such development and use. Said urgency interim ordinance was to remain in effect for 45 days from its adoption, until June 28, 2013; and

WHEREAS, on June 18, 2013, the City Council of the City of Novato did adopt Urgency Ordinance 1580 extending this interim urgency ordinance for a period of ten months and fifteen days, expiring on May 14, 2014; and

WHEREAS, on September 14 and 28, 2013 the City of Novato held two public workshops to help define the community's desire for redevelopment of the North Redwood Boulevard Corridor; and

WHEREAS, based on this public input the City of Novato Community Development Department prepared the North Redwood Boulevard Corridor Study report which contains a draft vision statement, land use regulations, design criteria and development forecasts, and received feedback on this report from the Novato Economic Development Advisory Commission on October 31 and November 21, 2013, and from the Planning Commission and Design Review Commission on November 20, 2013; and

WHEREAS, on January 7, 2014, the Novato City Council reviewed the North Redwood Boulevard Corridor Study report, held a public hearing, considered all staff reports and all written and oral communication submitted to the City on or before such public hearing, and the Record as a whole prior to taking action on the proposed ordinance, and provided direction to staff to incorporate the desired zoning and design criteria in the Draft General Plan document and implementing ordinances, and to incorporate the proposed development forecasts into the Draft Environmental Impact Report to be prepared for the Draft General Plan; and

WHEREAS, notices of the public hearing of the City Council on the proposed amendments were sent to property owners within the study area and within 600 feet of the study area, to all participants at the two community charrettes who provided e-mail addresses, and to all parties having requested notice, and the proposed ordinance title was published in a newspaper of general circulation in the City in accordance with law; and

WHEREAS, having provided direction to staff for future redevelopment along the North Redwood Boulevard Corridor, the interim moratorium ordinance will no longer be necessary; and

WHEREAS, the Custodian of Records is the City Clerk of the City of Novato, 922 Machin Avenue, Novato, CA.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NOVATO DOES FIND AND ORDAIN AS FOLLOWS:

Section 1. Findings: The City Council of the City of Novato hereby finds that repealing the temporary moratorium ordinance is not subject to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) because there is no possibility that the proposed action will have a significant effect on the environment.

Facts in Support: Terminating the temporary moratorium will result in preserving the status quo as the current zoning regulations will remain unchanged.

Section 2. Urgency Ordinance Nos. 1578 and 1580 are hereby repealed upon the effective date of this ordinance.

Section 3. Severability: If any section, subsection, sentence, clause, phrase or portion of this ordinance is for any reason held invalid or unconstitutional, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this ordinance. The City Council hereby declares that it would have passed this and each section, subsection, phrase or clause thereof irrespective of the fact that any one or more sections, subsections, phrase or clauses be declared unconstitutional on their face or as applied.

Section 4. Publication and Effective Date: The City Clerk shall cause this ordinance to be published and/or posted within fifteen days after its adoption. This ordinance shall go into effect thirty (30) days after the date of its passage and adoption.

THE FOREGOING ORDINANCE was first read at a regular meeting of the Novato City Council on the 7th day of January, 2014, and was passed and adopted at a regular meeting of the Novato City Council on the 21st day of January, 2014.

AYES:
NOES:
ABSENT:
ABSTAIN:

Attest:

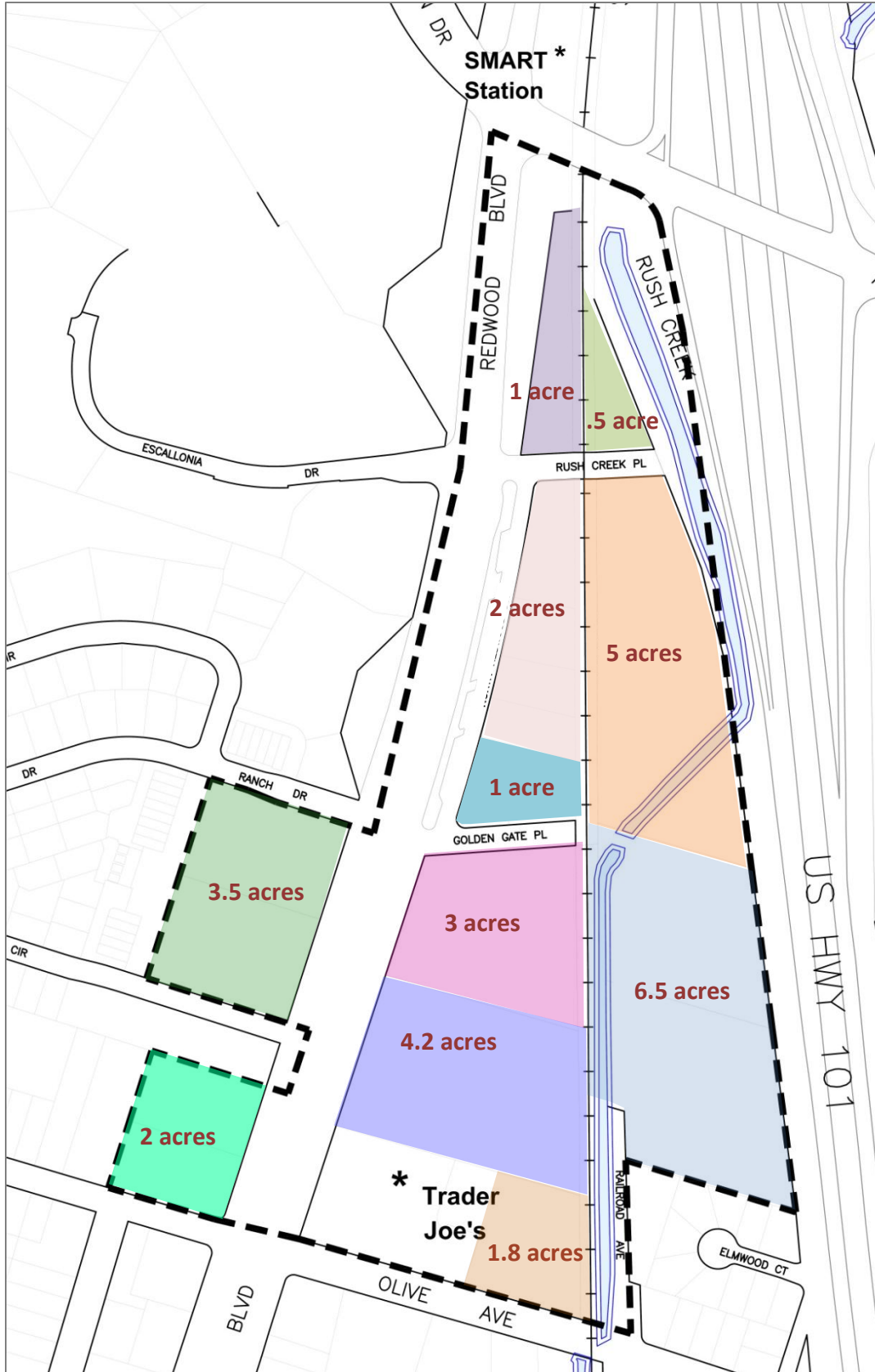
Mayor of the City of Novato

City Clerk of the City of Novato

Approved as to form:

City Attorney of the City of Novato

STUDY AREA – PARCEL SIZES



0 100' 200'



SURVEY RESULTS FROM 9/28/13 COMMUNITY CHARRETTE

(94 responses)

East of Redwood South (ROIC & Dairymen's)

Lifestyle Retail	67	73%
Mixed Use	18	20%
Apartments/Condos	4	4%
Small Scale Retail	2	2%
Health Club	1	1%

Preference for Design Scheme:

Team 1	49	58%
Team 2	16	19%
Team 3	20	24%

East of Redwood North (Shamrock, recycling, landscape materials)

Lifestyle Retail	35	38%
Mixed Use	28	30%
Apartments/Condos	11	12%
Medium Box Retail	6	7%
Recreation	5	5%
Community Retail	3	3%
Entertainment	2	2%
Light Industrial/Service Commercial	2	2%

Preference for Design Scheme:

Team 1	38	58%
Team 2	14	22%
Team 3	13	20%

Motel

Motel	29	47%
Apartments/Condos	20	32%
Office	3	5%
Recreation	3	5%
Light Industrial/Service Commercial	2	3%
Medium Box	2	3%
Self Storage	1	2%
Parking	1	2%
Chamber of Commerce	1	2%

Wood Sales Lot

Light Industrial/Service Commercial	21	44%
Feedstore	5	10%
Retail	4	8%
Chamber of Commerce	4	8%
Recreation	3	6%
Park	3	6%
Apartments/Condos	3	6%
Office	4	8%
Medium Box Retail	1	2%

Water District/Bus Yard

As Is/Light Industrial/Service Commercial	41	35%
Larger Box	28	24%
Medium Box	22	19%
Recreation	13	11%
Apartments/Condos	7	6%
Office/Biotech	3	3%
Parking	3	3%
Lifestyle Retail	1	1%

Atherton Ranch Vacant Parcel

Apartments/Condos	54	50%
Senior Housing	28	26%
Mixed Use	18	17%
Plaza/Park	5	5%
Amphitheatre	1	1%
Hotel	1	1%
Retail	1	1%

Olive/Redwood

Mixed Use	34	31%
Apartments/Condos	25	23%
Senior Housing	27	24%
Community Commercial	14	13%
Medium Box Retail	8	7%
Hotel	1	1%
Community Center	1	1%
Live/Work	1	1%

Workshop Evaluation

	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Somewhat</i>	<i>No</i>
Did you enjoy the workshop process?	95%	2%	3%
Do you feel like you had an opportunity to express your ideas?	95%	2%	3%
Do you feel like your ideas are reflected in the sketches prepared?	78%	5%	17%
Will you continue to participate in the General Plan Update process?	100%		

Proposed Design Criteria for North Redwood Corridor – With Proposed ROIC Revisions

<i>Subarea</i>	<i>Proposed Design Criteria</i>	<i>Requested Revisions from ROIC</i>
<p>E. of Redwood – South</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a retail development composed of smaller shops and larger retailers of 20,000-30,000 square feet each along with restaurants and entertainment facilities. 2. Allow for second and/or third story residential, recreational or office space, if practical and if a minimum of 0.3 FAR (floor area ratio) of retail space is provided in this subarea. 3. Provide for public gathering places and outdoor seating. 4. Incorporate extensive landscaping with shade trees. 5. Provide pedestrian and bicycle connections between retailers, public spaces and bicycle/pedestrian facilities along the SMART corridor and along Redwood Blvd. 6. Attempt to incorporate portions or design features of the Dairymen’s Mill building into the retail development. 7. Create wide pedestrian sidewalks and a bicycle path along the Redwood Blvd. frontage. 8. Locate buildings near the Redwood Boulevard frontage, with shop entries and display windows facing the street and gathering places. 9. Minimize views of parking areas from Redwood Boulevard, typically by locating parking behind buildings. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increase max. size of individual retailers to 50,000 sq. ft. 2. Requests allowance for second/third floor retail use (ROIC). <i>[Staff Note: The proposed guidelines and zoning criteria allow for retail on multiple floors, up to a height limit of 35 feet.]</i> 4. Incorporate extensive landscaping <u>per current codes</u> with shade trees. 5. <i>“Provide integrated pedestrian sidewalks and bicycle lanes on all public streets that help promote migration to and from all parts of the development. Provide links to future SMART trail system.”</i> 6. <i>“Development to be designed to create a sequence of unique and inviting gathering spaces, pedestrian streets and paseos. Spaces will be defined by a series of buildings designed at varying heights and scales to create a lively and architecturally rich environment. The buildings character will be inspired by both the agrarian vernacular of the Dairymen’s building as well as the Spanish revival of the Trader Joe’s building.”</i> 8. <i>“Locate buildings near the Redwood Blvd. frontage, with shop entries and display windows facing the street and gathering places.”</i>

**Originally Proposed Development Regulations for North Redwood Boulevard Corridor
- With Proposed Revisions from Property Owners**

<i>Draft Proposed Zoning</i>				
<i>Subarea</i>	<i>Allowable Uses</i>	<i>Floor Area Ratio</i>	<i>Coverage</i>	<i>Height</i>
E. of Redwood – South	Retail, office, housing, recreation, entertainment, restaurants, hotel, no additional grocery sales beyond existing sq. ftg. of Trader Joes <i>[Expansion of grocery sq. ftg. requested by ROIC]</i>	0.4 for commercial + 0.2 for residential/office mixed use Min. 0.3 FAR of retail/entertainment/restaurant prior to residential or office	40%	35' (except for modifications to Dairymen's building – 53')
E. of Redwood – North	Retail, office, housing, recreation, entertainment, restaurants, hotel	0.4 for commercial + 0.2 for residential/office mixed use	40%	35'
Motel	Hotel, housing, office	0.4 for commercial + 0.2 for residential/office mixed use	40%	35'
Wood Sales	Light industrial/service commercial	0.4	40%	35'
Water District/Bus Yard	Light industrial/service commercial, retail, office, recreation	0.4	40%	35'
Atherton Ranch	Housing or mixed use	0.4	60%	35' <i>[45' requested by the Prado Group]</i>
Olive/Redwood	Retail, office, restaurant, housing	0.4 for commercial + 0.2 for residential/office mixed use	40%	35'

REVISED November 20, 2013

**Joint Planning Commission and Design Review Commission Meeting Minutes
Land Use and Design Concepts for the North Redwood Boulevard Area**

All Planning Commissioners in attendance. All Design Review Commissioners in attendance. Chair Barber arrived at 8pm.

Staff in Attendance: Bob Brown, Chris Stewart, Elizabeth Dunn, Alan Lazure

Agenda Item #1: Approval of Planning Commission meeting minutes of Nov. 4: DD/PT 6-0

Agenda Item #4: Land Use Design Concepts for the North Redwood Boulevard Area

Consider making a recommendation to the City Council on land use and design concepts for the North Redwood Boulevard Area (BB)

Bob Brown gave a verbal and powerpoint presentation for this topic.

Six members of the public spoke: Tina McMillan, Jeff Rhodes, Wayne Campbell, Coy Smith, Gail Wilhelm and Mike di Giorgio .

Members of both Commissions provided comments and feedback on the land use and design concepts for the North Redwood Corridor. These will be presented to the City Council at a future Council meeting:

- Housing Over Retail
 - FEEDBACK: Mixed Use without residential (e.g., office or recreational use above retail) in the East of Redwood North and South subareas was supported by a straw vote of 9-2.
- Area between Highway 101 and SMART
 - FEEDBACK: Maintaining flexibility of uses, allowing light industrial/service commercial, retail, office or recreational uses, was supported by a straw vote of 11-0.
- Use the Dairyman's existing building character
 - FEEDBACK: Changing the design criteria language from "attempt" to "encourage" retention of portions of/or the character of the existing Dairyman's building was supported by a straw vote of 11-0.
- Redwood Boulevard
 - FEEDBACK: Planting more trees in the median (retaining the cork oaks) and on both sides of the street, considering narrowing the travel lanes, and providing right-of-way on the east side for a wider sidewalk, bike path, and/or angled parking was suggested by DRC member MacLeamy and discussed, but no straw vote was taken.

Commissioner MacLeamy also suggested that the DRC might be persuaded to volunteer to prepare some design schemes for redesign of Redwood Boulevard, with staff possibly determining the financial feasibility of undergrounding of transmission lines.

Bob Brown

From: Pam Drew [drew.pam@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, November 19, 2013 11:25 PM
To: Bob Brown
Subject: Re: North Redwood Boulevard Corridor Study - staff report for Planning and Design Review Commissions

Dear Bob,

Isn't it customary to include all cover letters or at the very least an explanatory paragraph giving the person or organization which requested the inclusion of the newspaper article or brochure? You are creating a public record, after all. Otherwise there is no indication of who sent what. I am, of course, assuming that you do not normally publish anonymous letters since there is no way to check their validity. Arbitrary selection of writings of any sort by staff does not in any way 'represent the unrepresented' but it does represent overreach.

As to your remark, "I felt that the IJ opinion piece should also be forwarded to the Commissioners in case they did not see it in the newspaper". There are many newspaper articles and brochures. How do you decide what to include or not to include? Isn't this inclusion of a newspaper article and a brochure a departure from past practice?

I take it that "the report submitted by SUNN for the Planning Commission" that you reference below is what I referred to as a brochure. If you take the time to compare it to the one they (Greenbelt Alliance/SUNN?) published three years ago, you may truly want to attribute authorship to SUNN publicly and to distance yourself because the practice of changing a few dates, slapping a few new pictures in, and using old data is really reprehensible....and I stand by my characterization of it as a brochure.

Pam

On Nov 15, 2013, at 11:01 AM, Bob Brown wrote:

> Pam:
>
> The attached e-mails and the report submitted by SUNN for the Planning Commission are all of the public correspondence I've received to date. If you know of other communications that I've omitted, please provide me with a copy. As to including comments that address perceived problems with the staff proposals, I note that Mr. Dugan's e-mail is included. Since the property owners have a significant stake in the outcomes, they also have submitted their reactions and differences with the staff suggestions. I felt that the IJ opinion piece should also be forwarded to the Commissioners in case they did not see it in the newspaper.
>
> Our intent continues to be to encourage maximum public input into this important planning process, and we expect there will be a diversity of opinions. Ultimately the City Council will have to sort through all the public and staff input and provide their direction.
>
> The staff recommendations were sent to all the workshop participants who provided their e-mail addresses.
>
> Bob Brown
>
> From: Pam Drew [drew.pam@gmail.com]
> Sent: Friday, November 15, 2013 9:06 AM
> To: Terri Brown; Bob Brown
> Cc: Novato Council

> Subject: Re: North Redwood Boulevard Corridor Study - staff report for Planning and Design Review Commissions

>

> Dear Terri,

>

> Why are emails addressing problems or observations re the North Redwood Boulevard Corridor Study process not included in the record (See pdf file below)? Do they not count? Were we told that only written correspondence, i.e., sent with a stamp through the mail or written on paper and delivered counted? I fear I have missed something very important here or perhaps this written record is not very important after all.

>

> I am very concerned that approximately 3 out of the 4 written letters are from developers, some already asking for exemptions for height limits and exceptional design. This sort of loophole is what enabled Millworks to be so exceptionally large and out of place for Novato.

>

> Furthermore, why has the staff prominently included in the first two slots a newspaper article from the IJ which is, in my opinion, clearly a pro-development paper(although I like this particular article), and the brochure from the Greenbelt Alliance? This brochure is a quick remake of material at least 3 years old which relies on partly pre-recession stats. What is the staff thinking exactly with these inclusions? Did individuals send these items and ask that they be included? If so, please identify the individuals and include their cover letters. Otherwise please consider deleting these items as an overreaching of staff prerogative, the sort of thing the neighborhoods have been leery about particularly in the selection of the Community Development leadership.

>

> If the staff is bound by some sort of legal necessity to include the newspaper article and the Greenbelt Alliance brochure, please accept my apologies and let me know about the regulation. In that case my question shifts towards what a perverse effect the regulation has in this case and how easily special interests can affect the process, getting, at the very least, free advertising to a large, highly targeted audience.

>

> NOTICE: The information contained in this email and any document attached hereto is intended only for the named recipient(s). If you are not the intended recipient, nor the employee or agent responsible for delivering this message in confidence to the intended recipient(s), you are hereby notified that you have received this transmittal in error, and any review, dissemination, distribution or copying of this transmittal or its attachments is strictly prohibited. If you have received this transmittal and/or attachments in error, please notify me immediately by reply e-mail and then delete this message, including any attachments.



October 30, 2013

RE: North Redwood Boulevard Corridor Study

City of Novato
Mr. Bob Brown
Community Development Director
75 Rowland Way #110
Novato, CA 94945-3232

ROIC
Robert Doran
Director of Construction
8905 Towne Centre Drive, Suite #108
San Diego, CA 92122

Mr. Brown:

In response to the North Redwood Boulevard Corridor Study and the scheduled Economic Development Advisory Commission Meeting scheduled for tomorrow we would like to address the following items as they pertain to our development and the currently crafted language:

1. "Create a retail development composed of smaller shops and larger retailers of 20,000-30,000 sq. ft. along with restaurants and entertainment facilities"
We would request the sq. ft. reflect "20,000-50,000 sq. ft."
2. "Allow for second and/or third story residential, recreational or office space, if practical and if a minimum of 100,000 sq. ft. of retail space is provided in this sub-area".
We would request additional retail be included to the list of acceptable uses for second and third floors if the 100,000 sq. ft. threshold is achieved.
3. "Incorporate extensive landscaping with shade trees."
We would request "extensive" be replaced with: "per current codes".
4. "Provide pedestrian and bicycle connections between retailers, public spaces and bicycle/pedestrian facilities along SMART corridor and along Redwood Blvd."
We request the language be revised to: "Integrated pedestrian sidewalks and bicycle lanes on all public streets that help promote migration to and from all parts of the development. Provide links to future SMART trail system."
5. "Attempt to incorporate portions or design features of the Dairymen's Mill building into the retail development"
We would request the following language: "Development to be designed to create a sequence of unique and inviting gathering spaces, pedestrian streets and paseos. Spaces will be defined by a series of buildings designed at varying heights and scales to create a lively and architecturally rich environment. The buildings character will be inspired by both the agrarian vernacular of the Dairymen's building as well as the Spanish revival of the Trader Joe's building."

Retail Opportunity Investments Corporation

Corporate Office: 8905 Towne Centre Drive, Suite 108 | San Diego, CA 92122 | P: 858.677.0900 | F: 858.408.3668

NASDAQ: ROIC

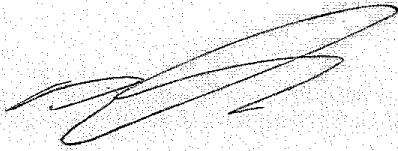
6. "Locate buildings near Redwood Boulevard frontage, with display windows and shop entries facing the street and gathering places".
We would request: "Locate buildings near Redwood Boulevard frontage, with display windows facing the street and gathering places."

In regards to Allowable uses we request the following language be removed: "no additional grocery sales beyond existing sq. ft. of Trader Joes." At a minimum we need the flexibility to expand Trader Joes or any replacement grocer and should not be limited to keeping grocery sales in current location.

In addition we would request language be added that the project be allowed to be built in phases and our development to not be tied to future acquisitions of properties that are out of ROIC control.

Sincerely:

Robert Doran



Bob Brown

From: Don Bragg [dbragg@pradogroup.com]
Sent: Monday, October 28, 2013 9:31 AM
To: Bob Brown
Cc: Dan Safier; joe@felson.com; Lisa Congdon
Subject: Atherton: Zoning

Bob:

Thanks for your continued assistance in understanding our options for the Atherton Ranch site.

We can support a zoning change from Mixed Use to R10-2.2 (20du/acre). As I understood our conversation, the PD is still in place allowing for some flexibility within the R10 zoning as may be needed to design a successful project.

Based upon the information we discussed, the R10-2.2 would allow for 40% coverage, no FAR requirement and a 35 foot height. We would like to request that a provision for up to 45 feet (with staff of DRC approval) if exceptional architecture is incorporated (similar to the downtown overlay) be included in the proposed language change. Alternately, would the PD allow for such a change at your discretion?

Finally, we appreciate you have a tight timeline for a much larger project than just our one piece. However, we have not been able to do an exhaustive review of the R10-2.2 zoning to understand if there are any material constraints as the zoning relates to our current project data (understanding that staff has issues with the current design).

Assuming there is no fatal flaw in the zoning that would somehow diminish the allowable project from what we are currently requesting, a proposed change in zoning would meet with our approval. Please let me know if you have any further questions or comments.

Thank you

Don Bragg
Senior Vice President
Director of Development
The Prado Group Inc.
150 Post Street, Suite 320
San Francisco, CA 94108
415.857.9324 Direct
415.395.0990 Fax
650.740.8192 Cell
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Bob Brown

From: Saxon Holt [sholt@saxonholt.com]
Sent: Friday, November 01, 2013 1:00 AM
To: Bob Brown
Subject: North Redwood

Bob - Thanks for the opportunity to contribute to the Vision Statement for the NRBC.

I really don't think our current business leaders recognize a new economy that is building in the North Bay around artisans who make a living serving consumers all across the region and draw national attention. These artisans, from farmers to craftsmen, actually manufacture real goods and are a creative force that is the envy of city dwellers and attract shoppers. Novato is probably the last place any of these new entrepreneurs think about to bring their business. It needn't be so.

I hope to amend the Vision statement in a way that suggests these possibilities:

"The North Redwood Corridor is a vital project in North Bay / regional economic development and provides an opportunity to create at its core a vibrant retail center with a unique design character, featuring inviting community gathering places with restaurants and entertainment in a location unique in the world. <added since my comment at the meeting>. New commercial development should be pedestrian-oriented with an active street frontage and convenient pedestrian and bicycle connections to the Downtown and the SMART station. New residences are encouraged, both on the remaining Atherton Ranch site and possibly on upper stories in appropriate locations as part of retail development. Redwood Boulevard should be improved with landscaping, pedestrian/bicycle paths and wide sidewalks recognizing this area as a gateway to Novato."

My hope with this is to emphasize the potential to develop NRBC in connection with our existing and sustainable assets - the location itself as beautiful 'Outdoor Marin', a nexus of economic engines that will drive the region long into the future - agriculture and tourism. You mentioned that no one wants a development that can be found in Denver or South Carolina. It only takes the realization that anyone from those regions who want to visit Marin or Sonoma, for localvore farming and eco-tourism is very likely to pass through Novato, even this intersection. It is the most direct route to West Marin from points east and I-80 (even from San Francisco I tell my friends who wish to avoid Sir Francis Drake Blvd).

I will also take this opportunity to push for higher height limits, perhaps as high as existing structures, or east of the tracks, no higher than the small hill in the southeast boundary where the freeway rises above the ground level within NRBC. If we could build a couple stories above a large parking garage that incorporated the existing municipal bus yard we gain more economic development in this potentially vibrant corridor. Well designed LEED buildings (green roofs ?) need not appear massive in this area and impacts no NIMBYs, as the back yard is the freeway.

Finally I would be sure to work with SMART to develop the paths from the train station into the corridor and on into downtown. I think the woodlot parcel offers an interesting location to capture and engage visitors using the train; attention needs to be paid to the bike and pedestrian path interface from the train station at the freeway underpass. SMART needs to be challenged on this deliverable. A clever developer could create some sort of entertainment / recreation venue here at the gateway to the corridor.

Thanks again for a clear public process on all of this and for encouraging my own input. Let me know how I might best be an advocate for this development.

Saxon Holt

Comments on North Redwood Corridor Study
Staff Report dated November 20, 2013

These comments are from Coy Smith, CEO, Novato Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Smith is also a nine year member of the City of Novato Economic Development Commission (EDC).

These comments were made by Mr. Smith at the EDC meeting on October 31, and are being restated at the joint Planning/Design Review commission meeting of November 20, 2013.

These comments also reflect the position of the Novato Chamber of Commerce.

The City's recently completed retail leakage study, showed that over \$169 million of retail sales by Novato residents are being made in other cities. The NRC is an opportunity to try to recapture some of those sales and provide a place for Novato residents to shop in their own City.

Comments on Subareas:

E. of Redwood - South -

1. We support a building size of greater than 30,000 square feet.
2. We do not support the second bullet point - which allows for second and third story residential space. We prefer second and third story retail and/or office.

E. of Redwood - North

1. We support a building size of up to 50,000 square feet.
2. We do not support the second bullet point - which allows for second and third story residential space. We prefer second and third story retail and/or office.

Wood Sales -

1. This could be a good location for a family entertainment type of use, such as a miniature golf center.

Water District/Bus Yard

1. This is prime freeway frontage lots which are very attractive as retail sites. They should be used for that purpose.
2. We do not support the use of this area for recreational development.

There are many examples of problems with mixed use developments that include retail/commercial and residential.

Novato's own Whole Foods projects is one such example. Musicians were playing acoustic music in the front patio area (hired by Whole Foods) on a Saturday afternoon. Residents of the building complained about the music.

Another incident involved person living in the Whole Foods complex that called to complain about music across the street on a Friday night at 9 pm. The resident said they lived in a "residential neighborhood" and that it should be quiet.

In the Theater District of Petaluma, residents formally complained to the City about the activities of a local business next door to them. The business was there BEFORE the residents. The business had to spend \$20,000 to fight the complaint. The complaint was denied by the city, but at a cost of \$20,000 to the business and zero cost to the residents.

We are not saying that at times, and in certain cases, mixed use may work. But we do not feel that is the case for the North Redwood Corridor.

We would also ask that staff include the minutes from the meetings of the EDC, Planning and Design Review (related to North Redwood), in any future reports that are intended for the City Council when they consider the design guidelines for the North Redwood Corridor

From: Al Dugan [aldugan2002@yahoo.com]

Sent: Tuesday, October 29, 2013 7:05 PM

To: Novato Council

Cc: Bob Brown

Subject: NorthRedwoodtally.xlsx

I again send the email below to you as I am very concerned now that Bob Brown is saying the consensus was for mixed use. First of all, I don't think the numbers actual indicate that per Bob Ratto's review on the numbers. Secondly, there were people voting that did not live in Novato and may very well have a special interest in such things as building housing. This can easy stack the deck with an appearance of community opinion but driven by outside special interests. The lack of control was very disappointing.

i believe Mr. Brown is a big fan, an outspoken advocate, of the new urbanism that exalts mix used, and this is primary reason I did not want a person with this strong of a belief to be in a position of power to influence the direction of decisions as appears to be the case in this instance.

Regards,

Al Dugan

Novato, CA 94947

From: Al Dugan <aldugan2002@yahoo.com<<mailto:aldugan2002@yahoo.com>>>

Date: September 28, 2013, 4:52:12 PM PDT

To: Novato Council

<novatocouncil@novato.org<<mailto:novatocouncil@novato.org>>>

Cc: Bob Brown <bbrown@novato.org<<mailto:bbrown@novato.org>>>

Subject: September 28, 2013 North Redwood Corridor Meeting

I attended the work shop today on the North Redwood Corridor and found it to be informative and well assembled.

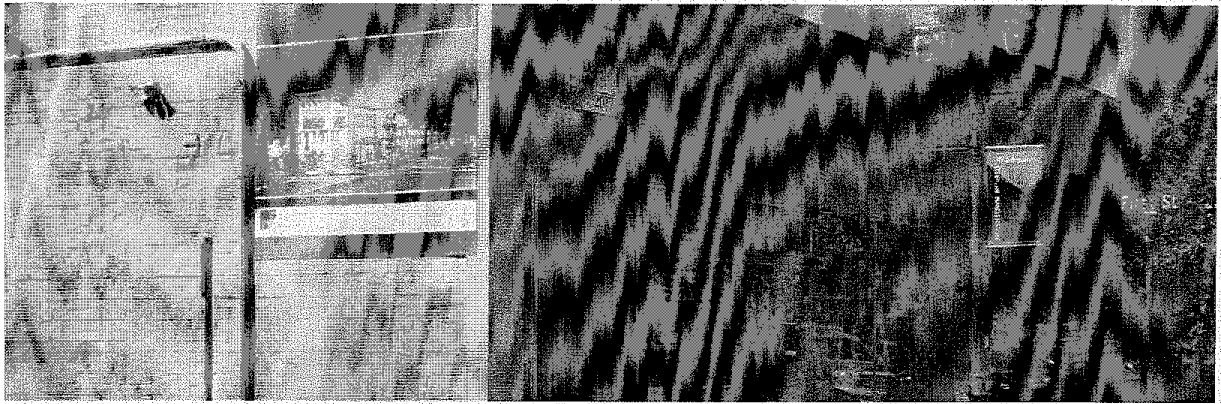
I have to go on record on two issues, one was related to improving future meetings and the other is of much more concern.

In the future, in the main meeting the people asking questions should have access to a microphone. It was very hard to hear the questions, especially if the person asking the question was in front of you.

Of real matter of concern was the apparent attendance by people outside of Novato, that voted and gave opinions. People that have a financial interest in what happens in this project in Novato or do not live here, should have been identified by a separate color name badge. Before people spoke they should have had to state where they live, and if outside of Novato their reason for attending. I heard several people, and not the architects, that stated they lived in San Rafael and one person say they lived in San Francisco. All three of these people were vocal and expressed their opinions on the future directions for Novato. This is very disappointing as it allows the "deck to be stacked" by special interest disguised as Novato residents. Announcing where people live and why they were attending would have allowed the Novato residents to weigh the comments by these people. This unfortunately, will bring into question if the workshop reflects the opinions of the citizens of Novato.

Regards,
Al Dugan
Novato, CA

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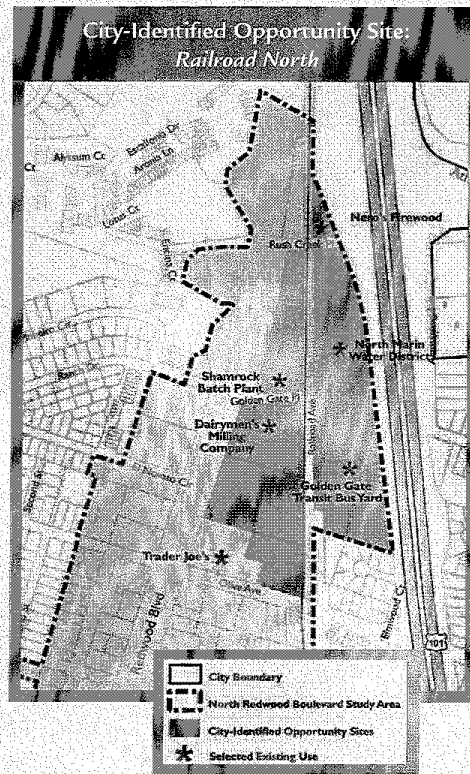
Homes and Retail: A Win-Win for North Redwood Boulevard

The City of Novato has an important decision to make as it weighs the future of North Redwood Boulevard. Civic leaders are deliberating the right mix of stores and housing against a backdrop of struggling downtown retail, a future nearby Sonoma-Marina Area Rail Transit (SMART) station, growing highway congestion, and a sizable budget deficit. How North Redwood Boulevard evolves over the next 10–20 years will have a significant impact on the City's economic, environmental, and fiscal health.

Done right, development along North Redwood Boulevard can help the city achieve three of its core goals — strengthening the local economy, ensuring the success of SMART, and creating a sustainable tax base — while maintaining the hometown charm valued by Novato residents and visitors. The key is ensuring that development along North Redwood Boulevard includes a strategic mix of housing and retail.

Retail is Too Uncertain to be the *Only* Planned Use for North Redwood

Given the importance of sales-tax revenue, some discussions have focused on an all-retail scenario for North Redwood. Some observers have expressed interest in a major outdoor “lifestyle” shopping center — large enough to attract national chains like Crate & Barrel. Such a center would require at least 300,000 to 500,000 square feet of leasable space to draw major retailers.¹



However, strong market forces are working against a large new retail center here. When the economy recovers, retailers that expand into new locations will focus on areas with significant population growth, areas experiencing a big upswing in affluence, or highly diverse areas that contain untapped niche markets.² Retailers will also prioritize locations with extremely high traffic counts and limited competitors. Given the likelihood of only modest population growth near north Novato, given that this area is out



of the way relative to large cities and towns, and given stiff competition from other locations with existing lifestyle centers nearby — such as Corte Madera and Petaluma — North Redwood faces an uphill battle attracting major retailers to a lifestyle center of its own.

North Novato's location difficulties are compounded by significant changes to the retail industry. The retail market is overbuilt right now both in Marin and statewide. Currently, Marin has more than 236,000 square feet of vacant retail, 81,000 of which is in Novato.³ Meanwhile, the national retail industry continues to shift toward on-line sales, making the future of “brick and mortar” stores all the more uncertain over the next 10 years.

These external market realities matter because Novato — as it exists today — cannot support a new large retail

center on its own. Even if a new shopping center were to recapture every single retail dollar that existing Novatans spend in other cities on apparel, home furnishings, appliances, specialty retail like electronics, and dining out, a new 300,000-square-foot shopping center would still need at least \$65 million per year in additional sales to keep its retail tenants. (See table below.)

To generate an additional \$65 million in annual sales for a North Redwood retail center, the Novato area would need to grow by at least 11,000 households (an increase of 20%), or an equivalent number of households who live elsewhere would need to shift the majority of their spending to North Redwood.⁴

Given these market realities, Novato should resist designating North Redwood Boulevard *solely* for retail use.

Sales Volume Needed to Support a 300,000-Square-Foot Retail Center	
Estimated shopping center size ^(a)	300,000 square feet
Average sales needed to draw tenants	\$400 per square foot ^(b)
Total required sales volume per year	\$120 million
Total sales currently lost to nearby cities in key categories (apparel, home furnishings, appliances, specialty and other retail, and eating and drinking establishments)	\$54.6 million ^(c)
Additional annual sales needed from non-Novato residents	\$65.4 million

^a Gross leasable area.

^b Estimate based on interview with Julie Taylor, senior vice president, Cornish and Carey Commercial

^c City of Novato, *Existing Conditions Report*, 2009, pp. 4-34.

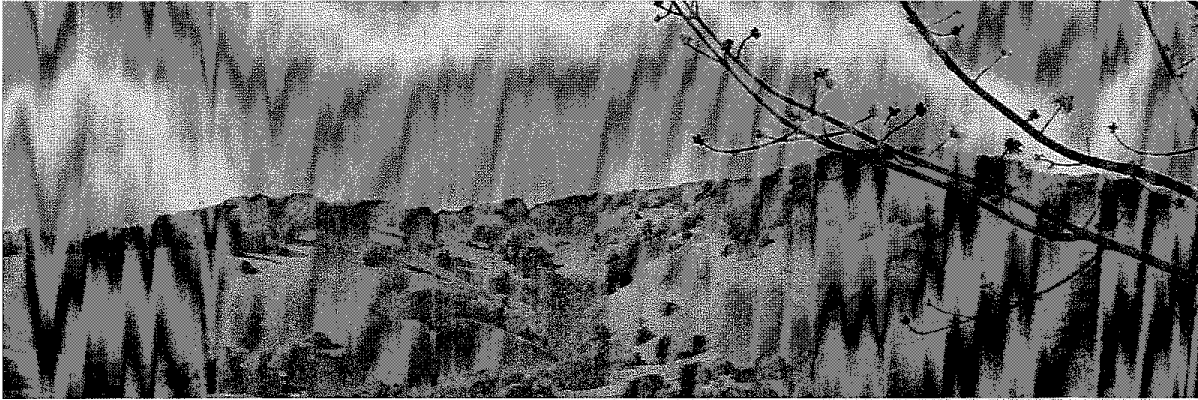
¹ Interview with Julie Taylor, senior vice president, Cornish and Carey Commercial. <http://www.ccarey.com/offices-agents/AgentDetail.aspx?id=346-W19770>

² Nielsen, *Finding Growth in Challenging Times*: October 2008.

<http://www.scribd.com/doc/21975950/Nielsen-Retail-Growth-7-Indicators-of-Population-Growth-Whitepaper>

³ Terranomics, *Marin County Retail Report*: Mid-Year 2009. <http://www.terranomics.com/research.asp>

⁴ This estimate assumes that new households would average \$88,000 in yearly income; spend \$9,900 per year on apparel, home furnishings, appliances, specialty retail, and eating and drinking establishments; and make 60% of their mall purchases at North Redwood.



The Perfect Combination: a Mix of Housing and Retail

Space exists for both new homes *and* retail along North Redwood. The sub-area known as Railroad North — with underutilized parcels stretching from Olive Avenue north to Atherton — provides the perfect place for a combination of housing and retail. At 28 acres, a mix of homes and retail could be achieved in numerous ways — including “side-by-side” mixed use. For example, 5 acres could accommodate 150 homes *adjacent to retail* at a modest 30 households to the acre. Even 3 acres allocated for new homes (and 25 acres for retail) could accommodate 150 new households, if some of the new retail buildings featured a couple of stories of housing on top.

Rather than having to choose between new homes or new retail at Railroad North, the City has the opportunity to “hedge its bets” by allowing space for both.

Hedging Our Bets in Uncertain Times

Rather than having to choose between new homes or new retail at Railroad North, Novato has the opportunity to “hedge its bets” by allowing space for both.

Housing Will Boost Existing Downtown Retail

In an uncertain retail market, the most effective thing we can do to support struggling downtown and North Redwood retail is to place new homes nearby, in strategic locations to expand the local customer base. Railroad North provides a prime opportunity to build a stronger customer base for downtown restaurants, shops and services, while creating the kind of vitality that will increase the potential for future retail along North Redwood.

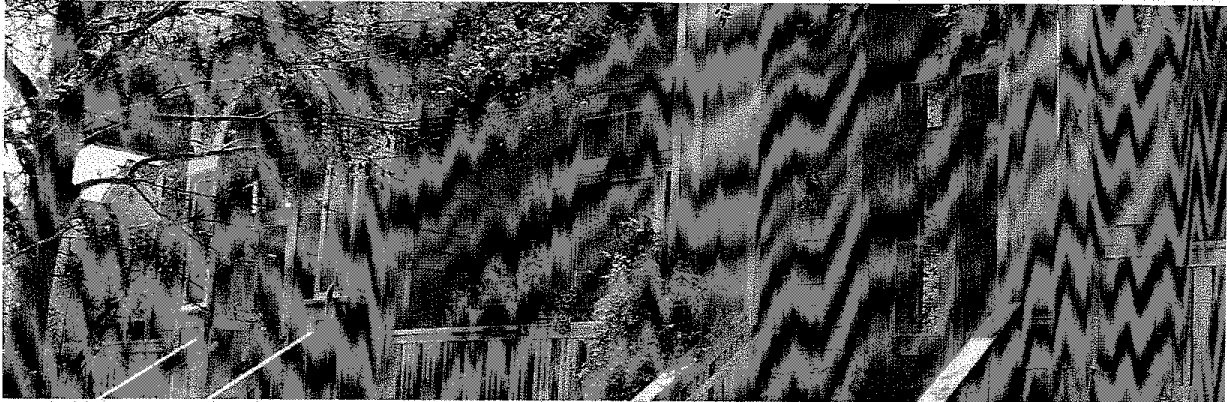
New households add considerable purchasing power that can rejuvenate downtown as well as other Novato businesses. Consider the additional purchasing power from a mere 150 new households of modest income:

Total Purchasing Power of 150 New Households	
Number of Households	150
Average Household Income ^(a)	\$74,072
Annual Retail Purchases per Household ^(b)	\$28,861
Total Annual Retail Expenditures	\$4,329,150

POWER TO PURCHASE
Total purchasing power of 150 new, low- and moderate-income households?
\$4,329,150

^a Based on a weighted average of 100 households earning \$88,830 (e.g. computer specialists, employment placement specialists) and 50 households at \$44,555 (e.g. pharmacy technicians, dental assistants, bookkeepers).

^b Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Consumer Expenditure Survey: Tables 2 and 3, 2007. This reflects the different retail expenditures of households earning \$44,555 and \$88,830.



Like other Novatans, downtown-adjacent residents won't spend all their retail dollars locally; however, the convenience of being able to walk to nearby businesses and restaurants makes these residents much more likely to spend their income downtown. And homes within walking distance of downtown are especially helpful for retail that relies on patronage outside of traditional work hours, such as restaurants.

Additional spending by downtown-adjacent residents has a multiplier effect. A larger local customer base gives downtown businesses additional incentive to stay open later. This, in turn, increases the ability of these businesses to capture more dollars from existing residents, who otherwise find it difficult to visit downtown businesses during limited hours of operation. Downtown-adjacent housing, then, can help Novato join other towns that are recognizing the economic value of a downtown that is "alive after five."

Furthermore, by building homes within walking distance of downtown retail, we increase the number of customers for downtown businesses without needing to increase

The Bottom Line

Strategically placed homes give us the opportunity to strengthen our existing retail, while seeding the potential for future retail at North Redwood.

parking. This saves the City and local merchants money, while helping keep downtown parking available for customers who do drive.

The bottom line is: With strategically placed homes, we have the opportunity to strengthen our existing retail while seeding the potential for future retail at North Redwood.

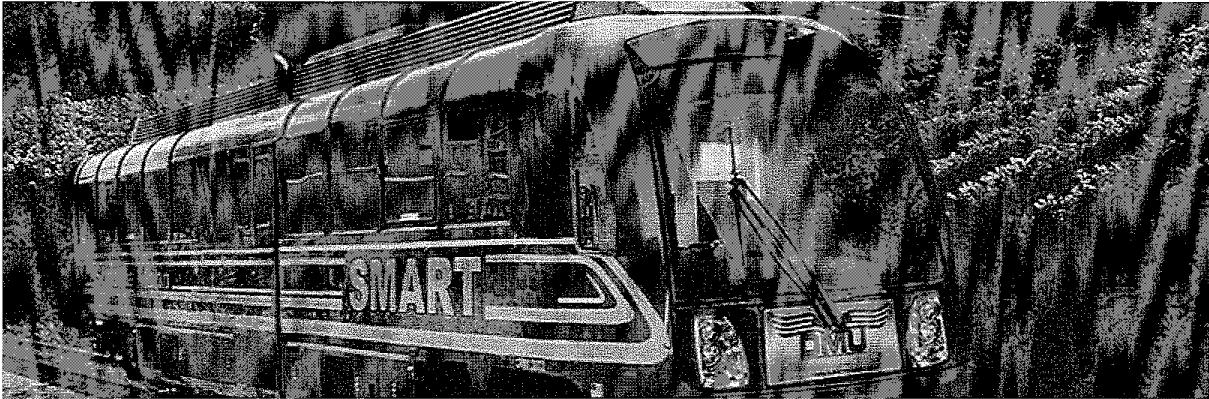
BOOSTING DOWNTOWN RETAIL

Potential boost for select downtown retail categories from 150 new households?

\$1,570,900

Potential Boost for Select Downtown Retail Categories from 150 New Households	
Category	Total Annual Expenditures
Eating and Drinking Establishments	\$495,350
Entertainment	\$473,650
Groceries	\$601,900
Total	\$1,570,900

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Consumer Expenditure Survey*: Tables 2 and 3, 2007.
Based on 100 households earning \$88,830 and 50 households earning \$44,555 per year.



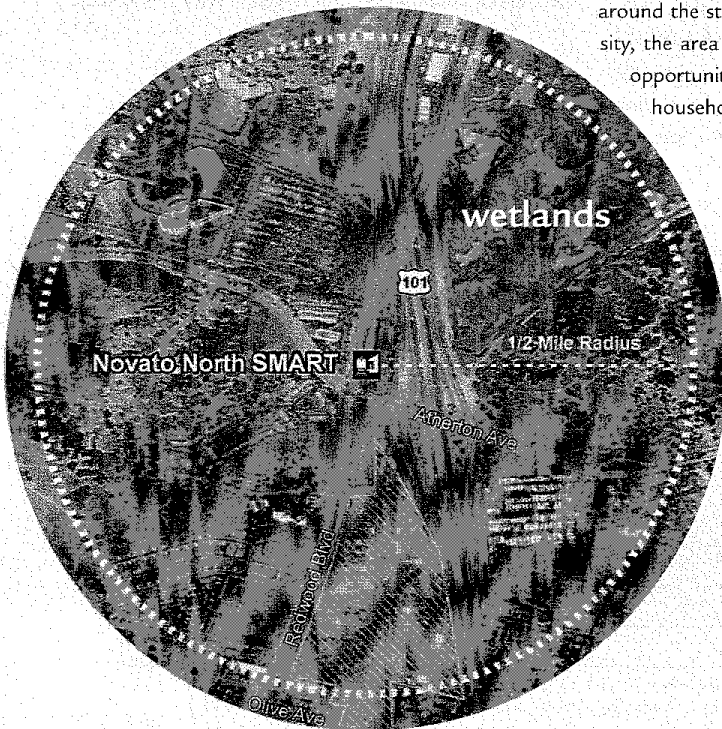
New Homes Will Support Transit, Walkability, and a Cleaner Environment

In addition to supporting downtown retail, housing at North Redwood will create a walkable neighborhood, while boosting SMART ridership. The SMART train has great promise to get people out of their cars, ease congestion along Highway 101, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution. But to succeed, SMART stations must be conveniently accessible to a significant number of

riders, ideally within walking distance from riders' homes. Studies have shown:

- People who live within ½ mile of transit are 5 times more likely to ride than those who do not.
- People whose home *and* workplace are each within ½ mile of transit are 10 times more likely to ride.⁵

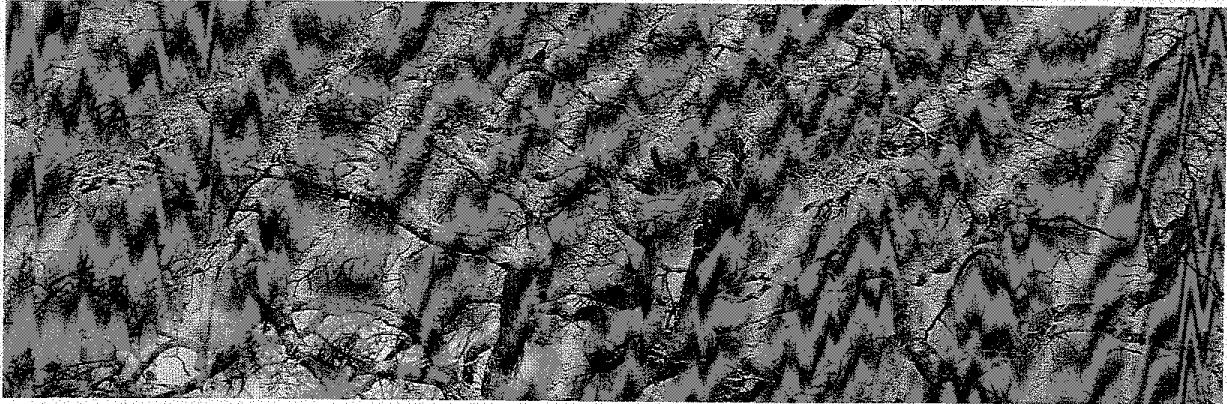
Novato's Atherton SMART station will be built just north of Redwood Boulevard — less than ½ mile from the Railroad North sub-area. This makes housing at Railroad North particularly important. With most of the ½ mile around the station already developed at a very low density, the area around Railroad North is one of the last opportunities for Novato to support SMART by adding households nearby in order to maximize ridership.



**BEST BET
Emerging Trends In
Real Estate, 2009**

Transit-Oriented Development

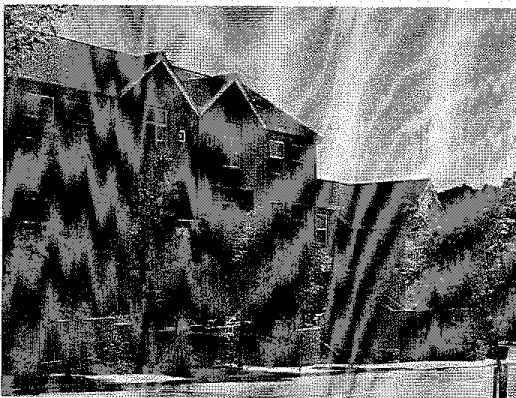
"Increasingly, people want to drive less and seek subway, commuter railroad, or light-rail alternatives. Developers can't miss securing project sites near rail stops and train stations."



Promoting a Cleaner Environment with the Right Mix of Jobs and Homes

Too few of Novato's local employees can afford to live here. As a result, many are forced to commute to Novato from outside the county, clogging freeways and polluting the air with their cars. Studies show:

- 67% of greenhouse gas emissions in Novato come from transportation.⁶
- In the past decade, though the population grew by only 5%, Marin has seen a 25% increase in daily vehicle miles traveled per person, primarily because our work-force is commuting in from farther and farther away.⁷



If retail is created on North Redwood Boulevard without homes that working families can afford, the environmental problems we are currently trying to reverse will be exacerbated. To become a sustainable community,

Novato must achieve a good "jobs-housing fit" by balancing the types of new jobs created with the types of housing needed by new employees. It can do so with a mix of compact housing choices at Railroad North. Focusing our population growth near jobs, groceries, and transit keeps our outlying neighborhoods intact and reduces suburban sprawl, emissions, and traffic.

Strengthening Local Employers

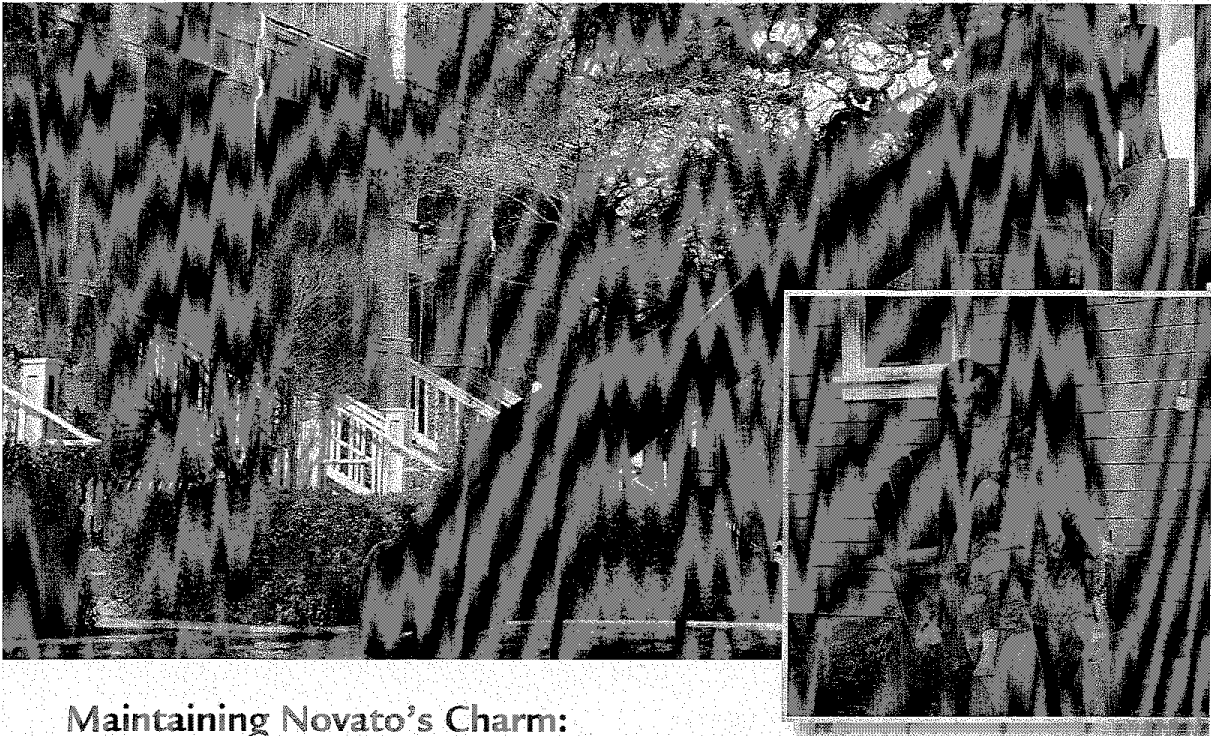
By including homes for Novato workers at Railroad North, Novato also has an opportunity to benefit local employers. Many small business owners find it challenging to retain valuable employees, who often find similar work closer to home. To attract skilled employees, business owners frequently must offer higher wages to compensate for long commutes, making their companies less competitive in today's challenging market. A better jobs-housing fit benefits Novato's employers by increasing their ability to retain employees — reducing costly turnover — while also increasing the reliability and punctuality of employees.



⁵ Robert Cervero et al, *Transit Oriented Development in America: Experiences, Challenges, and Prospects*. Transit Cooperative Research Program, Report 102, 2004.

⁶ City of Novato, *Draft Climate Change Action Plan*, 2009, p.26. <http://www.cityofnovato.org/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=4455>

⁷ Global Footprint Network, *Measuring Marin County's Ecological Footprint* (prepared for the County of Marin Community Development Agency), 2007. http://www.co.marin.ca.us/depts/CD/main/pdf/BEST_pdf/eco_footprint_final2007-01-24.pdf



Maintaining Novato's Charm: Attractive Homes for All

Novato's unique charm and character is valued by both residents and visitors alike. New homes should respect and reflect this value through appropriate scale and good design. Any housing combined with retail should blend with Novato's current low-rise skyline (two to three stories). Homes should be attractive and compact so as to use land efficiently and reserve enough room for adjacent retail.

In addition to market-rate housing, a portion of new homes at Railroad North should be priced for Novato's workforce. This includes teachers, healthcare workers, business sector employees, and retail managers. With rents aimed at 30 percent of local employees' monthly salaries, Novato can free up more of these residents' purchasing power to support local retail, entertainment, and eating establishments.

All Novatans will Benefit from a Strategic Mix of Housing and Retail

Novato's existing downtown businesses deserve the best possible chance to survive the current economy and come back to thrive. Novato's residents and visitors deserve a vibrant community with easy access to retail and public transit and a variety of new restaurants, shops, and entertainment. Novato taxpayers want to see SMART succeed and to enjoy a cleaner environment with reduced greenhouse gas emissions.

It is possible for Novato to achieve these goals by including compact, attractive homes and space for new retail at Railroad North. In doing so, Novato's businesses, residents and visitors all win.

**This report was prepared by the Non-Profit Housing Association
of Northern California and Housing California on behalf of:
Novato Housing Coalition - Sustainable Novato - Greenbelt Alliance
Grassroots Leadership Network - Marin Environmental Housing Collaborative
For more information, contact: Robert Hickey, Robert@nonprofnhousing.org
Support for this report was provided by a grant from the Marin Community Foundation.**

Marin Voice: Housing doesn't belong in Novato's Redwood Corridor

Posted:

marinij.com

NOVATO'S NORTH REDWOOD CORRIDOR workshops were well attended by many.

Architects, residents, business and property owners, developers, city staff, council members and the mayor were enthusiastic about sharing their visions for this last remaining developable area in downtown Novato.

Much is at stake even in the midst of great hope.

The North Redwood Corridor — an area defined within Olive Avenue, San Marin Drive, Highway 101 and Redwood Boulevard — offers an opportunity to preserve an iconic landmark representing Novato's agricultural heritage and zone for commercial/industrial use with no additional housing.

Three plans were drawn by 14 volunteer architects.

The first plan included a repurposed Dairyman's Mill building with public plaza, a promenade the length of Redwood, and shops and restaurants within easy walking distance to downtown.

It includes approximately 195,000 square feet of retail and 50,000 square feet of office space over the retail. There was no additional housing.

The second plan presented a design with a roundabout in a tree-lined Redwood Boulevard at the entrance to a plaza framed by a mix of retail spaces of up to 20,000 square feet around Trader Joe's for a total of 110,000 square feet of retail.

This design includes additional housing.

Contrary to what was mentioned in the IJ's Sept. 1 story, "Residents share corridor hopes," additional housing is not a requirement for the North Redwood.

The last design included a Dairyman's Mill inspired outdoor theatre and retail plaza with shops and offices around Trader Joe's. Town houses are located at Atherton Ranch site and senior housing at the corner of Redwood and Olive.

This design includes 105,000 square feet of retail.

A majority of the participants who completed surveys for this corridor indicated overwhelming support for a lifestyle-retail center, including gathering and entertainment spaces with pedestrian bicycle friendly paths accessing the Sonoma-Marín Area Rail Transit train.

Under current zoning, 27 percent of our city is residential, 1 percent is mixed use, 5 percent is commercial and industrial and 68 percent is open space, parks and public land.

In San Rafael, 17 percent of the land is devoted to commercial and industrial uses.

Novato poorly captures much-needed sales tax because many residents shop out of town.

Property taxes alone are not enough to pay for city services.

Novato cannot afford to lose one of the last commercial/industrial zoned areas to more residential development.

Novato, with its history of providing affordable housing, has included in the 2007 through 2014 housing element, ten properties for building 1,241 units.

Novato has sufficient property zoned for housing.

Furthermore, the Redwood Corridor is surrounded by residential property west of Redwood Boulevard, east of Highway 101 and south of Olive Avenue.

The existing residential layout in the North Redwood corridor resembles Corte Madera's Town Center neighborhood before the shopping center was developed.

According to Bob Brown and the North Redwood Corridor Workshop Economic Panel, mixed use zoning is the least viable method of enticing funding for new commercial development.

In addition to lack of funding, "vertical" mixed use, where housing is placed above shops, works well in denser urban cities like San Rafael, but in suburban settings can present unexpected conflict between residents and shop owners.

Overcoming our budget deficit will require making sound zoning choices to generate increased tax revenue.

Novato Community Alliance supports the development of commercial/industrial only east of Redwood for this corridor, except leaving the opportunity site by Trader Joe's.

By doing so Novato improves the odds of success in developing this area and realizing a strong and healthy tax base.

Trish Boorstein of Novato is a member of the Novato Community Alliance.

Bob Brown

From: Planning Commission
Sent: Wednesday, November 20, 2013 2:04 PM
To: Bob Brown; Dan Dawson; Gary Butler (gary.g.butler@sbcglobal.net); jrs@wintonstrauss.com; Michael Walker; Peter Tiernan; Robert Jordan; Beth Radovanovich; Joe Farrell; Michael Barber; Patrick MacLeamy; Tom Telfer; Xiaofen Luo
Cc: Michael Frank; Chris Stewart
Subject: FW: Big Box Hardware Store in NOOrth-north corridor

For tonight's meeting.

From: gary levin [mailto:gary.levin@comcast.net]
Sent: Wednesday, November 20, 2013 1:48 PM
To: Planning Commission
Cc: 'Pat Eklund'; Jeanne MacLeamy; Denise Athas; Eric Lucan; Madeline Kellner
Subject: Big Box Hardware Store in NOOrth-north corridor

Dear Planning Commission Members;

Unfortunately, I cannot attend tonight's planning commission meeting due to a prior obligation. However, it is my understanding that on tonight's agenda will be discussion about Friedman's Hardware/Department store in the north-corridor along Redwood Blvd.

While I strongly oppose ANY 'big box' stores in the downtown area (they belong in an isolated area like Costco and Target are at) , I most strongly oppose the impact it will have on traffic at Redwood Blvd and San Marin Drive, already classified as an "F" graded intersection for traffic.

Nobody seems to take responsibility for traffic until many years later, when it's far too late. This is your chance to speak up for neighborhoods like Partridge Knolls as well as downtown residents and those who commute along San Marin, who will all be directly impacted by the traffic a big-box retailer WILL bring to the worst intersection in Novato.

Thank you.

Gary Levin
Executive Member,
PKNA