

From:

To:

Barrett, Teresa; Pocekay, Dennis; Fischer, D"Lynda; Barnacle, Brian; -- City Clerk; Kendall Sawyer

Subject:

For Cross-Town Connector Workshop Monday 10-10-2022

Date:

Monday, October 10, 2022 5:20:57 PM

---Warning: Use caution before clicking any attachments. THIS EMAIL IS FROM OUTSIDE OUR EMAIL SYSTEM.---

Dear Councilmembers, Planning Commissioners, and Petaluma Residents,

As I read the most recent Community Update, I was pleased to see that we are honoring Indigenous Peoples' Day today, acknowledging "the beautiful cultures, traditions, and lives of indigenous people around the world." The announcement goes on to say that "Here in Petaluma, we respectfully acknowledge we reside on the ancestral land of the Southern Pomo and Coast Miwok people...[and] we encourage all members of our community to take the day as an opportunity to ...celebrate the Indigenous people who inhabited this land for generations...."

A really important way to acknowledge the First People who cared for this land would be to care for it ourselves. In that spirit, I urge you to commit to leaving the Petaluma River and its surrounding riparian habitat and flood plains in their natural state and not continue to channelize, bridge, "terrace," or pave over the small untouched part of the river that remains, as would happen with a Rainier cross-town connector.

The River is not just water. [The 2015 Watershed Enhancement Plan](#) explains why we cannot look at the River's surroundings as just uninhabited, "vacant" land. It is, collectively, a living organism.

From the 2015 Petaluma Watershed Enhancement Plan:

Ecological balance, the equilibrium between, and harmonious coexistence of, organisms and their environment is critical to maintain a healthy watershed. A stable balance in the numbers of each species in an ecosystem depends on how much it is affected by human population and development. The balance may be disturbed by several factors such as ... natural hazards or man-made causes. The many diverse species present in the Petaluma River watershed depend on symbiotic relationships to survive. As land is preserved and resources are managed effectively, fish and wildlife will have a chance to thrive in this watershed.

The Watershed Enhancement Plan goes on to say,

"Construction related impacts, such as topography changes (even subtle site grading) and increasing the amount of impervious cover associated with buildings and roads, alters and many times accelerates, natural processes or the rate of erosion and sedimentation in the waterway and refocuses the natural ecological change within a watershed. Urban development impacts ultimately affect all the stakeholders in a watershed and commit our non-renewable resources, such as water, forever. (I added the bolding in some of the quotes.)

How can we say we are honoring the indigenous Southern Pomo and Coast Miwok when we treat the land they called home with such abandon? How can we claim that we recognize that we have a climate change emergency and then treat our living River, the heart of our town, as a **thing**?

Why bankrupt our city with Rainier, which ultimately would only benefit developers and create more traffic when built out, when we can have a much better solution with Caulfield? We can ease traffic, improve connectivity, and protect our wild places if we put an end to Rainier once and for all. It has become a festering sore in our city's political environment. Why pay our city staff to waste any more time on such an impractical and divisive idea?

Remember [Big Yellow Taxi, sung by Joni Mitchell?](#)

They paved paradise and put up a parking lot
With a pink hotel, a boutique, and a swingin' hot spot

Don't it always seem to go
That you don't know what you've got 'til it's gone?
They paved paradise, put up a parking lot

Respectfully,

Beverly Alexander

Protect Wild Petaluma

"Hope is not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that it is worth doing, no matter how it turns out." - Vaclav Havel