



September 13, 2023

Members of the Petaluma City Council:

My name is Greg Sabourin, and I am the Executive Director of the Petaluma Small Craft Center (PSCC), a nonprofit organization working to improve access to the Petaluma River. I am writing on behalf of PSCC to express our support for the Oyster Cove Project being brought forward for review by the UrbanMix Development group. We believe that this project will have long-lasting benefits for Petaluma and represents the kind of development that the community wants to encourage.

We first became aware of the Oyster Cove project several years ago, when Mitch and Barbara Lind invited several of us to meet the principals, Keith McCoy and Scott Ward. We were given their early project materials, and it was clear early on, that this project checked many of the “boxes” in regard to the kind of downtown infill development our City was looking for. It seems to us, that from the beginning, the developers have really listened to what the community and its leaders want, and have offered us the best that they can—and continue to work to do so.

Over the years, other important infill projects have sadly, come and gone. The complicated Hines project, the Haystack project, and the Scanel project still struggles along. We recommend that the City approve the Oyster Cove project, one of the better infill projects that we’ve seen come to our town in years. If we lose this opportunity, we can’t assume that anything of its quality will take its place.

As Dave Alden of Urban Chat said at the Oyster Cove Planning Commission meeting, “the devil’s in the details.” While there are many details to work out, let’s do so in a timely and expedient manner. But let’s not lose the opportunity for the kind of green, climate conscious development we all want by drawing out the process and putting a good project in jeopardy.

Meanwhile, our organization will continue to work with the developers on the river access aspects of their project including the adaptive reuse of the Oyster Shed building and its adjacent wharf. In the last years, the City of Petaluma has done a better job of requiring new river-adjacent projects to build quality bike and pedestrian pathways along the top of bank, improving access to the public. However, to our way of thinking, river access doesn’t stop at the top of the river bank, but extends down to the river’s edge to allow our citizens access to the river itself—to boat, yes, but also to sit on a dock and dangle one’s feet in the water and watch the ebb and flow of river life. The vision of the Petaluma Water Ways is one we believe in strongly: to build a river trail as lively and accessible to the public as our bike and pedestrian pathways.

To summarize, the Petaluma River is a wonderful natural resource in the heart of this community and the Oyster Cove project will be a wonderful place for people to live, work and play, next to its shores. Please support the Oyster Cove project now and in the future.

Respectfully,

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Building Community Through Boating

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