



December 17, 2025

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Ms. Abey:

The City of San Rafael has an excellent opportunity to be one of the most bikeable cities in the nation. Over the past several decades, some excellent bicycle infrastructure has been developed by the city and others, facilitating bicycle travel within the city and beyond its borders. With a direct link to the San Francisco Bay Trail and the SMART multiuse pathway, as well as a low-stress route to the Ross Valley, San Rafael is uniquely positioned to provide its residents with the option to ride if they so choose.

However, despite the many bright spots, a number of substantial omissions remain in the bicycle network. Travel between the Canal and the rest of the city is very difficult, due to the presence of US-101 and I-580. Despite a clear need, and being designated as the top priority project in the 2018 Bicycle Master Plan, there has yet to be even a recommended low-stress, east-west route through Downtown. And while the streets in North San Rafael are wide, there are few opportunities there for parents to ride with their children without being passed by high-speed traffic.

We believe that the policies and priorities set in the 2025 Citywide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (CBPP) Update can address these shortcomings, if pursued with the necessary focus and alacrity.

In October, the San Rafael Public Works Department (DPW) and the project consultants released a map of proposed routes, including the 20 top priority projects.

Attached are the recommendations from the Marin County Bicycle Coalition (MCBC) on the draft recommendations from the CBPP.

Additionally, below are several other points we would like to make as part of the plan's policy recommendations.

Implement the bike plan through repaving

Every year, the DPW and City Council select a set of streets and roads to rehabilitate. This important work involves significant disruption to the street being resurfaced, during which time crews are mobilized to upgrade curb ramps, restripe the road, and repair other deficiencies. Repaving is the best time to implement recommendations in the bike plan, particularly if they can be accomplished through restriping or by the installation of quick-build materials. However, this has not been the practice in recent years. Opportunities were missed to implement a number of projects from the 2018 bike plan in the 2023 and 2024 repaving cycles, namely projects B-1, C-13, and D-11 (on Manuel T. Freitas Parkway and First Street respectively). This would have been the time to implement the projects most cost-effectively, and in a way that resulted in the least disruption to the neighborhood.

The response we hear typically is, “We don’t have time to do outreach around the project.” We submit that the CBPP Update process *is that outreach*. If projects are supported by the DPW staff and council and thus included in the plan, then they should be implemented, barring something that would result in a substantial political lift, such as a bikeway on 4th Street.

Prioritize the high-priority projects

The 2018 Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan Update included a project priority ranking. However, those priorities do not appear to have been matched by action on the city’s part. The 2018 plan divided the city into seven geographic groups, each was assigned three top priority projects. Of those 21 projects, to our knowledge six have been completed, two are underway, and 13 have not been initiated. Among the six completed projects, only two were led by the City of San Rafael (the Grand Avenue Cycletrack and 2nd Street Bikeway).

This lack of progress on the projects deemed most important for the completion of a bicycle network does not inspire confidence in the next seven years. While the projects that were completed filled critical gaps, and the current workplan includes worthy efforts, the pace is simply too slow.

Minimum viable network first

Something that the 2018 plan lacked, and seems similarly missing from the 2025 plan update is prioritization of a minimum viable network. This could take the form of providing quick build infrastructure within all of the key gaps in the existing bike network to ensure that people are able to ride between all key destinations within the city *soon* rather than waiting for years-long projects like the 3rd Street Rehabilitation project. These large capital projects are crucial, but we cannot wait for a multimillion dollar project that involves signals and hardscape work to address every gap in the bikeway network. There are urgent needs to give people safe and separated bikeways, which will reduce traffic injuries, reduce traffic congestion, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions (nearly *three quarters of which* come from passenger automobile traffic).

Follow-up

The 2018 bike plan included an excellent and detailed 10-year timeline for implementation. This involved biannual check-ins with the city council, as well as key milestones for progress toward

completion of the network. One of the members of the city's Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee conducted a review of this timeline to determine how closely it had been followed, and found that much of the follow-up had never happened, and that the city was falling far behind the milestones laid out in the plan. We urge the city to outline similar milestones for the 2025 CBBP Update, but to commit to following through with them, and altering course if necessary should it be found that those milestones are not on track to be met.

Clarify sidewalk riding ban

The City of San Rafael permits riding a bicycle on the sidewalk except where explicitly prohibited by a sign, as designated by (§ 5.12.020 & 5.34.010 of the San Rafael Municipal Code). These signs are found, it would seem, entirely in the Downtown area. However, no map of the prohibited areas exists on the City website, and staff have failed to respond to multiple requests for clarification. Given the importance of keeping sidewalks safe for all users, as well as reducing unnecessary police contact, we believe the city should clearly promulgate the sidewalk riding ban, or at least describe it clearly so that community organizations may share the information with the constituents.

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We believe that, by developing policies in line with the above recommendations, as well as making the minor adjustments to the proposed projects included in the attachments to this letter, the City of San Rafael can make substantial strides toward becoming a truly bike-friendly city, and reaping the many benefits that will bring. We thank staff and the consulting team for the work to date, and look forward to helping develop and implement the excellent biking and walking plan that the City of San Rafael deserves.

Sincerely,

Warren J. Wells, AICP
Policy & Planning Director
Marin County Bicycle Coalition

CC:

Mayor Kate Colin
Councilmember Maika Llorens Gulati
Councilmember Eli Hill
Councilmember Maribeth Bushey
Councilmember Rachel Kertz

Attachment A:

Projects that we strongly support

While all of the proposed projects are worthwhile, there are several in particular that we wished to draw particular attention to as being critical to the success of the city's bicycle network.

ID	CORRIDOR	FROM	TO	Notes	MCBC Comment
A17	North San Pedro Road	Los Ranchitos Road	Civic Center Drive/ San Pablo Avenue	Study feasibility of a Class I multi-use path on southside of North San Pedro Road (modified from original Class II bicycle lanes and sidewalks proposed in the 2013 Civic Center Station Area Plan) or Class IV protected bikeway, and study safety improvements	A very important project, but not one entirely in SR City ROW. There was a potential to move forward with an interchange reconfiguration here but it was not prioritized by TAM. City will have to interface with Caltrans to advance project.
B09	Nova Albion Way	Esmeyer Road	Las Gallinas Avenue	Create a Class I / IV multi-use path and protected bikeway on Nova Albion Way between Esmeyer and Las Gallinas.	Strongly support this project, which would connect to existing infrastructure and improve access to multiple schools.
C13	Miramar Avenue/ First Street	Second Street	E Street	Fairfax to San Rafael Cross Marin Bikeway Feasibility Study: Change existing Class III bicycle route to Class III bicycle boulevard.	This is a good project, but the city missed an opportunity to implement this along with repaving in 2024, meaning a project here may be challenging if it involves much construction.
C14	First Street	E Street	D Street	Fairfax to San Rafael Cross Marin Bikeway Feasibility Study: Reverse street from westbound one-way to eastbound one-way	Either of these alternatives would be satisfactory.

				and add contraflow bicycle lane. Alternatively, study feasibility of maintaining the current westbound one-way and adding advisory bicycle lanes.	
D01	Downtown East-West Connection	Fourth Street/ Second Street	Union Street	Study the feasibility of an east-west bikeway through downtown San Rafael that can comfortably accommodate people of all ages and bicycling ability. If compatible with the preferred alternative resulting from the feasibility study	A Downtown East-West Feasibility Study was the single highest priority project in the 2018 bicycle plan, and nothing ever came of it. Having another "TBD" bikeway recommendation for 4th St feels like more of the same.
D02	West Tamalpais Avenue	Second Street	Mission Avenue	Tamalpais Avenue Feasibility Study (ongoing): Convert West Tamalpais Avenue into a one-way street in the southbound direction; create a Class IV protected bikeway between West Tamalpais and SMART right-of-way; create improved bicycle and pedestrian cross	Strongly support this project.
D07	Albert Park Path Connection	First Street	Albert Park Path	Fairfax to San Rafael Cross Marin Bikeway Feasibility Study: Create Class I multi-use path along the south side of the Safeway property line and the north side of the San Rafael Community Center property connecting to the existing Albert	Good project, as there is no low-stress connection between A and B St.

				Park Path	
F05	Canal Crossing	Mouth of Yacht Club harbor	Third Street	Canalfront Conceptual Design Plan (2009): Study potential bicycle and pedestrian bridge over San Rafael Canal [part of SF Bay Trail alignment].	Strongly support this project, though the current Bay Trail map does not show a proposed route over the canal. That would have to be added at the request of the city.
F09	Canal Street	Harbor Street	Pickleweed Community Center entrance	Study upgrade of existing Class III bicycle route to Class III bicycle boulevard, Class II bicycle lanes (as noted in the Canalfront Conceptual Design Plan), or advisory bicycle lanes [part of SF Bay Trail alignment].	Acknowledging that removing parking would be hard here, significant traffic calming is needed to provide safe connection to future canal bridge. If that is not done, then the utility of the bridge will be squandered except for those within short walking distance.
F12	Bellam Boulevard/Baypoint Village Drive	Andersen Drive	Baypoint Drive	Canalfront Conceptual Design Plan (2009): Study feasibility of Class IV protected bicycle facilities on Bellam Boulevard and Baypoint Village Drive corridor connecting to the San Francisco Bay Trail.	Strongly support this project, which overlaps somewhat with the TAM-led 101/580 and Bellam corridor project.
New	Fourth Street	Tamalpais Avenue	Grand Avenue	Install Class IV bikeways on Fourth Street from Tamalpais Avenue to Grand Avenue	Strongly support this project.
New	Merrydale Road	Las Gallinas Ave	Civic Center Drive	Install Class I multi-use path on the south side of the SMART tracks from the northern end of Merrydale Road (south), under Highway 101, to Civic Center	Strongly support this project.

				Drive.	
New	Andersen Drive	Bellam Boulevard	Jacoby Street	Install Class IV bikeway on Andersen Drive from Bellam Boulevard to Jacoby Street, with accessible connection to the North-South Greenway via Jacoby Street	Strongly support this project.
A07	Merrydale Road	Las Gallinas Avenue	SMART Pathway	SMART Draft Environmental Impact Report (2005): Develop Class I multi-use path from SMART Pathway near Civic Center SMART Station to Promenade at Las Gallinas Avenue.	Important project to support connection between Northgate Mall and SMART train and pathway.
A13	McInnis Parkway Sidepath	Civic Center Drive	Bridgewater Drive	Maintenance: Repave and widen existing McInnis Parkway Sidepath from Civic Center Drive to proposed SMART Pathway extension at Bridgewater Drive [part of SF Bay Trail alignment].	Repaving here would be critical to connecting to the new SMART pathway segment.
A14	Madison Avenue	Civic Center Drive	Roosevelt Avenue/ existing Madison Avenue pathway	Create Class I multi-use path on northside of roadway connecting Civic Center Drive, Field of Dogs dog park, and Venetia Valley School.	This would be a nice project to enhance neighborhood connectivity. We support it.
A16	Civic Center Drive	Peter Behr Drive	North San Pedro Road	Pave Class I multi-use path in northbound direction [part of SF Bay Trail alignment] or continue existing two-way Class IV protected bikeway from Peter Behr Drive to North San Pedro	Strongly support this project.

				Road	
C12	D Street/ C Street	Fourth Street	San Rafael Avenue	Study the feasibility of a Class IV protected bikeway couplets or a Class III+ bicycle boulevard with wayfinding signage on D Street and C Street between Downtown and Gerstle Park	Strongly support. There is very little north-south connectivity in downtown San Rafael. One street, or a pair of streets, needs to be safe for bicycling.
C21	Fifth Avenue	River Oaks Road	H Street	Study parking occupancy rates and potential for bikeway connecting Sun Valley Elementary and downtown.	Strongly support. As it stands, there is simply no safe way to reach Sun Valley ES by bicycle, as there are no parallel routes and riding on the sidewalk is infeasible.
D12	Andersen Drive	Albert Park Path	Mahon Creek Connector	Fairfax to San Rafael Cross Marin Bikeway Feasibility Study: Extend Class I multi-use path along Andersen Drive from Albert Park Path to Mahon Creek Connector. May require the removal of on-street motor vehicle parking on the south side of Andersen Drive	Strongly support this project in order to create a full AAA route along Andersen connecting to the Albert Park Path and the 1st St corridor.
F14, F15, F16	Kerner Boulevard	Bellam Boulevard	San Francisco Bay Trail north terminus (north of Target)	Study feasibility of Class IV and Class I route as alternative to Francisco Blvd E.	Strongly support using Kerner as an alternative to Francisco Blvd E.
New	Anderson Drive	A Street	North-South Greenway	Upgrade existing Class II bike lanes to Class IV bikeway	Strongly support this project

Attachment B:Projects that we would like to see modified

Below are the projects where we feel that the recommended treatment is incorrect or inappropriate given the traffic speeds, traffic volumes, and roadway constraints.

ID	CORRIDOR	FROM	TO	Notes	MCBC Comment
B01	Manuel T. Freitas Parkway	Del Ganado Ave	Montecillo Road	Study and bicycle and pedestrian improvements along Manuel T. Freitas Parkway between Montecillo Road and Del Ganado Road.	There is room for Class IV bikeways here, which are warranted due to the 35 mph posted speed limit.
B06	Manuel T. Freitas Parkway	Del Ganado Road	Los Gamos Drive	Install a Class I multi-use path on the north side of Manuel T. Freitas Parkway between Del Ganado Road and Los Gamos Drive	The eastern limit of this project should be Northgate Drive rather than Los Gamos Drive. The TAM/101 Interchanges project is developing alternatives that provide a Class I path as far as Northgate Drive, but if neither project is changed, there will be a 300' gap in the pathway.
New	Woodland Ave	Bayview Street	City limit	Install Class III+ bicycle boulevard on Woodland Avenue from Bayview Street to the southern City limit	Recommend a bike lane or Class IV where parking does not front residences or business, such as between Auburn St north and south, or where there are so many curb cuts that there is essentially no street parking (e.g. westbound between Auburn St north and Irwin St).

					Recommend significant traffic calming and traffic circles at stop-controlled intersections.
New	Francisco Blvd E	Bellam Boulevard	Grange Avenue	Caltrans District 4 Bay Area Bike Plan Update 2025: "Install Class IV bikeway on Francisco Blvd E parallel to I-580 to provide connectivity through Canal Neighborhood."	The Caltrans Bay Area 2025 update recommended a Class IV separated bikeway, while the website recommends a Class III+ bike route. While the former, depending on the design, would be sufficient, the latter is wholly inappropriate given the speed, volume, and truck mix of traffic on Francisco Blvd E. (we have been told this was a mapping error)
A10	Civic Center Station Pathway/Puerto Suello Hill Pathway	North San Pedro Road	South end of Merrydale Road/ Puerto Suello Hill Pathway	SMART Draft Environmental Impact Report (2005): Extend SMART Pathway from Civic Center SMART Station to existing Puerto Suello Hill Pathway under Highway 101 and along Los Ranchitos Road/ Lincoln Avenue. Plus, extend existing Puerto Suello Hill Path	The alignment shown here parallels that shown in the 2018 bicycle plan. However, the City and SMART arrived at a different preferred alignment (one that follows the railway more closely). That other alignment is currently being designed by SMART.
A22	Lucas Valley Road/Smith Ranch Road	Los Gamos Drive	Silveira Parkway	Create Class II on-street buffered bicycle lanes connecting existing Lucas Valley Road bicycle lanes and McInnis County Park.	Smith Ranch Road has low volumes and does not need two lanes in each direction and has no fronting uses that would require parking. Either drop a lane or drop the parking to provide a Class IV bikeway.

Attachment C:

Projects not recommended that we believe should be included

Las Gallinas Avenue between Northgate Drive and Freitas Parkway

This is a high-stress connection where bicyclists currently have to ride in traffic. To even add Class II bike lanes, you need to remove some parking, and if some parking is going to be removed, then the city should install protected bike lanes here. In fact, the 2018 Bike Plan included a recommendation to convert the existing Class III route to a Class IV protected bike lane. That recommendation, the 3rd highest priority in the Civic Center Connections area, appears to have fallen away. This critical gap in the bike network should not be ignored.

Gallinas Creek Path between Redwood Highway and Yosemite Road

This path is considered “existing” but is in fact highly degraded and barely rideable, with a number of pedestrian tripping or bicycle crash hazards. Grass is currently growing in the middle of the path. Additionally, at the access points, chicanes and boulders are installed that make it very difficult to bring even a modestly sized bike on the trail, much less a cargo bicycle transporting children. This is not a top priority project, but improving the path should be in the bike plan, given that the parallel road, Smith Ranch Road, is a high-stress facility, and this plan only recommends Class II bike lanes there.

Freitas Parkway/101 Interchange

While this would not be a city project, I recommend that the city state a preference for a Class I path through the interchange, as was done with the N San Pedro Road interchange. This project is actually much farther along than N San Pedro Road, with TAM having completed a PID and currently considering which alternatives to advance to environmental. Input from the city would no doubt be welcome.

Nova Albion Way between Northgate Drive and Golden Hinde Boulevard

This is an important route to Terra Linda HS, and is very busy with cars during the start and end of school. Recommend removing parking in one direction to provide bike lanes or adding substantial traffic calming. There are planned improvements on the other end of Nova Albion Way where it passes by Vallecito School, but the current plan would leave a gap between the planned redevelopment of Northgate Mall (where more than a thousand units are planned) and Terra Linda High School.

Freitas Parkway between Montecillo Rd and Mission Pass Path

With a very wide roadway and no fronting residential, there is simply no reason not to recommend at the very least a Class II bike lane here, or potentially a Class IV separated bike lane. The posted speed limit between Montecillo Rd and Lea Dr (where the fatal bicycle crash occurred in June of 2025) is 35 mph, which is inappropriate for a Class III bike route.

Lucas Valley Road between Miller Creek Road and Huckleberry Road

The existing Class II bicycle lanes are inappropriate for the high vehicle speeds on Lucas Valley Road, which is signed for 45 mph. We recommend narrowing vehicle lanes to 11' and converting these to Class IV separated bike lanes, or at least buffering the existing unbuffered Class II bike lanes. This project might entail coordination with the Marin County Department of Public Works.

Andersen Drive between E. Sir Francis Drake Boulevard/US-580 on-ramp and Bellam Boulevard

This segment of road is designated San Francisco Bay Trail, and the stretch between Marin Sanitation Services and the E. Sir Francis Drake Blvd/I-580 on-ramp is considered a Bay Trail gap. The existing and proposed bikeway treatment for this whole segment is merely a minimum-width (5') curbside or door-zone painted bike lane. This is incompatible with the high vehicle speeds and heavy truck traffic that this route sees. We recommend replacing the existing Class II bike lanes with two-bike Class IV on the north side of the road. This would connect to both the planned Class I paths on Bellam Boulevard and the I-580 flyover path, and would cross driveways with less truck than a project on the south side of the road would.

Andersen Drive between Francisco Boulevard W and 400' east of Francisco Boulevard W

The TAM 101/580 Bellam Boulevard project will install a Class I pathway between Bellam Boulevard and 400' east of Francisco Boulevard W (the limits of their project). We urge the City to propose closing the short Class I gap between the western limit of the TAM project and Francisco Boulevard W, where riders can connect to the SMART pathway. This would entail widening the sidewalk into the space currently occupied by the westbound bike lane, creating an identical experience to the Class I path on Andersen Drive immediately west of Francisco Boulevard W.

Francisco Boulevard E between Canal Street and Grand Avenue

This section of road saw the sidewalk widened from 5' to 8' as part of a project to replace the San Rafael Sanitation District main line. Unfortunately, because the decision was made not to narrow automotive lanes or remove the TWLTL, the 8' sidewalk (a width that includes a substantial amount of furniture, including trees, hydrants, street lights, and sign posts) does not meet the standard for a multiuse path, and is considered still a gap in the San Francisco Bay Trail. Though it will undoubtedly be a long-term goal, we recommend the city at least plan to bring this section up to a Class I path.