

## ABOUT TOWN: SAN RAFAEL

## Whistlestop scale model created

Sally Lewis turned down a request to create a scale model of the proposed Whistlestop building planned for San Rafael. She is no stranger to creating scale models of buildings. She even spent a portion of her art career creating amazing scale models of people. These life-size sculptures were snatched up by celebrities like Daniel Steele, and commissioned by well-known figures such as philanthropist Charles Schwab.

**Kate Fitzsimmons**

Lewis enjoys taking on a challenge and admitted, "I said no to Whistlestop initially. A week later, I turned 90 and I was feeling a bit guilty for refusing. Once I saw the (architectural) plans, I thought it might help them raise money and inspire others, to know that a senior like me could create a model of this wonderful design that includes new housing for seniors and a new home for Whistlestop."

What she didn't know at the time, was the incredible detail work involved in creating a replica up to her own design standards. Lewis began making scale models as a communications tool. "I was married to a man who was a gifted mathematician, but he had trouble with spatial concepts. I got interested in scale models when we wanted to build our first house, and he didn't grasp the design ideas I had. So, I built a scale model to show him. I'd repeat it any time I wanted to remodel. I built two different home scale models for one of my sons, as well."

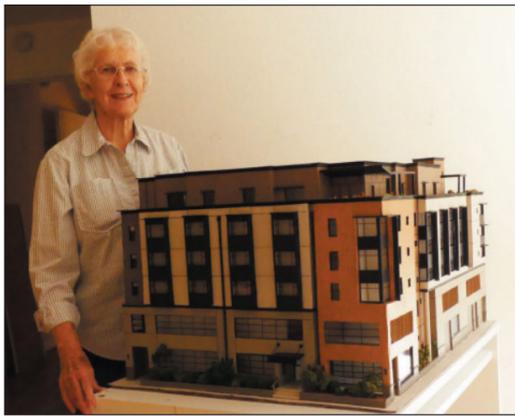
In March, Lewis received

the architectural plans for the six-story, 67-unit senior affordable housing and activities building for Whistlestop. BioMarin has donated about 15,000 square feet of the northwest corner of a 3-acre-site at 999 Third St., valued at \$1.2 million for the project. The location is the former Pacific Gas and Electric Company property.

Lewis wanted to complete the scale model by the end of June. The pressure mounted in mid-June, knowing that the San Rafael's Design Review Board voted unanimously to support BioMarin's proposed project. "I wasn't sure if I could stay with my timeline. This design has a lot of unusual detailing. I had to invent everything that I was using."

The building has over 220 windows of differing dimensions. Lewis explained, "I was working at one-quarter scale, meaning one-quarter inch equaled 1 foot. I ended up having to use corrugated board from Michael's to find material thin enough. When I painted one side of the board to match the color of the building material, it warped. At first, I wasn't sure what to do, then I painted the other side of the board to even it out. It worked, but the paint caused some of the paper on the board to blister, so I had to iron it. Cutting the plastic to fit all those windows was a challenge, but Tapp Plastics sold me just the right thickness to cut with a scissors. Then I had to experiment to find the right glue to bond the plastic to the board."

Working from drawings and plans supplied by Rick Williams, with the architectural firm Van Meter Williams Pollack, LLP, Lewis brought her project in under the deadline.



PROVIDED BY SALLY LEWIS

Sally Lewis with her scale model of the proposed Whistlestop building planned for San Rafael.

Jennifer Golbus, marketing strategist at Whistlestop said, "We were just amazed when we saw it. Such attention to detail, and it is so much larger than we first imagined. Sally put so much work into the model. Right now, it is with the architect who is just adding some trees — Sally did all the rest. Once we get it back, it will have a prominent place in our active aging center. Everyone is invited to come and see it."

#### Senior Living site

Speaking of senior living, bulldozers are busily breaking ground at the Oakmont Senior Living site, preparing for the planned three-story, 83,000-square-foot care center at 3773 Redwood Highway, in San Rafael. The site is expected to be a mix of different types of housing to provide various levels of care.

#### Store repairs

The fences are down, and the lights are finally on, inside the HomeGoods Store at Northgate Mall. Nextdoor.com has been abuzz with

rumors about the reopening. After months of very little evidence of repairs, at least from a view on the outside, but progress has been made and the collapsed roof, that closed the store since October of 2018 appears done. Renovations on the interior are still underway.

Courtne Hawkey, the assistant manager of the Northgate Union Bank said, "I am looking forward to the store reopening." She added with a smile, "I am ready to spend money."

When pressed to give an exact opening date, Bethany Crocetti, corporate communications manager for TJ-Maxx, and spokesperson for HomeGood, said, "We are very excited about this store reopening, but at this time, I can only say that we currently expect it to be sometime this fall."

*Kate Fitzsimmons, of San Rafael, is the IJ's About Town correspondent for San Rafael. Reach the author at kf@fitzsimmons.com or follow Kate on Twitter: @katefitzsimmons.*

## Merger

FROM PAGE 1

That process began on Wednesday with the first meeting of the Joint ABAG MTC Governance Committee. The committee is made up of six ABAG board members and six MTC board members.

The board members were selected by the organizations' respective chairs. Rodoni is the only Marin representative on the committee. Marin Supervisor Damon Connolly, who was appointed to the MTC board in January 2017, was not selected to serve on the committee.

"I think the main issue is should we have a combined board," Rodoni said at Wednesday's meeting. "If we don't, then how do we work with two boards and make them function well so we

don't confuse staff?"

Rodoni noted that the MTC and ABAG boards often disagree on important issues, such as which legislation to endorse.

In an email following the meeting, Rodoni wrote, "Common sense tells me that having two boards for one staff is not efficient, productive, or practical; however, addressing how you fairly represent all stakeholders who are currently represented by ABAG and MTC is challenging."

Rodoni was the only official at the meeting who indicated what kind of governance structure he or she would prefer. Asked following the meeting whether he thinks the boards should be merged, Connolly responded with an email stating, "I was supportive of the merger of staff of ABAG and MTC as a means of creating efficiencies. Governance is the larger issue and needs to be

approached deliberately."

The workings of ABAG and MTC have become increasingly controversial ever since the 2013 adoption of Plan Bay Area, a product of state legislation passed in 2008. SB 375 required MTC and ABAG to adopt a plan that integrates transportation, land use and housing to meet greenhouse gas reduction targets set by the California Air Resources Board.

The plan sought to channel a majority of the Bay Area's housing and job growth into designated "priority development areas," sites located along existing traffic corridors, near mass transit, jobs, shopping and other services.

Local jurisdictions that approved priority development areas and complied with a state law to pave the way for their fair share of new housing through appropriate zoning were to be rewarded with more transportation grant money.

One of ABAG's chief tasks is to determine the projected housing need for counties and municipalities every eight years and assign each local government a share in meeting that need. Jurisdictions are required to adjust their zoning laws to help make the creation of this housing possible. MTC oversees distribution of state and federal transportation funds.

Many Marin jurisdictions, however, recoiled from approving priority development areas. Marin withdrew a priority development area (PDA) at the Civic Center in San Rafael and another PDA that included six neighborhoods along Highway 101.

ABAG's general assembly consists of one representative from each of its 100 member cities and nine member counties. The general assembly meets at least once a year to adopt ABAG's annual budget and work program, but its 38-member executive board, which in-

cludes Rodoni and Novato Councilwoman Pat Eklund as members, makes most of the decisions.

MTC has 21 commissioners, 17 of whom are local elected officials. Alameda and Santa Clara counties and San Francisco each have three representatives on MTC's board. Contra Costa and San Mateo counties each have two representatives. Marin, Napa, Solano and Sonoma counties each appoint one MTC commissioner.

"What has been overlooked in this discussion is the option to have a democratically-elected regional board," said Richard Marcantonio, an attorney with Public Advocates, a non-profit law firm and advocacy organization based in San Francisco.

"Currently, as you know, while many MTC and ABAG board members are locally elected officials, they are appointed to their regional board seats rather than popularly elected," Marcantonio said. "This results not only in a lack of democratic control, but also an unfair underrepresentation of the urban areas with the greatest population overall, and the greatest concentration of residents of color."

"If people don't feel like they have representation that is accountable to them," he said, "if they don't feel like they have a voice in the process, how are you ever going to get past all of the turf wars?"

Susan Kirsch of Mill Valley, founder of slow-growth group Livable California, said discussion of consolidation of the two boards is premature before a clearer picture emerges of what the combined agencies' mandate is going to be.

"Maybe if they had a clearer answer to what problem are they trying to solve," Kirsch said, "it would be easier to know if they should have one single board."

## Routes

FROM PAGE 1

"For me personally, it means a bus that picks me up 20 minutes earlier than before and my ride will be longer," said Marinwood bus rider Jenny Coyle, "but I appreciate that I don't have to get in my car, I don't have to produce emissions and I have alternatives that will work for me."

Lucas Valley resident Aaron Munter has been riding the bus to work in San Francisco's financial district for the past seven years.

Under the Golden Gate Bridge district's original proposal, he would have had to travel 3 miles to reach the closest bus pad. He doesn't own a car, but said he began shopping for one once he heard the district might drop Route 44. "I think the last thing in the world the Bay Area needs is more cars on the road," he said.

Like for Coyle, Munter said he will have to get up about 20 minutes earlier to catch the new Route 38A bus and will be riding the bus for longer. But it beats the alternative.

"I'm really glad some middle ground was able to be found," Munter said. "It helps Golden Gate Transit save some money but also doesn't leave an entire community of people in the lurch."

Speaking before the bridge district board on Friday, Marin County Supervisor Damon Connolly expressed appreciation that the board took the riders' concerns into account.

A fourth northbound Route 58 trip, which runs between Novato and San Francisco, will be added to attempt to make up for the loss of Route 44 service in San Rafael.

Other routes like the Route 27 into the Sleepy Hollow neighborhood weren't as fortunate. Averaging just three riders per trip, the spur into Sleepy Hollow was ultimately cut by the board on Friday despite pleas from 17 people.

Route 27 will now end at the San Anselmo Hub on Sir Francis Drake Boulevard.

"If all 17 people were rid-

**All of the changes are expected to cost the district \$333,000.**

ing that bus, we wouldn't be having this conversation," Ron Downing, bridge district planning director, told the board at its Thursday transportation committee meeting.

District staffers recommended that Marin Transit be contacted to discuss potential service to Sleepy Hollow.

Among the other changes, the board added an afternoon trip for Route 38, expanding the service to five trips in each direction. Three of these trips will serve Del Ganado Road in Terra Linda, which was proposed to be cut before. The two remaining trips will be the Route 38A trips into Lucas Valley.

In another reversal, Route 54 service to Marinwood, Lucas Valley, Terra Linda and North San Pedro Road bus pads will also be maintained, but northbound service will be reduced from three to two trips in the afternoon.

Route 54 and 54C service in the San Marin area of Novato will be cut as originally proposed due to redundancy with Route 56. At the same time, Route 56 service will be converted to an express route, Route 56X.

For Sir Francis Drake Boulevard, the board voted Friday to add one additional evening Route 24 trip in response to riders' calls for more frequent service. The express Route 24X was also changed to provide nonstop service between the College of Marin and Golden Gate Bridge Toll Plaza.

All of the changes are expected to cost the district \$333,000. The costs will be covered, however, by reshuffling of resources from discontinued routes and the planned discontinuation of Route 31 after the SMART Larkspur extension opens later this year.

A full list of the route changes, including schedule times and maps, can be found on the district website at bit.ly/2yfxhPu.

## \$1.5M

FROM PAGE 3

"Day work is less expensive for the contractor, but the work may be more efficient at night," Schneider said.

"We will work with the contractor to balance inconvenience to drivers with day work with noise impacts to nearby residents with night work."

The private donor could fund the donation through personal funds or through an agreed upon charitable organization,

according to the donor's terms approved Tuesday.

The donor will pay the donation in five \$300,000 installments as the project proceeds. Town Manager Dave Donery said town officials have expressed a deep gratitude to the private donor.

"This project is very important as it will beautify one of the primary gateways into our town," he said.

"This donation reflects wonderful community-minded generosity by the donor, and it's difficult to overstate how grateful we are for this gift."

## Marin Independent Journal

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## Marin public meetings

### Monday

**San Rafael:** San Rafael City Schools community forum on trustee areas mapping, 6:30 p.m. Davidson Middle School library, 280 Woodland Ave. Website: srcs.org

### Tuesday

**San Rafael:** PG&E wildfire safety open house, 6 p.m., Embassy Suites by Hilton, 101 McInnis Parkway. Website: pge.com/wildfiresafety. PG&E will discuss topics including its power shutoff program, infrastructure inspections and vegetation management around power lines. Representatives will be available for one-on-one conversations.