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## San Rafael OKs design plans for miles of biking, walking lanes

Jennifer Upshaw  
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Design plans for federally funded alternative transportation projects in San Rafael were unanimously approved Tuesday by the City Council.

The Non-Motorized Transportation Pilot Project aims to get more people out of their cars by giving them better access to sidewalks, bike paths and the city's main transportation hub.

"This will provide people opportunity not to use cars," San Rafael Mayor Al Boro said. "We think it will be very helpful and certainly reduce the greenhouse gas issue. Transportation is one of the biggest contributors."

The five projects in San Rafael are part of a \$25 million federal grant that will create miles of new bicycle and walking lanes in Marin by the end of the year.

"We're really excited that we're now going to get to finish the final design," San Rafael City Manager Ken Nordhoff said. "We'll be able to improve the accessibility of these kinds of facilities and safety around town. It's just great to get this going and achieve these improvements. Absent the federal grant, we wouldn't be able to do these things."

Planners are racing to meet a December deadline. The effort is behind schedule because of a delay in approval from the California Department of Transportation. Construction must be completed by the end of the year to comply with the grant requirements.

Marin is one of four communities nationwide to receive a \$25 million grant.

In San Rafael, \$2.81 million will be spent on five bicycle routes.

In north San Rafael, a path

is planned that will connect Terra Linda to the Marin Civic Center along Manuel T. Freitas Parkway, Las Gallinas Avenue, Northgate Drive and Merrydale Road.

Farther south, plans are in place to add access from Puerto Suello Hill to the transit center on a route that continues south, linking the Mahon Creek pathway to Andersen Drive.

Another stretch along Francisco Boulevard East from Bellam Boulevard to Grand Avenue also is planned.

Concerns have been raised about placing a portion of the route along busy Hetherton Street, which parallels Highway 101 in downtown San Rafael. Plans are in place to add a dedicated signal that bicyclists could activate on Hetherton, which would force motorists turning right to stop at a red light. The Hetherton route at one point cuts into less-busy Tamalpais Avenue.

"I would say we are really actually supportive of the solution in particular on Hetherton," said Kim Baenisch, Marin County Bicycle Coalition executive director. "We

were very concerned about safety for cyclists sent down Hetherton then being funneled down a little stretch of Tamalpais. We do now feel the city is implementing as many safety features as possible.

"We're very happy they worked out some resolutions to our concerns," she said.

Read more San Rafael stories at the IJ's [San Rafael](#) section.

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