

From: stephanie@friendsofthepetalumariver.org
To: -- City Clerk
Subject: Public Comment - Crosstown Connector Workshop
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Attachments: [FOPR - New Logo.png](#)
[Crosstown Connectors Workshop - FOPR Comment 10.10.22.docx](#)

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Hello -

Please find a public comment for tonight's Council Workshop on Crosstown Connectors.

Thank you for sharing this with Council Members and adding it to public comment.

Best,

Stephanie

Stephanie Bastianon, Executive Director (she/her)

Friends of the Petaluma River

625 2nd Street, Suite 107

Petaluma, CA 94952

(707) 763-7756

FriendsOfThePetalumaRiver.org



Good Evening City Council Members, Madame Mayor and Community Members,

My name is Stephanie Bastianon and I am the Executive Director of Friends of the Petaluma River. I am here tonight on behalf of our organization to share why we think a crosstown connector at Rainier is not the best use of the land, nor the right solution to traffic congestion. We would like to share our vision of what this land could be for our community.

The approximately 1.6-mile upper reach of the Petaluma River from Lynch Creek Trail to Corona Road is the largest remaining unprotected open space in Petaluma. This open space is connected to public recreation and commercial centers, is important to the City's resilience to climate change, and is an area of outstanding beauty and biological richness.

This land is the last remnant of the once lush wetlands and oak woodland savannah – a vast flood plain that should not be paved over. More roads, houses and pavement in this area will jeopardize the flood mitigation project completed by the Army Corps of engineers decades ago and put thousands of people down stream at greater risk of flooding.

Instead of paving over our wetlands for a questionable decrease in traffic time, Friends proposes that we protect this land and create a Petaluma River Greenway. The Greenway would be a 160-acre nature park amidst Petaluma's urban core, making Petaluma even more of a destination city for outdoor activities accessible to all.

The City's Petaluma River Access and Enhancement Plan, adopted in 1996, calls for such a 'River Greenway.' In order for this riparian habitat to truly be protected, this Greenway cannot merely run along the side of the River but must connect with and preserve open space for wildlife and native plants and trees to thrive.

When completed, the Petaluma River Greenway will benefit the people and wildlife of Petaluma in many ways – preserving a richly bio-diverse habitat, mitigating flooding due to heavy rain events and rising seas, providing recreation and improving quality of life.

Preserving flood zones helps provide natural buffers for people and protect property. 100% of the parcels in the proposed Petaluma River Greenway area are within flood zones.

The Rainier Crosstown Connector is the development of yesterday. It won't solve our traffic problems but it will destroy a space we should be protecting. By forming a Climate Action Commission, banning new gas stations, becoming a 'Cool' city, the people of Petaluma have chosen smart, climate-resilient growth. A crosstown connector at Rainier isn't smart or climate resilient. A Greenway project, that preserves the ancient oak woodlands and wetlands is the smart decision for Petaluma's future.