

Summary of Northwest Quadrant Neighborhood Workshop Walking Tour Comments (3/14/15)

What does the study area look and feel like today?

- Old and tired and in need of rejuvenation.
- It's sad how many of the cute houses need new paint and landscaping.
- The neighborhood looks untended and unmanaged. It is a hodgepodge of styles and random growth.
- The cottages and farmhouses are evocative of Novato's agricultural and pioneer spirit.
- Many unkempt homes.
- Some gentrifying.
- Trash on corners/streets.
- Looks like no pride in neighborhood.
- Not walker friendly.
- Lacks a sense of community.
- I have empathy for the people inside this area. The single family owners are outnumbered by renters. Landlords have not represented themselves today. The single family folks are living where they can afford and area proud of them home.
- Noticed a hodgepodge of buildings.
- Need code enforcement.
- A bit of a hodgepodge – not consistent when it comes to sidewalks, stop signs, bike lane and trees.
- Too many empty lots used as dumping ground.
- The apartment development is unsightly and brings more people in the neighborhood than traffic controls can direct.
- Area feels a little confused. Some real nice, some just nice and total crap.
- Same old. Nothing changes. Increase density. Turn single family homes into courtyard bungalows, etc.

What do you consider some of the challenges we'll need to address in creating a planning vision for this area?

- Smaller lot size requirement, smaller setbacks and lower fees to add water/sewer for second units or divided lots.
- Cooperation between landlords.
- Creating consensus, agreeing on "What does a single family home look like in 2015?"
- Parking spaces off street for existing units and new construction. Get the cars off the street to put bike lanes, speed bumps and roundabouts to slow traffic.
- Get views of renters and businesses.
- Respecting and listening to views of people who live in the neighborhood (renters and homeowners) while moving towards long term future goals.
- Creating a dynamic downtown that will draw in residents who want to live in a community that has a walkable downtown.

- The charm of Novato is that it's a small town with small time character. How do you build for the future with an objective of high growth and maintain the essential nature that makes Novato a great place to live.
- Making sure we do not have over density type units that will take away the look and quality of life in our neighborhood.

What are some of the important opportunities this area offers for redevelopment?

- The downtown area is ripe with opportunities: community center, park, or square; beautify the existing area; improve walkability; art; bike paths; points of interest – skating rink/movie theater.
- Well located to downtown.
- Due to the fact that most lots are built, it would be nice to allow smaller lots more density to encourage growth and rejuvenation.
- Able to beautify (cleaning and pretty landscaping) without touching the building.
- Help create more of a community.
- Communicate to the neighborhood what is happening in Downtown.
- Landlords should be required to clean up their units. They are the ones charging the big bucks.
- Where there is a home being run down, a person should be able to build a new home, but nothing extravagant. Sonoma, Pacific Grove and Carmel are all doing this.
- Our location – downtown facilities, traffic control, keeping neighborhood safe, great for families.
- Build greener, more eco-friendly homes. Create homes with less lawns, more communal space. Create something that is truly walkable.
- Joint elderly living complexes.
- The neighborhood has the last affordable homes in Marin. Many families want stand along SF homes, not a development of a park like the Habitat for Humanity. New home owners spend a lot of money on upgrades that house a home. The neighborhood has been the dumping ground for years of every project that never and more prosperous neighborhoods don't want in their area. High density means more absentee landlords – check police reports – worst neighborhoods are blocks with high density units.