

From: [REDACTED]
To: -- City Clerk; [Barrett, Teresa](#); [Barnacle, Brian](#); [Fischer, D"Lynda](#); [Healy, Mike](#); [King, Dave](#); [Pocekay, Dennis](#); [McDonnell, Kevin](#)
Subject: Expanded concept of Greenway along Petaluma River without Rainier Connector
Date: Monday, October 10, 2022 1:57:30 PM

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Mayor Teresa Barrett, Members of the City Council;

For the past few months we have been working with the Friends of the Petaluma River (FOPR) on a proposal to implement a greenway project along the Corona Reach of the Petaluma River. Maxene is a board member of FOPR. We both worked for many years at the Coastal Conservancy and have worked on this type of project.

On the face of it, there is nothing controversial about implementing the greenway. It has been a part of the general plan for decades. It would be established as the area developed around it. The current general plan would allow for hundreds of housing units and some commercial development. All of this is predicated on the development of a crosstown connector extending Rainier Avenue.

But the greenway proposal being developed by FOPR, which we support, is a much different type of project than what is now contemplated in the general plan. It would be much more extensive by including many properties now planned for development. These areas would instead be restored for habitat, and would mitigate flooding, sequester atmospheric carbon, and provide a carbon neutral north/south transportation link between downtown Petaluma and the commercial areas to the north.

This "Central Park" concept would necessitate relocating or redesigning development now contemplated in the general plan. The full plan would also necessitate abandoning the proposed Rainier crosstown connector. The new underpass under Highway 101, would become the non-vehicular gateway from the Eastside to the new park and its trails.

The area of this extended greenway concept was recently studied by the San Francisco Estuary Institute and the Southern Sonoma RCD. Clearly it contains very rare habitat types that used to dominate the Petaluma River system. FOPR has discussed this project with various state and local agencies that provide funds to acquire and restore property. There is great enthusiasm from these agencies to help secure these properties as well as fuller coffers for such projects than there has been in many years.

We urge the council to consider changing the general plan in the current update to expand the greenway concept and to consider alternative locations for development. With funds to acquire the properties, along with viable alternative locations, current owners may be willing to work with FOPR and the city on mutually beneficial projects. The result will be a new central greenway that is also a nature preserve and climate protector. Our grandkids will be thankful.

Sincerely,

Maxene Spellman and Neal Fishman

