

**SEPTEMBER 2, 2018 TO DECEMBER 6, 2018:**  
**PUBLIC COMMENTS SUBMITTED TO CITY STAFF**



**From:** Keith Weber <keithmax2@gmail.com>

**Sent:** Sunday, September 2, 2018 6:03 PM

**To:** Rick Bonilla <RBonilla@cityofsanmateo.org>; Maureen Freschet <mfreschet@cityofsanmateo.org>; Joe Goethals <jgoethals@cityofsanmateo.org>; Diane Papan <dpapan@cityofsanmateo.org>; Eric Rodriguez <erodriguez@cityofsanmateo.org>; Julia Klein <jklein@cityofsanmateo.org>

**Cc:** Sandra Council <scouncil@cityofsanmateo.org>; George White <gwhite@cityofsanmateo.org>; Patrice Olds <polds@cityofsanmateo.org>

**Subject:** Support for Affordable Rental Housing Policies 9/4/18

Dear City Council Members,

I am writing in **support of the Affordable Rental Housing Policies** on the 9/4/18 Council study session. There is no need to repeat the overwhelming evidence documenting stagnant wages and skyrocketing rents that have resulted in displacement of many Bay Area renters and put the squeeze on many more. It is becoming increasingly difficult for hardworking families to afford to live here. Therefore I encourage you to move forward towards implementing the following policies:

**Increase Inclusionary Requirements.** As you are well aware, San Mateo's inclusionary housing program, first established as Measure H in 1991, enables the City Council to increase the requirement percentage at any time to any level.

**Section 8 Landlord Incentives.** The marketplace is rife with disincentives for landlords to participate in the Section 8 program. Adding a few incentives to encourage landlord participation will help reduce the overly long waiting list for Section 8 apartments.

**Relocation Assistance.** The current policy of providing rental assistance upon demolition is good policy, but is no longer sufficient in itself. Companion relocation policies, such as remodel/renovation, red tag, and economic relocation have now become necessary.

**Rental Database.** Last, but not least, it is important to collect data to inform decision makers of the size and scope of the problems locally, so that policies can be accurately crafted to address them. Without accurate data, crucial problems go unrecognized and unsolved.

Needless to say, these policies must be crafted carefully in order to avoid unintended consequences to small "mom & pop" landlords. The best way to avoid these unintended consequences is with accurate and adequate rental data.

Thank you,  
Keith Weber  
San Mateo

**From:** Keith Weber <keithmax2@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 9, 2018 5:33 PM  
**To:** Julia Klein <jklein@cityofsanmateo.org>  
**Subject:** Re: General Plan Update - Key Issues/Priorities/Existing Conditions

Julia,

There was an oversight in compiling the meeting materials for Subcommittee meeting #2. Although your email to me is included in the meeting materials under Public Comments, my attached letter to which it references is not. All other correspondence from the public was included along with your responses, but not my letter to the committee dated October 8, 2018, and which I requested be in the meeting materials for the October 16 Subcommittee meeting #2. Please include my letter as you have indicated you would.

Thank you,  
Keith Weber

On Mon, Oct 8, 2018 at 9:50 AM Julia Klein <[jklein@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:jklein@cityofsanmateo.org)> wrote:  
Hi Keith,

Thank you for your letter. It will be forwarded to the General Plan Subcommittee and will be included in the General Plan project file as part of the public record.

Sincerely,

Julia Klein  
Principal Planner  
City of San Mateo  
(650) 522-7216

 Please consider the environment before printing this email.

**From:** Keith Weber <[keithmax2@gmail.com](mailto:keithmax2@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Monday, October 8, 2018 9:14 AM  
**To:** Julia Klein <[jklein@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:jklein@cityofsanmateo.org)>  
**Cc:** Charlie Knox <[cknox@placeworks.com](mailto:cknox@placeworks.com)>; City Mgr <[citymgr@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:citymgr@cityofsanmateo.org)>; George White <[gwhite@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:gwhite@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Drew Corbett <[dcorbett@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:dcorbett@cityofsanmateo.org)>  
**Subject:** General Plan Update - Key Issues/Priorities/Existing Conditions

Julia,

Please distribute the attached letter to the General Plan Subcommittee and include a hard copy in the meeting materials for the October 16 subcommittee meeting.

Thank you,  
Keith Weber

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GENERAL PLAN SUBCOMMITTEE

Rick Bonilla, Mayor

Eric Rodriguez, Council Member

Amourence Lee

Adam Lorraine, Vice Chair

Ellen Mallory-Ulrich, Chair

Ramiro Maldonado

Clifford S Robbins

**Subject:** General Plan Update - Key Issues/Priorities/Existing Conditions

General Plan Subcommittee Members:

San Mateo has a wealth of historic resources that can be found in every corner of the city, from homes to storefronts, parks to public works, individual buildings and intact districts. They reflect important themes in the city's growth and development, including architecture, city planning, social history, ethnic heritage, and commerce. Collectively, they tell the story and define the character of our community, adding to the quality of life for all. These oft neglected community assets are recognized by our current General Plan as providing "economic, cultural and aesthetic benefit to the City of San Mateo," yet many remain unidentified and most are unprotected.

Listed below are several suggestions for General Plan priorities to reinforce city policies that support recognition and protection of our irreplaceable historic buildings and neighborhoods. The City Council, at their January, 2018 priority setting meeting, determined that these issues should be included in the general plan update process.

- **Review, update and complete the City of San Mateo Historic Building Survey**

In order to make informed planning decisions that support City policy goals, policy makers need baseline information on potential historic resources. Before buildings are torn down or altered, it is useful to ask if they have some significance to the community. Without critical information about our historic resources, bad decisions will inevitably be made.

Adopted by the city council almost thirty years ago, the 1989 Historic Building Survey was a significant achievement, but also limited and incomplete. It did not include many neighborhoods with a large number of older buildings that relate historically and have a high degree of architectural consistency.

Completing the historic resources survey at this time would accomplish a strategic direction identified by the Council in 2016 to "support efforts to improve residential neighborhoods and preserve and enhance neighborhood character." Leading cities from Palo Alto to Pasadena, San

Francisco to Santa Barbara have undertaken extensive historic resource surveys. Even Los Angeles recently completed a citywide survey, documenting 880,000 properties<sup>1</sup>.

As development pressure increases, policy makers and the community at large deserve clear data about which structures have ‘historic’ value and if they deserve to be preserved. In the end, completing the survey will lead to better land use decisions and a more livable community. There are a number of highly qualified preservation consulting firms in the Bay Area capable of completing historic resources surveys<sup>2</sup>.

- **Strengthen protection of the City’s Historic Resources and Downtown Historic District**

San Mateo’s historic resources, both individually and collectively, are perhaps the city’s most under valued asset. The zoning code and demolition ordinance offer some protection to individually eligible buildings and contributors to the historic district, but they are silent on potentially eligible buildings that have not yet been identified as historic. Moreover, there is no deterrent to “demolition by neglect,” a situation in which a property owner intentionally allows a historic property to suffer severe deterioration, potentially beyond the point of repair.

Other jurisdictions in California have established review and approval procedures for demolition permits for older structures that are potentially significant historical resources. The City of Sacramento, for example, has a mandatory investigation and review process for the demolition of structures 50 years or older that may be historically significant for purposes of CEQA but are not otherwise yet recognized as historically significant. And before issuing a residential demolition permit, San Francisco and San Jose apparently require complete CEQA review.

Even cities with reasonably strong protections are finding that in the Bay Area’s turbocharged housing market there is ample financial incentive to circumvent the law. Indeed, a January 7, 2018 San Francisco Chronicle report “**Homes in S.F., some historic, razed illegally**”<sup>3</sup> reveals that developers and flippers are finding it more profitable to work around the law than to comply with it.

Adding sufficiently strong protections and stringent financial penalty provisions in the general plan, downtown plan, and zoning code will help deter unnecessary demolitions, retain architectural interest and serve to enhance the vitality of our downtown environment and residential neighborhoods.

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<sup>1</sup> Los Angeles (<https://preservation.lacity.org/survey>);  
San Francisco (<http://sf-planning.org/historic-resources-survey-program>);  
Pasadena (<https://ww5.cityofpasadena.net/planning/planning-division/design-and-historic-preservation/historic-preservation/>)

<sup>2</sup>VerPlanck Historic Preservation Consulting (<http://www.verplanckconsulting.com/>)  
Page & Turnbull (<http://www.page-turnbull.com/>)  
Architecture + History (<http://architecture-history.com/>)

<sup>3</sup>See San Francisco Chronicle archives: <http://digital.olivesoftware.com/Olive/ODN/SanFranciscoChronicle/Default.aspx>

- **Update and strengthen Downtown Retail Core & Downtown Historic District Design Guidelines**

The current guidelines have worked well and I support updating and strengthening them to help ensure compatible new designs that reference and respect their historic context. Developers of new infill projects or property owners renovating existing buildings in the downtown deserve the best up-to-date professional guidance available in order to produce top quality projects.

Revision of the existing design guidelines should be done by an architectural firm that specializes in the revitalization of historic buildings. Several Bay Area firms experienced in preparing historic district design guidelines are identified above. The general plan and the downtown design guidelines should reflect the fact that the protection and enhancement of our historic downtown buildings are community priorities.

All three of these suggested priorities - resource survey, resource protection, and historic district design guidelines - are essential components of both the general plan and downtown plan. As we articulate a community vision for our long term future and grapple with jobs, housing and transportation issues, we must not lose sight of the contributions of those who came before us and what they have left behind for our use, benefit and enjoyment.

I thank you in advance for including these priorities.

Sincerely,  
Keith Weber  
San Mateo, CA

CC:  
Charlie Knox, PlaceWorks  
Larry Patterson, City Manager  
Drew Corbett, Finance Director  
George White, Community Development Director

ATTACHMENT: *Downtown Assets and Opportunities*, Guest Perspective, San Mateo Daily Journal 1/8/18.

## Downtown Assets and Opportunities

“Great downtown!” exclaimed the post-it note at the pop-up workshop. Just one of many comments offered during the multi-year San Mateo downtown engagement process. But what makes a great downtown? What are the ingredients? The engagement process attempted to answer these questions and more. A variety of factors contribute to a great downtown, but one that I would venture plays an outsize role is the built environment and historic fabric.



Why, I wondered, was the historic district in downtown barely acknowledged during the engagement process? Why was this remarkable asset never a focused topic of discussion during the years of workshops, forums and pop-ups? Missing an obvious opportunity to celebrate the most notable aspect of downtown, the engagement process steered discussion toward intensifying new development, parking, bike lanes and pocket parks. All worthwhile, but they fall short without first affirming that the historic core is the urban and architectural context that gives downtown its authenticity. Let's take a moment to pause and reflect on just how important the downtown historic district and the historic buildings within it are to the future of the City.

Decades of San Mateo planning documents have reinforced the community's strong interest in respecting its existing historic and architectural character. The General Plan itself “confirms the City's commitment that the protection, enhancement, perpetuation, and use of historic structures are of economic, cultural, and aesthetic benefit to the City of San Mateo.” If so, why then was the historic character of downtown an after thought and not the starting point for planning outreach? Take a walk downtown and you will notice signs of neglect: dirty sidewalks, peeling paint and missing tiles. One is left to wonder if our preoccupation with an imaginary tomorrow has not betrayed the very character we claim to appreciate.

As development pressure in the downtown continues to mount we must not lose sight of the valuable contribution our historic buildings make to our downtown. It is worth keeping in mind that its collection of historic buildings is downtown's single most important characteristic, and a regional drawing card. It's an asset, that above all others, enables us to understand how downtown's authenticity can provide direction and inspiration for future development.

“There may have been a time when preservation was about saving an old building here or there,” Richard Moe, former president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation has said, “but those days are gone. Preservation is in the business of saving communities and the values they embody.”

During the first two months of 2018 the City Council will outline it's vision and priorities for the next two years. Finalization of the Downtown Plan and revisions to the General Plan will soon follow. The Council has an opportunity to reconfirm priorities that celebrate and strengthen this irreplaceable asset for the benefit of current and future generations, business and community alike. We should expect nothing less.

To show your support for historic downtown San Mateo, call, email or write the City Council: by phone (650-522-7049) or visit their website (<https://www.cityofsanmateo.org/55/City-Council>) for email information.

\* \* \*

*Keith Weber is a community activist and former Trustee of the California Preservation Foundation. He has been active in downtown planning, historic preservation and land use issues for over 30 years.*



**From:** Julia Klein  
**Sent:** Monday, October 15, 2018 10:23 AM  
**To:** 'Michael Nash'  
**Cc:** Patrice Olds <polds@cityofsanmateo.org>  
**Subject:** RE: Comments on General Plan Update - Sub-Committee Meeting 2

Hi Mike,

Thanks for your email and the quick phone call. I understand you would like your personal email and phone number removed from the letter before it is forwarded to the Subcommittee and included in the General Plan project file. To keep it simple, I've removed the last sentence of your letter with your personal information, and added your name to bottom so that the letter is attributed to an author.

Let me know whether or not you have any other changes.

Thanks,

Julia Klein  
Principal Planner  
City of San Mateo  
(650) 522-7216  
P Please consider the environment before printing this email.

**From:** Michael Nash  
**Sent:** Monday, October 15, 2018 9:59 AM  
**To:** Julia Klein <[jklein@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:jklein@cityofsanmateo.org)>  
**Cc:** Patrice Olds <[polds@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:polds@cityofsanmateo.org)>  
**Subject:** Comments on General Plan Update - Sub-Committee Meeting 2

Julia:  
I look forward to seeing you on Tuesday evening. Please find comments on traffic and congestion.

Regards,

Michael Nash

Ms. Julia Klein  
 Principal Planner  
 City of San Mateo  
 Community Development Department – Planning Division  
 330 W. 20th Avenue  
 San Mateo California 94403  
 USA

Re: San Mateo General Plan Update—Comments on the planned analysis of Traffic Mitigation and Transportation

Dear Julia:

The following comments are provided after a review of the materials sent in preparation for the October 16<sup>th</sup> General Plan Update Subcommittee and the Scope of Work Document provided by PlaceWorks, Inc. This review focused on the issues of traffic congestion. Subsequent letters will address other topics. This letter was written by a small group of Baywood residents. Our intent is to provide constructive commentary based on the opinions of residents in the Baywood and other neighborhoods.

#### Questions regarding PlaceWorks Inc.'s Scope of Services for the General Plan:

- a. Please confirm that the locations of the “62 San Mateo monitored intersections” whose LOS are to be reported are the intersections and the “major streets” referenced in Figures 3 and 4 in the Appendix of the Circulation Public Review Document.
- b. Will the evaluation of the effectiveness of potential circulation scenarios and improvements include analyses of the expected (1) changes in peak hour LOS at the 62 monitored intersections, (2) changes in travel time along major corridors, as well as (3) VMT per capita, Citywide VMT, and Citywide trips generated?
- c. Is 2040 the proposed “Horizon Year” to be used when preparing the General Plan? For purposes of comparing circulation alternatives and transportation alternatives, will analysis be prepared for LOS, travel times, and VMT occurring during interim year(s)?
- d. When the San Mateo traffic model was updated, what were the key input assumptions used regarding travel behavior, changes in automobiles per household, and resident and employee mode choice? What assumptions were made regarding “the emergence of clean-fuel, connected autonomous vehicles” and the percentage of these vehicles in the City’s traffic stream? Page 23 Section 6 mentions the availability of autonomous vehicles, suggesting they will be available soon or now. Regional planning efforts have suggested these cars will either reduce or increase the number of vehicles on the road, and policy assumptions are being tested against each scenario. Understanding what the General Plan Update expects will help understand the risks to plan.
- e. Will the EIR’s evaluation of Transportation Noise model analyze the changes in railway noise and operations resulting from the CalTrain electrification or simply “discuss” these affects?
- f. Is the Sunset of Measure P considered to be a “given” in the preparation of the General Plan? If so, will the determination of a new policy with its commensurate financial feasibility, fiscal sustainability and traffic impact be a part of the new General Plan

## General comments regarding Traffic Circulation and Congestion Mitigation

- a. Use changes in travel time to compare alternative congestion mitigation measures. As stated in the General Plan Briefing Book, traffic congestion is already bad. If you mention “traffic” to any resident, you will get an earful about increases in traffic volumes and the resulting delays residents and local employees encounter when travelling from A to B during peak hours. Their perception of congestion is based on travel time, not VMT. While we appreciate the City and General Plan goal of transitioning from LOS to VMT to comply with CEQA guidelines implementing S.B.743, we strongly urge that the comparisons of alternative development scenarios, circulation plans, and related improvements also be based upon changes in peak period travel time along major routes, not solely VMT per capita or citywide VMT. Residents understand and recognize changes in travel time—due in part to intersection delays—much more readily than changes in VMT.
- b. Use peak hour travel time and congestion, not daily volumes, to compare land use alternatives. Roadways, transit systems, and other networks are normally sized to accommodate peak needs not daily requirements. Forecasts of the volume of traffic occurring over the course of an entire day are useful for environmental analyses but less useful for determining roadway congestion or delays. Our work and school schedules dictate that we travel during peak hours rather than between midnight and 6:00 AM when streets have plenty of unused capacity and few delays. Comparing land use alternatives—especially those that generate most of their traffic during peak hours—solely based upon daily traffic can be misleading.
- c. Consider relative changes in traffic volumes on local streets, not just total volumes. As noted in the Briefing Book, traffic and traffic congestion is spilling from major thoroughfares onto local streets as Waze and similar apps inform motorists how to avoid delays. If traffic on a minor street increases from 20 vehicles/hour to 200 vehicles/hour, residents of that street will perceive that traffic has increased dramatically, but a planner will accurately report that 200 vehicles/hour is far below the street’s operational capacity. As delays on San Mateo’s major streets increase, private vehicle motorists and trucks will continue to use parallel minor streets offering fewer delays. The impacts and perceived impacts on minor streets resulting from alternative land uses and mitigation measures will not be considered if the evaluation of alternatives only considers major streets and 62 monitored intersections. It is requested that the evaluation consider how minor streets will be impacted by land use plans. This is important if maintaining the character of neighborhoods is a goal of this Update.
- d. Continued reliance on private vehicles. Driving alone will likely continue to be the way most San Mateo residents travel to work and to stores when shopping for groceries and other bulky goods. It is also likely that an overwhelming majority of local residents will travel to places of work located in other towns, and most local employees will travel into the city. These decisions—where one works and lives—are personal choices as is one’s preferred travel mode. It is important to use realistic, not optimistic or wishful inputs when estimating how San Mateo’s residents and employees will travel in 2040 and interim years. People are adept at circumventing rules and policies if they believe that doing so will be in their best interest.
- e. Measuring success of past TDM programs. Have the City’s TDM programs (e.g., requirements that developers encourage use of non-automobile modes) proven successful given San Mateo’s unique geography and demographics? What has been the reduction in trips—both daily and peak hour--generated by recent residential or office developments in San Mateo compared with similar developments built in the City more than 10 years ago? As new tenants replace the original tenants, and demographics shift, have the program’s success been impacted? If it is too

early to quantify the specific results in San Mateo, what assurance is there that proposed trip reduction programs will be successful and can be considered “givens” when evaluating future land use plans and their traffic impacts? Similarly setting goals for TDM programs that anticipate large changes to current behavior in favor of lower car use runs the risk of deteriorating circulation if the TDM goals are not met. For example, plans based on reaching the stated goal of reducing new vehicle trips by 25% and reducing lanes on streets to create bike lanes and facilitate transit stops and pedestrian traffic will severely impact traffic congestion if the reduction goals are not met.

- f. The overall impression of the “Circulation Public Review-1” document is that the City is supporting a reduction in vehicle use in favor of alternative transportation measures. While admirable, is this realistic in the next five years? Expectations for new technologies to provide solutions that support reduced parking (autonomous vehicles and ride share), and reduced vehicle use of streets (TDM Programs) could backfire if the public does not adopt the new behavior as quickly as assumed. Realistic projections need to be made. This is a challenge but one that is fundamental to the success of the City and the Plan.
- g. Why is the City using a lower LOS standard (low LOS D) than the Caltrans standard of between LOS C and LOS D?
- h. Page 3 of the document states in reference to SB743- “Further, parking impacts will not be considered significant impacts on the environment for select development projects within infill areas with nearby frequent transit service.” This comment is typical of a series of similar remarks that assume that existing and proposed transit systems (Trains, buses, bikes and walking) can handle the needs of commuters and local residents’ travel needs, with trains and buses being the most prevalent mode. Do we know what the capacities of these systems are? Can they support planned development? Should we limit development to the capacity of these systems? Transit schedules will also have a significant impact. Will you analyze vehicle use when public transit schedules are not sufficient for convenient use?
- i. “The Sustainable Streets Plan also provides a potential new functional classification for street typologies (Figure 1). This classification provides a potential framework for updating the Circulation Element map to support General Plan goals while still maintaining FHWA requirements for functional street classifications for projects to be eligible for federal funds.” (See Page 7). San Mateans have long cautioned elected officials to maintain the character of the City. How will these new classifications and General Plan goals change the nature of the streets we live on. Congested residential streets that had been modified to support potentially underutilized bike lanes pedestrian lanes, transit stops will change the character of the City.

While the goal of encouraging fewer single passenger car trips is laudable, the process for achieving these goals needs to be specific and proven to avoid unintended results or, at least, to minimize them. Expending resources to support a careful approach is warranted.

Regards,

Mike Nash

CC: Patrice Olds

**From:** Julia Klein  
**Sent:** Monday, October 15, 2018 10:42 AM  
**To:** 'Leora Tanjuatco Ross' <[leora@hlcsmc.org](mailto:leora@hlcsmc.org)>; Lily Lim <[llim@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:llim@cityofsanmateo.org)>  
**Subject:** RE: Letter for General Plan Subcommittee

Hi Leora,

Thank you for forwarding the letter from Evelyn Stivers, Executive Director for HLC. It will be forwarded to the Subcommittee and included in the General Plan project file along with other public comments.

Best,

Julia Klein  
Principal Planner  
City of San Mateo  
(650) 522-7216

 Please consider the environment before printing this email.

**From:** Leora Tanjuatco Ross <[leora@hlcsmc.org](mailto:leora@hlcsmc.org)>  
**Sent:** Friday, October 12, 2018 10:39 AM  
**To:** Julia Klein <[jklein@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:jklein@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Lily Lim <[llim@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:llim@cityofsanmateo.org)>  
**Subject:** Letter for General Plan Subcommittee

Dear Julia and Lily,

Thank you for your exceptional work with the San Mateo general plan. Please find attached HLC's letter regarding the process.

Many thanks,  
Leora

--

**Leora Tanjuatco Ross**  
Organizing Director  
Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo County  
(650) 201-9889  
2905 S El Camino Real  
San Mateo, CA 94403  
[www.hlcsmc.org](http://www.hlcsmc.org)



October 12, 2018

City of San Mateo  
City Hall  
330 West 20th Avenue  
San Mateo, CA 94403

Re: General Plan

Dear Members of the General Plan Subcommittee:

Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo works with communities and their leaders to create and preserve quality affordable homes.

We are thrilled to start this general plan process and look forward to working with you on solutions to some of the hardest challenges the city is facing. Much has changed since 2010. At that time, the region was still suffering from the recession, which took pressure off of our overheated housing market. Book and record stores are no longer the only retailers struggling to survive with online shopping. According to a 2017 report by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, the region has set a new record for congestion related delays, which have gotten 80% longer since 2010.

And most importantly, between 2010 and 2016, 80,000 new jobs were created in San Mateo County, but permits were only issued for 8,000 new homes. This huge disparity has impacts throughout and beyond our sub region. Local workers who are unable to find housing options in our communities are forced to commute long distances, worsening traffic. Local businesses have difficulty attracting and keeping qualified employees. And low-income families—whose bread-winners work at grocery stores, preschools, and restaurants—are hit the hardest. For families who stay in the county, rising rents force them to double up—cramming more people into each room—and to choose between paying for food, medication, or housing. As others move out of the area, the inability to meet housing needs in San Mateo is creating tidal waves of displacement throughout the Bay Area. The timing of this process is critical and we strongly encourage the City to complete the process prior to 2020.

Our past does not need to be our future. HLC envisions San Mateo growing into an inclusive community where renters, retirees, people with disabilities, people of all races, people who grew up here, and everyone who works here has quality housing that they can afford. We want a variety of housing to meet the needs of current and future neighbors. We want a vibrant downtown and successful local businesses throughout San Mateo. We want safe and comfortable walking, biking, and transit access in our neighborhoods, downtown, and in shopping districts. And we want to achieve this while creating less traffic on 101 and 92 and an overall reduction in Greenhouse Gas emissions and other pollutants. In order to accomplish these objectives, there is no question that

higher densities and heights in areas located in proximity to transit are going to be required. San Mateo's General Plan Update offers an opportunity to make that vision a reality. Additionally, San Mateans, through this process, have the opportunity to lead by being model for other communities on how to address these critical challenges.

The best way to accommodate new neighbors and services is to promote higher density housing and commercial uses near train stations and along San Mateo's transit-rich corridors, like El Camino Real. The additional density will have other benefits, such as increasing transit availability and supporting a wider range of walk-to services. In turn, new households would be able to live without a car, which would reduce traffic impacts as well as household expenses.

Diverse & Affordable Housing. Encourage housing production for all levels of income and ability, and recognize that transit-oriented locations are more affordable in that they reduce household car use and expenses.

Jobs & Economic Opportunity. Recognize San Mateo's desirability as a business hub, with vibrant and accessible activity centers such as downtown and the Hillsdale Station area.

Livable Communities. Focus growth on transit-rich locations – to preserve existing single-family residential neighborhoods – and use the benefits of the growth to make San Mateo a better place to live, work, and play.

Equity. Promote transportation alternatives like walking, bicycling and public transit to reduce traffic and provide options for those without cars.

Fiscal Health & Effective Government. Harness growth to increase public revenues, and use compact development to reduce costs associated with constructing and maintaining public infrastructure.

Sustainability & Resilience. Promote urban development that uses less energy and water, and emits fewer greenhouse gases, by further integrating land use and transportation, and promoting green buildings and infrastructure.

We appreciate your efforts to make San Mateo a more equitable, sustainable, and vibrant city. We will be here to support you in that endeavor.

Sincerely,

Evelyn Stivers  
Executive Director

**From:** Julia Klein  
**Sent:** Monday, October 15, 2018 10:25 AM  
**To:** 'Matthew Taecker' <matt@taeckerplanning.com>  
**Cc:** Ronald "Ron" Munekawa <munekawa@cityofsanmateo.org>; David Bohannon <david.bohannon@ddbo.com>; Bob Webster <robert.webster@ddbo.com>; Tim Tosta <tim.tosta@arentfox.com>; Frank Petrilli <frank.petrilli@arentfox.com>; Matt Stone. <Matthew.Stone@arentfox.com>; Clara Parker <Clara.Parker@arentfox.com>  
**Subject:** RE: Connecting Analysis to Important Challenges

Hi Matthew,

Thank you for sending in your written comments. Your email will be forwarded to the General Plan Subcommittee and included in the project file along with other public comments.

Sincerely,

Julia Klein  
Principal Planner  
City of San Mateo  
(650) 522-7216

 Please consider the environment before printing this email.

**From:** Matthew Taecker <[matt@taeckerplanning.com](mailto:matt@taeckerplanning.com)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 11, 2018 4:15 PM  
**To:** Julia Klein <[jklein@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:jklein@cityofsanmateo.org)>  
**Cc:** Ronald "Ron" Munekawa <[munekawa@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:munekawa@cityofsanmateo.org)>; David Bohannon <[david.bohannon@ddbo.com](mailto:david.bohannon@ddbo.com)>; Bob Webster <[robert.webster@ddbo.com](mailto:robert.webster@ddbo.com)>; Tim Tosta <[tim.tosta@arentfox.com](mailto:tim.tosta@arentfox.com)>; Frank Petrilli <[frank.petrilli@arentfox.com](mailto:frank.petrilli@arentfox.com)>; Matt Stone. <[Matthew.Stone@arentfox.com](mailto:Matthew.Stone@arentfox.com)>; Clara Parker <[Clara.Parker@arentfox.com](mailto:Clara.Parker@arentfox.com)>  
**Subject:** Connecting Analysis to Important Challenges

Hi Julia, Please forward the attached letter for Subcommittee members consideration as they review Placeworks' Existing Conditions report. Please let me know if you have questions or concerns. Thank you! Matt Taecker.

---

*Taecker Planning & Design, 510-333-9231*



October 11, 2018

General Plan Update Subcommittee  
c/o Julia Klein, Principal Planner  
City of San Mateo  
330 West 20th Avenue  
San Mateo CA 94403

**Re: Strive San Mateo - Analysis and Challenges**

Dear Members of the General Plan Update Subcommittee,

Your work offers an extraordinary opportunity to imagine what San Mateo can be in 2040. In 21 years, a new generation will be adults. These new leaders' notions of home and lifestyle will have been shaped by 21st century realities. Shared mobility services will have reduced private car use by 23%.<sup>1</sup> California will have heated up by an average of 4 degrees Fahrenheit<sup>2</sup>, and Bay waters will have risen about 1.7 feet.<sup>3</sup> All but the youngest baby boomers will have aged beyond America's average life expectancy of 79 years.

I'm pleased to have been asked to follow your long-range planning process. As much of my work has focused on transit-oriented development, I've been asked by the Bohannon Group and its team to help envision a mixed-use future for Hillsdale Shopping Center and Station Area – and how it can complement the community's vision for San Mateo. For thirty years, my career has concerned itself with how to make communities livable and sustainable.

The City is at a critical stage of the planning process. New information and different perspectives are about to broaden our shared understanding of San Mateo and the challenges it faces. At the same time, you are beginning to distill information and perspectives into a vision statement describing the community's most important aspirations. The purpose of policies that you develop later will be to implement this shared vision.

Planning works best when analysis is not for its own sake, but targets community challenges. *How can analysis help explain important challenges, and can defining important challenges help focus GPU analysis performed?*

To illustrate, below I offer a few observations on four planning challenges expressed at the Subcommittee's first meeting, and pose some questions. My intent is not to be provocative. I do not pretend to know the answers or pretend

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.oliverwyman.com/content/dam/oliver-wyman/v2/publications/2016/Nov/Mobility2040Report.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.scp.org/news/2015/09/14/54331/future-of-water-how-hot-dry-and-crowded-will-ca-be/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.sfchronicle.com/science/article/Many-coastal-properties-may-be-flooded-out-by-13002375.php>

to know what's best for San Mateo. Instead, I hope that these questions might help get at some of the concerns we heard from the Subcommittee and other community members, and help identify what kinds of information might be useful during the conversations that follow.

## Traffic Congestion

Hard planning challenges are comprised of inter-related factors – some obvious and some less so. Frustration over congestion often focuses on the symptom – too many cars. *But what are congestion's underlying causes?* This might be answered with local and regional data that has to do with land use as much as transportation patterns.

For example, over recent decades, California's population grew 40%, while the number of vehicle-miles traveled doubled.<sup>4</sup> There seems to be something in the way we are growing our communities that forces people into cars at ever increasing rates.

Studies indicate that vehicle-miles traveled – how much people drive – are largely a regional phenomenon caused by growth as: 1) housing and jobs are separated by long distances, and 2) retail, parking, schools and other local destinations are too far from homes for trips to remain on local streets inside of the neighborhood. Traffic studies often show that new infill housing growth adds relatively little traffic compared with regional traffic growth from segregating jobs, housing, and local destinations. *Are trips from new infill development a small fraction of traffic growth in San Mateo as well? And, if so, what is driving regional growth in vehicle-miles traveled? Also, to what extent do residents travel on arterial (city-serving) roadways for trips that might have been accommodated locally and without adding to congestion?*

The amount of congestion and vehicle-miles traveled also has to do with whether transportation alternatives to the car are available and convenient. Residents of areas within walking distance of conveniences and transit drive roughly 43% less than locations without these advantages.<sup>5</sup> In Berkeley, 3,000 new dwelling units were assumed by the Downtown Area Plan, but only 3% of traffic growth was attributable to downtown growth and 97% was attributable to higher driving rates at the regional level.<sup>6</sup> In Portland, Oregon, construction of a new northwest freeway was avoided entirely by concentrating growth around transit.<sup>7</sup> *In San Mateo, can most new growth be transit-oriented to minimize traffic congestion and expensive road improvements?*

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<sup>4</sup> Holtzclaw, John, "Smart Growth – as Seen from the Air," National Sierra Club Transportation Committee, June 2000.

<sup>5</sup> Gloria Ohland and Shelley Poticha (2006). *Street smart: streetcars and cities in the twenty-first century. Reconnecting America* ([www.reconnectingamerica.org](http://www.reconnectingamerica.org)).

<sup>6</sup> City of Berkeley, *Downtown Area Plan EIR*, [www.cityofberkeley.info/dap](http://www.cityofberkeley.info/dap).

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.reconnectingamerica.org/index.php/resource-center/browse-research/1997/integrating-land-use-and-transportation-planning-for-livable-communities-making-the-connections-a-summary-of-the-lutraq-project/>

I've suggested two conditions that reduce congestion: bringing destinations closer together; and making walking, bicycling and transit convenient options. Another way is by adopting transportation demand management (TDM) programs. TDM programs make it easier to get around without a car. To do this, cities can require new housing developers and employers to offer free transit passes. Another TDM program is to "unbundle" the price of parking from the rent of an apartment, as even a small charge can encourage some households to get by with fewer cars. Berkeley incorporated these TDM features within its Downtown Area Plan and Zoning, which won the American Planning Association's national award for "best practices" in 2013. *What TDM programs have been adopted in San Mateo and what exemplary TDM programs from nearby communities might be added?*

## Costs of Not Growing

Much may be lost if San Mateo fails to grow at pace with the Peninsula, in which it is an integral part. *What are the consequences of not managing that growth responsibly?*

- *Will housing costs and apartment rents continue to climb and consume an even greater share of household income, if San Mateo fails to grow as California's Office of Economic Development and the Association of Bay Area Governments studies indicate?*
- *Is San Mateo becoming a less diverse and exclusive place, as median incomes rise and incomes remain tied to racial and ethnic characteristics?*
- *What housing opportunities are available today for millennials who grew up here, and might some be forced to move because there is not enough housing? Has that been happening already?*
- *Can local retail survive as more sales occur online without more local patrons? How much growth will be needed if the community wants to enjoy about the same amount of retail as it enjoys today?*
- *Can the City remain fiscally strong as its infrastructure ages, without growth and new sources of revenue?*

## Housing Affordability

While nearly everyone agrees that San Mateo has a housing crisis, its causes and consequences are complex and not well understood. *In the absence of fact-based policies, what assurance is there that housing policies will result in enough housing supply to meet expected demand?*

Housing prices have escalated as median incomes on the Peninsula have risen and as the ratio of jobs to housing has grown. While the Association of Bay Area Governments reports that eight jobs are added to the larger Bay Area for every one housing unit, what has the trend been in the Peninsula subregion?

Care should be taken in drawing conclusions. For example, in the Briefing Book, historical analysis uses different years as starting points or the years are not referenced. Baseline years might correspond with the US Census and Association of Bay Area Government studies, including information from 2010 and 2000, for a cleaner comparison of longer trends over time.

It's also important to recognize that jobs and housing connect across municipal boundaries, but knowing a city's jobs/housing ratio can still be useful since this is the only geography that local land use controls can regulate. Communities with significantly higher ratios may suffer higher housing costs, while communities with lower ratios likely suffer from fewer jobs and less municipal revenue. The Bay Area as a whole has roughly 3.46 million employed residents and 2.76 million housing units,<sup>8</sup> for a region-wide ratio of 1.25 employed residents per housing unit. *How does San Mateo's jobs/housing ratio compare with the region as a whole?*

At the same time, jobs-housing ratios are an inexact indicator for why a community experiences a lot of commute traffic, as the "match" between local jobs and housing also plays a role. Commute trips into San Mateo may be because housing is too expensive for many people in the local workforce who live in places with lower housing costs. If true, this pattern contributes not only to traffic congestion, but also higher transportation costs for these households. The Center for Neighborhood Technology and other organizations consider the combined cost of housing and transportation to be a more fair assessment of affordability than rent alone.<sup>9</sup> *How affordable is San Mateo when transportation costs are also factored when considering someone who lives, and someone who works, in San Mateo?*

Many residents in San Mateo commute to jobs in Silicon Valley and San Francisco. *What kinds of jobs fit the profile of San Mateo residents who commute out of the City, and can these kinds of jobs be recruited to reduce commute distances long term?*

## Housing Capacity

In its report on Downtown San Mateo from 2016, the Urban Land Institute remarked "to accommodate the growth of San Mateo and the overall region, the city must build more densely, increase height limits, and take advantage of its access to mass transit."<sup>10</sup> *What analysis might substantiate this assertion?*

In this analysis, consider that change in traditional residential neighborhoods and historic districts will be difficult to attain and may be inconsistent with their

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<sup>8</sup> 2010 American Communities Survey of the US Census

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.cnt.org/tools/housing-and-transportation-affordability-index>

<sup>10</sup> [http://1o91j73ixgji10eaou3ddjy-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/47/2016/06/Downtown-San-Mateo-ULI-TAP\\_Final.pdf](http://1o91j73ixgji10eaou3ddjy-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/47/2016/06/Downtown-San-Mateo-ULI-TAP_Final.pdf)

protection. Quite possibly, the character of San Mateo's most valued places can be maintained if the potential for transit-oriented development that excludes these areas is sufficient. *To understand the potential of transit-oriented areas, can the extent of land suitable for development be measured – not just residentially-zoned land but also aging commercial properties? Are transit-oriented opportunities sufficient to accommodate growth through 2040? And how tall might some new places need to be to protect San Mateo's most valued existing places?*

## Next Steps

Yours is sure to be an exciting process of realization and creation.

The General Plan Update is the community's opportunity to chart a course for the future that is inclusive, resilient, sustainable, and responsible. To do this, the community will want to address its challenges squarely. It will want to embrace change associated with demographic trends, economic development, transportation behavior and technology, and millennial preferences – to name just a few.

An exemplary plan can emerge from a clear understanding of challenges, penetrating analysis, and solid information – all pointing toward a compelling vision for the future. It might be that a preferred outcome may not require difficult trade-offs. A win-win scenario might be possible, which conserves San Mateo's most valued places, while maximizing favorable growth where it makes the most sense.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matthew Taecker". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a stylized "T" in the last name.

Matthew Taecker AIA AICP

**From:** Julia Klein  
**Sent:** Monday, October 15, 2018 11:05 AM  
**To:** 'Lilian Poladian' <lilian.poladian@ddbo.com>  
**Cc:** David D. Bohannon II <david.bohannon@ddbo.com>; Robert L. Webster <robert.webster@ddbo.com>; Angela I. Wu <angela.wu@ddbo.com>; 'Matthew Taecker' <matt@taeckerplanning.com>; Matt Stone. <Matthew.Stone@arentfox.com>  
**Subject:** RE: Strive San Mateo Correspondence

Hi Lilian,

Thank you for forwarding David Bohannon's letter. It will be forwarded to the General Plan Subcommittee and included in the project file along with other public comment letters.

Best,

Julia Klein  
Principal Planner  
City of San Mateo  
(650) 522-7216

 Please consider the environment before printing this email.

**From:** Lilian Poladian <lilian.poladian@ddbo.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 11, 2018 11:01 AM  
**To:** Julia Klein <jklein@cityofsanmateo.org>  
**Cc:** David D. Bohannon II <david.bohannon@ddbo.com>; Robert L. Webster <robert.webster@ddbo.com>; Angela I. Wu <angela.wu@ddbo.com>  
**Subject:** Strive San Mateo Correspondence

Julia,

Please find enclosed a letter from David Bohannon in advance of next week's General Plan Update Subcommittee meeting.

Lilian Poladian (on behalf of David D. Bohannon II)  
Executive/Personal Assistant to Scott E. Bohannon



Bohannon Development Company  
David D. Bohannon Organization  
Sixty 31st Avenue  
San Mateo, CA 94403  
P: (650) 345-8222  
F: (650) 573-5457  
[lilian.poladian@ddbo.com](mailto:lilian.poladian@ddbo.com)



October 10, 2018

Members of the General Plan Subcommittee  
c/o Julia Klein, Senior Planner, City of San Mateo

**Re:    Striving for a Livable and Sustainable San Mateo**

Dear Members of the General Plan Subcommittee:

On behalf of the Bohannon Development Company, I would like to thank all of you for your history of public service and, particularly, for your willingness to serve on this important Subcommittee. As briefly described below, my family has deep roots in San Mateo, and we have significant financial and emotional investments in the City's future, so the City holds a special place in our hearts. And as the City commences the process to update its General Plan amidst upheaval in the housing market, retail, and transportation sectors, our commitment to our community compels us to participate more than we have in the past.

As you know, the Bay Area is facing many socio-economic challenges as economic growth continues to far outpace the ability to build, improve, and redevelop the infrastructure to accommodate more people and redress decades of poor regional transportation planning. Unfortunately, this is nothing new for jurisdictions throughout California, which have historically struggled to keep up with population increases. Yet, despite the current housing affordability crisis and our crumbling infrastructure, we are optimistic about the future because of the growing consensus that the status quo is unacceptable. And, we're particularly excited about San Mateo's future as the General Plan Update process commences – which couldn't be more timely.

The purpose of this letter is to briefly introduce ourselves, explain our questions and concerns as the General Plan Update proceeds to the substantive portions of the process, and to outline our intentions as we engage with the community. We believe that we can be a valuable resource and provide an important perspective as the plan is formulated.

## **I.        Why We're Here**

The Bohannon Development Company's interest in San Mateo's current and future well-being is multi-faceted. While we have developed property all over the Bay Area dating back to the 1930s, San Mateo is particularly important to us. My family built the Hillsdale community starting with a grocery store at the corner of Hillsdale Blvd. and El Camino Real in the 1940s, which we later expanded into a regional shopping center and adjacent residential neighborhood. We are proud that the shopping center continues to be a popular destination and significant financial contributor in and to the community. Still, the shopping center has been forced to evolve considerably over the last 60 years in response to cultural and economic trends.

Longtime San Mateans are probably more familiar with the Bohannon name. For newer residents, we are more likely to be associated with the Hillsdale Shopping Center, which is undergoing another substantial improvement (renovation of the north block) to attract new tenants in response to changing lifestyles, shopping habits, and tastes. Although we try to maintain a low profile, we believe you'll find that residents of all ages appreciate our commitment to be thoughtful stewards of our properties, as well as our genuine concern for the City's well-being evidenced through our support of local schools and charities.

We see that San Mateo is at a crossroads. The lack of affordable housing and efficient transportation options in the region are well-documented. Less documented, but of equal concern, should be changes to the retail environment, which chip away at the viability of brick and mortar establishments. What is less well understood is how these issues are related.

From our perspective, there is no question that the Hillsdale Shopping Center will need to continue to evolve, as will the environment in which we operate. This is especially true given changes in the way we live and work, the influence of the internet and online shopping, and changing demographics and economic conditions. How we shop, where we choose to live and work, and how we move around are all in dynamic transformation, as the region continues to grow and add jobs. Thus, in order to remain economically viable and vibrant destinations, retail environments, including Hillsdale, will need to incorporate housing, entertainment options, and office space so that people can live, work, and play in the same area.

## **II. Initial Questions for Consideration**

The Subcommittee has an incredible opportunity to address the City's housing and transportation challenges, and to serve as a leading example of how cities can achieve a more sustainable, livable future. I hope we can all agree how important this process is. Maintaining the status quo is not a viable or sustainable response to the problems facing our community. If we do nothing while other cities invest and accommodate growth, we will continue to deal with higher housing costs and increased congestion, while reaping none of the benefits afforded to those other cities. Our local businesses will continue to struggle, leading to the slow erosion of San Mateo's character, and the undermining of the City's fiscal platform. These risks are real, and they are imminent. But we are optimistic that the Subcommittee will be successful in addressing them in a meaningful way.

This process won't be easy. One city cannot solve all of the region's problems. But we know there are local solutions that can work – if there's the will to see that those solutions are adopted. Among the solutions that we will advocate for are additional height and density along El Camino Real in proximity to the train stations as well as in the downtown area, at levels that will support retail and serve the needs of those who are struggling to find affordable places to live, while fully preserving our residential neighborhoods.

We understand just how difficult the Subcommittee's job is and how your leadership will dictate whether the process produces the outcome the City needs and expects. This means that for the process to be productive, all of us will need to keep an open mind and not lose sight of the big



picture, and the committee will need to incorporate stakeholder and expert input, ask difficult questions, and think outside of the box. Accordingly, some of the key questions we believe that you should consider as part of this process are:

- How do we plan for a sustainable future with a larger population that will continue to experience changes due to technological innovations?
- How can San Mateo promote equitable, affordable housing that is inclusive and diverse, so that current residents and their children, as well as local workers at all income levels, and future residents have housing options that meet the changing tastes of younger generations?
- How can we create a vibrant, healthy, livable, pedestrian-friendly downtown, as well as vibrant, livable areas adjacent to transit that will help support and sustain our retail environment?
- How can we promote growth while keeping new traffic impacts to a minimum?
- How can we ensure that the ultimate plan is economically feasible so that it can be realized?

These questions are not exhaustive and are merely meant to help aid your thoughts as you prepare the plan's vision. Your thoughtful consideration of these questions, however, will likely affect the direction of that vision and, ultimately, whether this process is successful.

### **III. Team Introduction**

To help supplement the City's efforts, we have hired a planning expert, Matt Taecker, who has substantial expertise in transit-oriented development throughout the Bay Area. We intend to combine Matt's knowledge with our own expertise in development to provide meaningful input throughout the process, and we encourage you to be open-minded about our ideas as you tackle the difficult issues and questions outlined above. Matt will touch on some of our initial thoughts in his separate comment letter.

Please know that we are here to help facilitate the process, including the necessary conversations to ensure the process is productive. So please do not hesitate to reach out to any of us if you have any questions or could use another perspective.

Thank you for your time. We look forward to engaging with you throughout this collaborative process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "D. Bohannon", with a stylized flourish at the end.

David D. Bohannon

**From:** General Plan

**Sent:** Friday, November 9, 2018 2:49 PM

**To:** Kevin Burke <kev@inburke.com>; General Plan <generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org>

**Cc:** Leora Tanjuatco <leora@hlcsmc.org>

**Subject:** RE: Comment on Existing Conditions - general plan update

Hi Kevin,

Thank you for sending in your comments. Your email will be provided to the General Plan Subcommittee and included in the project file as part of the official records for the General Plan Update project.

In consideration of the Brown Act and in an abundance of caution, I have moved the City Council and Commissioners, some of whom are on the General Plan Subcommittee, to the BCC line on this reply.

Thanks and should you have any additional comments, please email [generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org).

Best,

Julia Klein  
Principal Planner  
City of San Mateo  
(650) 522-7216

 Please consider the environment before printing this email.

**From:** Kevin Burke <[kev@inburke.com](mailto:kev@inburke.com)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, October 17, 2018 1:58 PM

**To:** General Plan <[generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org)>

**Cc:** Joe Goethals <[jgoethals@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:jgoethals@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Rick Bonilla <[RBonilla@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:RBonilla@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Adam Loraine <[adamloraine@gmail.com](mailto:adamloraine@gmail.com)>; Leora Tanjuatco <[leora@hlcsmc.org](mailto:leora@hlcsmc.org)>

**Subject:** Comment on Existing Conditions - general plan update

Sorry I couldn't make the meeting last night.

One consequence of having 88% of the housing stock built before 1990 is that **the housing stock is really old and not very good!** This is kind of obvious in some ways but has really bad side effects.

- We know much more now than we used to about how to build buildings that can withstand an earthquake.

- San Mateo has no registry of soft story apartments.

- New buildings are much more likely to be ADA compliant.

- New buildings do not use lead. The first lead law was passed in California in 1978. A majority of structures in San Mateo were built before 1978. Everything we know says that lead is really, really, really, really damaging to helping people grow, help children develop their brains and lead healthy lives.

- New housing has air conditioning, which can help seniors avoid heat stroke.

This is an argument for allowing lots of new housing to be built, since it has those nice things, and hopefully to replace the old housing. Since replacing housing at the same density does not pencil it **would be good to permit a density bonus for landowners who want to tear down a soft story/lead paint building and put an ADA compliant structure in its place.**

Specifically about existing conditions: **I wish the document had a section on displacement. How many people have been displaced from San Mateo since 2010 due to high rents?** We know for example that the Pilgrim Baptist Church, an institution of 82 years, was forced to close because its constituents can't afford it here anymore. How many other people are in their boat?

[https://www.smdailyjournal.com/news/local/gathering-a-community-around-its-church/article\\_86c6c5ea-58bf-11e8-85bd-5bfa869b0813.html](https://www.smdailyjournal.com/news/local/gathering-a-community-around-its-church/article_86c6c5ea-58bf-11e8-85bd-5bfa869b0813.html)

Going forward **maybe we could make projections about how much displacement there would be under varying densities of housing under the new plan.**

Kevin

--

Kevin Burke

phone: 925.271.7005 | [kev.inburke.com](http://kev.inburke.com)

**From:** General Plan  
**Sent:** Friday, November 9, 2018 4:02 PM  
**To:** Adam Nugent <adam.william.nugent@gmail.com>; General Plan <generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org>  
**Cc:** jonnew@gmail.com  
**Subject:** RE: General Plan 2040 - Existing Conditions Resources

Hi Adam,

Thank you for sending this in. Your email will be provided to the General Plan Subcommittee and included in the project file as part of the official records for the General Plan Update project.

Thanks and should you have any additional comments, please email [generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org).

Best,

Julia Klein  
Principal Planner  
City of San Mateo  
(650) 522-7216

 Please consider the environment before printing this email.

**From:** Adam Nugent <[adam.william.nugent@gmail.com](mailto:adam.william.nugent@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 17, 2018 11:16 PM  
**To:** General Plan <[generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Julia Klein <[jklein@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:jklein@cityofsanmateo.org)>  
**Cc:** [jonnew@gmail.com](mailto:jonnew@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** Re: General Plan 2040 - Existing Conditions Resources

Hi Julia,

I have really appreciated the structure and process of these early meetings for the General Plan Update. Thank you for the work your team has done. To follow up my comments at Tuesday's meeting (General Plan Subcommittee #2: Existing Conditions), I am sending links to the materials I referenced. These resources are important pieces in understanding our city's current circumstances.

The first resource is [Strong Towns](#), a non-profit founded to help municipalities and citizens build more financially resilient, sustainable, and just cities. [Here](#) is a link to their introductory lecture, hosted by the City of Austin, Texas. I invite everyone to take a break from all of the reading and give it a watch. I recommend listening to the Q&A at the end, as well. Having completed my graduate degree in Texas, I can attest that Austin has many of the same issues we face. The insight that Strong Towns provides is foundational to understanding the financial situation of North America's cities and citizens, why they struggle and how the decisions we make in the General Plan Update process will shape our ability to provide a higher quality of life for ourselves and our future generations.

I hope that after seeing this talk the members of the committee can look at the challenges we have - challenges like traffic, debt, affordability, the costs associated with providing city services, taxation constraints, and economic growth - in a way that can better connect these things to how we have planned, designed, engineered, and built our cities in the 20th Century. It is fascinating.

This message is so important and so fundamental to the future sustainability of our city that a contingent of engaged, young city residents are eager to invite Charles Marohn, the President of Strong Towns, to speak as an expert as part of our General Plan Update process. Chuck is [hailed](#) as one of the great contemporary minds in the planning world, and Strong Towns features such contributors as [Jeff Speck](#), author of [Walkable City](#) who is doing an event for Strong Towns members in November, and [Andrés Duany](#), co-founder of the [Congress of the New Urbanism](#), of which I am a member as well.

The second resource is the book, [The Color of Law](#), by Richard Rothstein of UC Berkeley. I know many of the people involved have a lot to read; Amazon offers an Audiobook for those who might need to give their eyes a break and the opportunity to take the subject with them on the go. The history this book provides can be hard to bear, but it is important to hear and should be fundamental to understanding the existing conditions of our city's neighborhoods as well.

As a landscape architect and homeowner committed to this city, I am compelled to be of service in this important process and to help all of us create a lasting community that provides for all its residents the highest quality of life in our region, in our state, and in our nation. I think we have the opportunity to make that happen.

Best,  
Adam Nugent, PLA

**From:** General Plan

**Sent:** Friday, November 2, 2018 4:41 PM

**To:** Kenneth E Abreu <k.abreu@sbcglobal.net>; General Plan <generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org>

**Cc:** Nancy Schneider <hnschneider@astound.net>; Gita Dev <gd@devarchitects.com>; Gladwyn D'Souza <godsouza@mac.com>; David Crabbe <dcarch@comcast.net>

**Subject:** RE: Information for General Plan Subcommittee - Sierra Club California Housing Policy

Hi Ken,

Thank you for your email and offer of information. I will be reaching out to Nancy in the coming weeks.

Additionally, if you have not already heard, there are two Vision Workshop on Saturday, Nov. 3<sup>rd</sup>. Details are as follows:

Morning Workshop

DATE/TIME: Saturday, Nov. 3, 2018 from 10 am – Noon (sign-in and light breakfast begins at 9:30 am, kid friendly activities will be available)

LOCATION: Central Park Recreation Center, 50 East Fifth Avenue, San Mateo

Afternoon Workshop

DATE/TIME: Saturday, Nov. 3, 2018 from 2:30 pm – 4:30 pm (sign-in and light refreshments begins at 2:00 pm, kid friendly activities will be available)

LOCATION: Hillsdale High School Cafeteria, 3115 Del Monte St, San Mateo

Best,

Julia Klein  
Principal Planner  
City of San Mateo  
(650) 522-7216

 Please consider the environment before printing this email.

**From:** Kenneth E Abreu <k.abreu@sbcglobal.net>

**Sent:** Wednesday, October 17, 2018 12:33 PM

**To:** Julia Klein <jklein@cityofsanmateo.org>; General Plan <generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org>

**Cc:** Nancy Schneider <hnschneider@astound.net>; Gita Dev <gd@devarchitects.com>; Gladwyn D'Souza <godsouza@mac.com>; David Crabbe <dcarch@comcast.net>

**Subject:** Information for General Plan Subcommittee - Sierra Club California Housing Policy

Dear Ms Klein,

As I mentioned at the General Plan Subcommittee meeting on October 16, attached is the Sierra Club California Housing Policy. Please distribute to the Subcommittee. I think the Subcommittee members will find it makes some important points on how the General Plan should address the housing issue.

Also, Nancy Schneider of our committee will be in touch with you, so that we can also share our Guidelines with the Subcommittee. Feel free to contact her on these matters.

Sincerely,

Ken Abreu (925-989-7912) and Nancy Schneider (650-274-8079)  
Residents  
and Members of Sustainable Land Use Committee, Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter



Virus-free. [www.avast.com](http://www.avast.com)





# Sierra Club California Housing Policy: Meeting Our Housing Needs and Protecting the Environment









# **Sierra Club California Housing Policy: Meeting Our Housing Needs and Protecting the Environment**

August 2018

This paper was written by Sierra Club California volunteer leaders experienced in land use and housing policy in California. It provides an overview of the housing crisis in California, describes Sierra Club's housing policies, and offers solutions to improve housing availability.

Sierra Club California is the legislative and regulatory advocacy arm of Sierra Club's 13 local chapters in California, representing more than 400,000 members and supporters around the state.

## Executive Summary

The housing crisis is one of the most important challenges facing California today. The dramatic loss of state funding for affordable housing, the high cost of land, and zoning that restricts residential density are just a few of the factors that have exacerbated the problem. As job growth continues to exceed housing growth, workers must live further from work resulting in unreasonable commute distances.

This paper outlines the factors that have led to the housing crisis and its effects on California's population and economy. Sierra Club has been active in housing and related growth issues for several decades. We strongly support:

- Residential growth plans with dense housing that will reduce driving to meet our 2030 greenhouse gas targets.
- Land around transit stations zoned for higher density development to facilitate transit use.
- Incentives for housing production within infill areas, including along transit corridors and commercial areas.
- Legislation that motivates the development of affordable and infill housing, especially within designated growth areas within an adopted urban growth boundary.
- Strong tenants' rights, especially for vulnerable and low-income communities to fully participate in the decision-making process to ensure that projects do not negatively impact their community's environmental quality or risk pushing them out of their homes.
- Development directed toward areas within the urban growth boundary, in order to avoid adverse impacts upon wildlife habitat, critical watershed lands, open space lands, and scenic values.

## The Current Housing Crisis

Today's housing crisis is largely the result of housing policies and a land-use pattern that was set 70 to 100 years ago. Areas of rapid employment growth have rarely planned for the construction of affordable housing within a reasonable commuting distance. Rather, local governments and the state have encouraged a sprawling development pattern that has led to a severe jobs and housing imbalance.

Housing is especially unaffordable in coastal areas, where two-thirds of Californians live. The most affordable areas in California are inland areas. However those too are starting to see dramatic increases in housing costs.

When we discuss the future of housing, we must place it in context with the existential fight of our time—to attack the worst effects of climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The state has pledged to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. To do so, Californians must drive less and walk, bike, and use mass transit much more frequently than they do now.

## What Caused the Crisis?

The high cost of housing in most of California's coastal cities and suburbs has been caused by a number of factors, including:

- The dwindling supply and high cost of available land, especially in coastal communities.
- Zoning that restricts residential density and limits the efficiency with which we use land.
- Labor costs that have significantly increased due to a skilled labor shortage and code requirements for labor intensive building systems.
- Codes that require builders to use higher quality materials—such as windows, insulation, and heating and cooling systems—to achieve certain energy efficiency goals. The costs can be recaptured in lower energy bills, but they do increase upfront costs.
- Development fees—charges levied on builders as a condition of development—that have increasingly replaced the property tax as a source of funding for infrastructure and are consequently higher in California than the rest of the country.
- The “fiscalization of land use” caused by Proposition 13, which leads local jurisdictions to favor commercial growth, that pays sales tax and needs fewer public services, over housing projects that are often viewed as a negative drain on local resources.

## **Responses to the Affordable Housing Shortage**

The housing crisis has led to lower levels of home ownership, a spike in the number of residents renting apartments, and a tightening rental market. The rapid rise in rents has triggered a predictable response, with residents and local elected officials calling for the imposition of rent control, greater tenant protections, and other housing initiatives.

As residents are forced to travel further and further from work to find affordable housing, they struggle with long distance commutes. This causes even greater congestion on our already over-crowded freeways across the state.

Homelessness has become widespread and the evidence is unmistakable in many California cities. As homelessness becomes more and more visible—and is affecting even small, rural counties—voters are pressing their elected officials to address the problem.

## **The California Environmental Quality Act**

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is designed to ensure that Californians understand how land use decisions will impact their communities and health and can hold public agencies accountable to local and state environmental and land use laws. While business and real estate interests are critical of CEQA for curtailing housing projects, it is integral for the review process and safeguarding the environment, especially for medium-sized and large development that could have significant impacts. To simplify the CEQA process for projects that are in line with state laws, the California Legislature has passed a number of exemptions, which are helpful for infill, transit-oriented development, and affordable housing projects.

Some have advocated for radical changes to housing and CEQA policies. In 2018, Senate Bill 827 would have dramatically increased zoning densities near major transit stops, but with substandard inclusionary requirements and no labor standards. The bill directly stripped away control from local officials and general public engagement for zoning decisions. It also eliminated any analysis of potential environmental impacts such as air quality and traffic impacts and impacts related to previous hazardous materials on the site.

There is room to reform CEQA, but many recent proposals go too far, adding huge loopholes to exempt all housing development projects from any environmental review. Application of sweeping legislation reform that guts public review and paints all housing development applications with a “one-size-fits-all” law undercuts the public review process, which is an integral component of CEQA. While CEQA is a favorite target for many interest groups, numerous studies on the issue have largely debunked the complaint that CEQA is a major factor in preventing construction of new housing.

## **Solutions to the Housing Crisis**

Cities in California often resist any attempts by Sacramento to dictate, or intrude on decisions made by local officials to approve subdivisions and other local development applications. Most legislative attempts to insert state involvement in housing issues have been defeated over the last two decades. However, lawmakers should seriously consider state intervention again through comprehensive planning—as opposed to top-down regulatory controls.

Sierra Club California, the legislative and regulatory advocacy arm of the Sierra Club's 13 local chapters in California, recommends several proposals in this report's conclusion that can help make affordable housing easier to build. They include:

1. Mandate that cities that fall behind in their RHNA goals must rezone lands around transit stations.
2. Reform the RHNA process by transforming it into a state planning program.
3. Re-establish a more narrowly defined redevelopment-like program that focuses on creating affordable housing.
4. Allow local affordable housing bonds to be passed by the voters by a simple majority, rather than a two-thirds majority.
5. Support the repeal of the Hawkins-Costa Act to return to cities and counties the option of enacting rent eviction controls and rent stabilization measures.
6. Mandate that local agencies reduce building and development fees for qualifying affordable housing projects.

7. Develop incentive programs that encourage local agencies to adopt inclusionary housing ordinances that require housing projects to include affordable units.
8. Plug the SB 375 loophole by requiring a direct link (and a finding of consistency) between the new smart growth principles of adopted Sustainable Community Strategy Plans and the local General Plans that guide all local growth decisions.
9. Identify ways to help ensure local planning departments are adequately staffed and trained to implement existing measures that can accelerate housing production.

There is a clear need to produce more affordable housing in California, just as there is a clear need to protect wildlands, prevent displacement, and reduce greenhouse gases. It is possible to accomplish all of these goals, but it will require early consultation and collaboration among all parties through the legislative process.

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## Sierra Club California Housing Policy: Meeting Our Housing Needs and Protecting the Environment

California's housing crisis has received significant attention in the last few years, as the number of residents who cannot afford the cost of housing, especially in coastal areas, has rapidly grown. Job growth continues in places like the Bay Area, but workers cannot find a place to live within a reasonable commute distance. Long-term Californians are being displaced as rents skyrocket and the homeless population in many cities continues to increase.



The housing crisis received more press coverage recently, with newspapers publishing numerous stories about families who are pushed into financial crisis because of escalating housing costs, and editorials calling for solutions to the crisis. In 2017, a package of 15 bills addressing housing and the housing crisis was signed into law.

Sierra Club California (SCC) is the umbrella organization that represents and advocates in Sacramento on behalf of the state's 180,000 members, who are spread over 13 separate local chapters. Sierra Club, at the national, state, and local level, has been active in housing and related growth issues for several decades in California and across the country.

The Sierra Club believes the production of affordable housing for California's families and workers is one of the most important challenges facing California. We support incentives for housing production within infill

areas, including along transit corridors and commercial areas. We encourage legislation that motivates the development of affordable and infill housing, especially within designated growth areas within an adopted urban growth boundary. At the same time, we defend the right of all residents, especially vulnerable and low-income communities of color, to fully participate in the decision-making process to ensure that projects do not negatively impact their community's environmental quality or risk pushing them out of their homes.

This paper summarizes recent studies of the housing crisis, including its numerous causes and its effects on California's population and economy. The Sierra Club has adopted long-standing policies at the national, state, and local level that strongly support greenhouse gas emission reductions; infill development and higher housing densities; social justice; and preservation of the natural environment.<sup>1</sup> The paper concludes by offering proposals to further reform state housing laws that Sierra Club California believes can contribute to a comprehensive solution to California's housing crisis.

### I. The Current Housing Crisis and How We Got Here

The stage for today's housing crisis was largely set in California 70 to 100 years ago. The federal and state government, as well as local cities, have encouraged a development pattern that contributed to, and has now exacerbated, historic jobs/housing imbalances in specific geographic areas. Housing policies, or the lack thereof, have only reinforced these imbalances, as employment growth has never been coupled with the construction of affordable housing within a reasonable commuting distance.

Job growth in the movie, aerospace, technology, healthcare and other industries in Los Angeles over the last five decades has outpaced local housing development that has been hamstrung by restrictive zoning that limits infill and higher density housing options. Meanwhile, new federally funded highway capacity opened up ever more "cheap land" in ever more distant suburbs, first in the San Fernando Valley, then the Inland

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1. The policies on these related issues are included in the Appendix of this document.



**WHEN TALKING ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THE HOUSING STOCK IN CALIFORNIA, WE MUST ALWAYS PLACE IT WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE EXISTENTIAL FIGHT OF OUR TIME—TO MAKE A DENT IN THE WORST EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE BY REDUCING GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS.**

Empire, and now even as far out as the High Desert areas of Lancaster and Palmdale. The dramatic expansion of the office and high technology industries in San Francisco and the Silicon Valley has likewise caused suburban sprawl into the agricultural lands of eastern Contra Costa County and the northern San Joaquin Valley beyond the Altamont Pass. Workers in job-rich Orange County are forced to endure 60-mile commutes from their homes in places like the Moreno Valley in Riverside County because of the lack of affordable housing opportunities closer to their employment.

### **“Drive ‘til You Qualify”**

By the late 1980's, long-distance commuting had been ingrained in the daily lives of many workers in Los Angeles and the Bay Area. Residents who held well-paying jobs in the inner urban and suburban cities often couldn't qualify for a mortgage on a home unless they drove into the far suburbs (now called “exurbs”), where the price of housing became affordable. This pattern, unfortunately, has become reinforced and worsened thirty years later.

Housing is now especially unaffordable in coastal areas, where two-thirds of Californians live. By 2017, the San Francisco metropolitan area (San Francisco, San Mateo, and Marin Counties) was the nation's least affordable major housing market. Los Angeles, Orange County, San Jose, San Diego, Oakland and Stockton were among the ten least affordable metropolitan areas nationwide. Less than one-fifth of households could afford the median-priced home in these areas. Salinas, Santa Cruz-Watsonville, Napa, and San Luis Obispo-Paso Robles were among the nation's least afford-

able smaller housing markets. In these markets, even people with middle incomes can't afford the rent.

The most affordable areas in California are inland areas. In the Redding, Bakersfield and Chico metropolitan areas, families earning the area's median income could afford more than 55 percent of homes sold in 2016. Families at the median income could afford 38 percent of the homes sold in Sacramento and 35 percent of the homes sold in the Inland Empire.<sup>2</sup> But those areas, too, have begun to see dramatic increases in housing costs and people earning below the median income are squeezed even in these locations.

### **Environmental Justice, the Housing Crisis, and Economic Stress**

“Housing affordability” is a relative term defined by the ratio between housing costs and wages. Our housing crisis is partly a function of the low wage employment crisis gripping not just California, but the country. The purchasing power of the minimum wage has declined by more than one half since 1980. In California, a worker making minimum wage can't afford a market rate one bedroom apartment in any of our 58 counties. According to the National Low Income Housing Coalition, out of more than 3,007 counties in the U.S. a full time worker earning the minimum wage can afford a market rate one bedroom apartment in only 12 counties. The low wage crisis is almost universal.

The wage decline isn't just at the bottom of the market. There is a hollowing out of the middle too. While the housing crisis affects virtually everyone in the state, the most impacted are the low-income workers and unemployed residents who are being displaced by gentrification and are becoming homeless. A disproportionate share of these lower income people are people of color.

The housing crisis is among the main contributing factors to the growing inequity in California. In addition to the human cost of little to no affordable housing, including the rapidly growing homeless population, the housing deficit is beginning to destabilize the economy in some regions. As noted in a recent editorial, California's housing crisis is centered in the Bay Area, and the region's booming economy is increasingly inequitable and unsustainable, which is the message of two recent studies by two very different organizations.<sup>3</sup>

2. Public Policy Institute of California, Housing paper, January, 2018. Accessed at: <http://www.ppic.org/publication/californias-future-housing>.



A study published by the public policy group Next 10 documents the state's increasing inequalities in wages and housing and sounds an alarm about the impact these stresses are having on the workforce. From 2011 to 2016, California added a net of just 209 new housing units for every 1,000 new residents. The major losers from this failure have been California's low-income workers—many of which are leaving the state. From 2006 to 2016, 1.09 million more people left California for other states than moved here from other places in the U.S., with most decamping for Texas, Arizona, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington, where housing costs are lower. Although the level of out-migration was far greater in 2006 amid the housing bubble as the economy and home prices cratered, the rate of out-migration has picked up since 2012 as housing costs once again surged.



While the number of low-income jobs in California has increased significantly over the past several years, the wages offered for those jobs has not. The result is a smaller and smaller share of Californians who are able to afford a basic cost of living in the state. The Next 10 study concludes "While California's economy overall is strong, it is only a matter of time before the discrepancies between wages and housing prices could begin to constrain economic growth."<sup>4</sup>

In a particularly troubling trend, the construction industry itself has suffered from the rapid rise of a sweatshop labor model over the last 35 years. In 1980, a

majority of construction workers in California earned a prevailing wage after undergoing rigorous apprenticeship training. Construction careers promised a reliable path to the middle class for blue collar workers. Today, in contrast, 40 percent of construction workers earn what both the state and federal government classify as a low income and many can't afford a home without a subsidy. Non union workers typically lack proper safety training and suffer disproportionately from on-the-job injuries. For reasons we have stated above, reversing this trend has to be part of the answer to our housing crisis.

A second recent study by the California Housing Partnership, which works with nonprofits and government agencies to provide affordable housing, found a dramatic loss of state funding for affordable housing, substantial increases in the percentage of income that lower-income Californians spent on rent, and enormous increases in homelessness. The homeless numbers are particularly shocking. In Sacramento County, homelessness increased by a whopping 47 percent from 2016 to 2017. In Alameda County, homelessness skyrocketed by 36 percent over the course of the same year. In Santa Clara County, homelessness rose by 13 percent. The Partnership traces a large part of the affordable housing problem to the end of the state's redevelopment programs in February 2012. In California's current housing market, affordable housing development doesn't pencil out without state support.<sup>5</sup>

### **Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions While Tackling the Growing Jobs/Housing Imbalance**

When talking about the future of the housing stock in California, we must always place it within the context of the existential fight of our time—to make a dent in the worst effects of climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The state has pledged to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. To do so, Southern Californians will have to drive nearly 12

3. San Francisco Chronicle, May 11, 2018, editorial "The Bay Area's housing crisis has become an emergency." Accessed at: <https://www.sfchronicle.com/opinion/editorials/article/editorial-The-Bay-Area-s-housing-crisis-has-12908782.php>.

4. Next 10, May 3, 2018, three briefs prepared by Beacon Economics, "Growth Amid Dysfunction: California Migration, Current State of California Housing Market, and California Employment by Income." accessed at: <http://next10.org/housing>.

5. California Housing Partnership, March, 2018. "California's Housing Emergency: State Leaders Must Immediately Reinvest in Affordable Homes," accessed at: <https://chpc.net/resources-library>.

percent less by that date than they did five years ago, cutting their miles on the road every day from 22.8 to 20.2, according to a Los Angeles Times estimate based on data from state and regional climate and planning officials.

These driving reductions mean that Californians will have to walk, bike, and use mass transit much more frequently than they do now. By 2030, residents will have to travel by foot four times more frequently than they did in 2012, alongside a nine-fold increase in bicycling over the same time, and a substantial boost in bus and rail ridership.

vastly reducing the amount of carbon in fuel. But even if the state reaches those targets, the amount of pollution emitted from cars and trucks will still be too high to meet the state's environmental targets, along with an increase in electricity generation to meet the higher demand.<sup>7</sup> One way to make up the difference is for people to drive less.



Getting people out of their cars in favor of walking, cycling, or riding mass transit will require the development of new, dense housing near jobs and commercial centers at a rate not seen in the United States since at least before World War II, according to a recent study by permit and contractor data analysis website BuildZoom.<sup>6</sup> The benefits of doing this, in addition to reducing greenhouse gas pollution, would be to reduce local air pollution; cut noise pollution associated with traffic; and reduce workday commutes, thus allowing people more time for family and social activities.

California's largest portion of greenhouse gas emissions comes from pollution generated by cars and trucks. Climate regulators want to cut traffic emissions by replacing gasoline-powered vehicles with electric versions—the goal is to have 40 percent of all new car sales be zero-emission vehicles by 2030—and by

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6. As cited in the Los Angeles Times, "California won't meet its climate change goals without a lot more housing density in its cities," by Liam Dillon, March 6, 2017. Accessed at <http://www.latimes.com/politics/la-pol-ca-housing-climate-change-goals-20170306-story.html>. See "Can U.S. Cities Compensate for Curbing Sprawl by Growing Denser?," BuildZoom blog by Issi Romem, September 14, 2016. Accessed at <https://www.buildzoom.com/blog/can-cities-compensate-for-curbing-sprawl-by-growing-denser>.

7. Los Angeles Times, March 6, 2017, op cit.

## II. What's Causing California's High Housing Costs?

Why is housing in California so outrageously expensive compared to other parts of the country? Why hasn't more housing, especially housing that is affordable to the workers who fill the new employment centers, been constructed in the coastal areas?

Most experts agree that the huge increase in the cost of housing in most of California's coastal cities and suburbs has been caused by a number of factors, including: zoning that restricts residential density; job growth that outpaces housing growth; the high cost of available land; a shortage of skilled labor; and local regulations and fees. Increased levels of gentrification, displacement, and rapidly inflating home prices in some regions are also being caused by the dramatic expansion of new high-paying tech jobs, which have not been accompanied by the creation of any new affordable housing.

Additionally, systemic issues can reduce turnover of existing housing or encourage greater tolerance for small-scale land speculation. These include property tax laws that are not uniformly applied across counties, and lack of social safety nets that make income from selling a house the essential pathway to retirement or for paying off debt. Other factors that affect home construction are availability of financing for developers and interest rates on mortgages for homeowners. Finally, Governor Jerry Brown's decision in 2012 to end local redevelopment programs and the lack of federal and state funding to build more affordable housing have contributed to the problem.

### Supply and Demand, and Building Costs

It is clear that, on a statewide level, housing supply has not kept up with demand. It has been estimated that on average, between 1980 and 2010, builders in California constructed about 120,000 new housing units each year, when up to 230,000 were needed to keep pace with growing population and changing demand, such as the desire to live in cities near jobs and transit. Due to slowing population growth over the last 10 years, state housing officials now estimate that about

180,000 units are required annually, while about 80,000 units are being built. The gap has hit low-income people especially hard. There is a 1.5 million unit-shortfall between the number of low-income families who live here and the number of rentals they can afford.<sup>8</sup>

The cost to build housing is higher in California than other states. Zoning is the number one culprit because it limits the efficiency with which we use land—which is very expensive in urban and coastal areas. But zoning isn't the only issue. Three additional factors determine developers' cost to build housing: labor costs, materials, and government fees. All three of these components are higher in California than in the rest of the country. Despite relatively stagnant construction wages, labor costs of projects in California have been driven up by declining productivity, a skilled labor shortage, and code requirements for labor-intensive building systems. These factors have created a perfect storm that makes total labor costs so expensive in California metropolitan areas. California's building codes and standards are considered more comprehensive and prescriptive, often requiring more expensive materials and labor. For example, the state requires builders to use higher quality building materials—such as windows, insulation, and heating and cooling systems—to achieve certain energy efficiency and greenhouse gas reduction goals. These costs can be recaptured in lower energy bills during the life of the housing, but they do increase upfront costs. Additionally, in the post Proposition 13 era, development fees—charges levied on builders as a condition of development—have increasingly replaced



8. Legislative Analyst's Office reports, as cited in the Los Angeles Times, August 21, 2017. Accessed at <http://www.lao.ca.gov/LAOEconTax/Housing>.



the property tax as a source of funding for infrastructure and are consequently higher in California than the rest of the country (see separate discussion below).<sup>9</sup>

The Legislative Analyst's Office estimates that altogether, the cost of building a typical single-family home in California's metropolitan areas is likely between \$50,000 and \$75,000 higher than in the rest of the country. Higher building costs contribute to higher housing costs throughout the state. The relationship between building costs and prices and rents, however, differs across inland and coastal areas of the state.

In places where land is relatively abundant, such as much of inland California, building costs generally determine housing costs. This is because landlords and home sellers compete for tenants and homebuyers. This competition benefits renters and prospective homebuyers by depressing prices and rents, keeping them close to building costs. In these types of housing markets, building costs account for the vast majority of home prices. In coastal California, the opposite is true. Renters and home buyers compete for a number of apartments and homes limited by zoning, bidding up prices far in excess of building costs. Building costs account for around one-third of home prices in California's coastal metros. Instead, supply limitations imposed by zoning is the primary driver of housing cost growth in coastal California.<sup>10</sup>

### The Cost of Land and Labor

Regarding the cost of land for new housing, the California coast has some of the most expensive real estate in the country. Residential property is valued at \$150,000 or more per acre, compared to \$20,000 per acre on average in other large metropolitan areas of the country. Land prices in cities like Oakland and San Diego are twice as expensive as other U.S. cities, and more than four times as expensive in San Francisco.<sup>11</sup>

The price and availability of labor is also a factor in new housing construction. Many residential projects

**MORE THAN TWO-THIRDS OF CALIFORNIA'S COASTAL COMMUNITIES HAVE ADOPTED MEASURES—SUCH AS CAPS ON POPULATION, HOUSING GROWTH, OR BUILDING HEIGHT LIMITS—AIMED AT LIMITING RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT.**

have been subject to serious labor shortages in recent years that have affected housing production. The number of builders who report "some or serious" labor shortages has risen from 21 percent in 2012 to 56 percent in 2016.<sup>12</sup> Part of the reason is that the number of construction workers has dropped precipitously. Many skilled workers lost their jobs during the Great Recession of 2007 – 2009. They found better paying jobs in other industries and have not returned to construction.

### Discretionary Review

Local land use and zoning regulations can have an impact on how much housing is built in certain jurisdictions. More than two-thirds of California's coastal communities have adopted measures—such as caps on population, housing growth, or building height limits—aimed at limiting residential development, according to the Legislative Analyst's Office.<sup>13</sup> Onerous parking or transportation improvement requirements, and excessive design review can also discourage housing projects. A UC-Berkeley study of California's local land use regulations found that every growth-control policy a city puts in place raises housing costs by 3 to 5 percent there.<sup>14</sup> One recent study concludes, in particular, that "the pace of housing development appears to be driven by the amount and sequence of discretionary review." These studies are discussed in a separate section of this paper.

9. Legislative Analyst's Office, California's High Housing Costs, March 2015. Accessed at <http://www.lao.ca.gov/LAOEconTax/Housing>.

10. LAO, op cit.

11. LAO, op cit.

12. Survey by the National Association of Home Builders, as cited in "To build housing, pay construction worker fair wages," Sacramento Bee, August 22, 2017. Accessed at: <http://www.sacbee.com/opinion/op-ed/soapbox/article167882062.html>.

13. LAO, op cit.

14. UC-Berkeley, Turner Center, "Expanding Housing Supply in California: A New Framework for State Land Use Regulation." Accessed at: <http://turnercenter.berkeley.edu/other-publications>.

## **Local Development Fees**

Local regulations and fees, and state tax policy, are intertwined in California largely because of the peculiar effect that Proposition 13, and later Proposition 218, have had on land use patterns. Prop 13 is the tax-cutting initiative passed in 1978 that limited the ability of local jurisdictions to raise property taxes to fund schools and other public facilities and services.

The initiative has created what economists refer to as the “fiscalization of land use” in the state, which causes local jurisdictions to favor commercial growth that pays sales tax and needs fewer public services over housing projects that are often viewed as a negative drain on local resources. As a direct result of Prop 13, the state now funds much of the local education budget directly, and local school districts rely on developer fees to make up the difference.

Thus, local fees for housing projects have reached \$30,000 to \$50,000, or more, per single-family unit in many cities, with a significant portion of this total cost due to the increase in local school fees (and other local fees, such as transportation impact fees). A typical list of fees charged to a building permit for a new single-family house consists of local school fees, local traffic/transportation fees, new water and sewer hookup fees, building/planning/health permit review fees, and other fees.

A recent study analyzed development fees in seven sample cities across California—Berkeley, Oakland, Fremont, Los Angeles, Irvine, Sacramento, and Roseville—to examine the total amount of fees charged in each city, the makeup of these fees, and the extent to which information on development fees is available to builders. The study found that development fees for multi-family housing range from a low of \$12,000 per unit in Los Angeles to \$75,000 per unit in Fremont. Fees for single-family housing range from \$21,000 per home in Sacramento to \$157,000 per home in Fremont, over five times as much. The study also found that fees can amount to anywhere from 6 percent to 18 percent of the median home price depending on its location.<sup>15</sup>

## **Proposition 13**

Proposition 13 has had a dramatic effect on housing turnover rates in all parts of California. The initiative limits local jurisdictions from raising property taxes more than 2 percent annually but allows newly sold housing to be taxed at current market value. The phenomenon of older residents who have lived in their homes for decades paying one-half or less in property taxes than young families who have recently purchased a home next door has become commonplace throughout the State. This tax policy has discouraged older residents from downsizing into smaller units and allowing younger residents to purchase move-up housing.

## **Foreclosures and Speculation**

Another factor that has contributed to the rapid rise in housing costs, is the effect of foreclosures taking housing off the market, and in some neighborhoods with high ratios of foreclosed homes, sowing the seeds of blight. In too many instances these foreclosures were the product of abusive loan products which were disproportionately marketed to buyers with modest incomes. Those whose homes were foreclosed weren't the only victims. In neighborhoods with high foreclosure rates, home values collapsed wiping out the life savings of whole communities en masse. To make matters worse, many banks foreclosed rather than renegotiate loans even when foreclosure resulted in greater financial loss for the banks.

## **Loss of Redevelopment**

A final factor that has depressed housing production, especially affordable units, in recent years is the act by Governor Jerry Brown and the State Legislature in 2011 to abolish the 400 city and county redevelopment agencies. That single action wiped out approximately \$1 billion annually of local tax-increment funding that contributed to the construction of low-income housing projects. Since then, no substitute programs have been adopted to compensate for this loss.

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15. UC-Berkeley, Turner Center for Housing Innovation, “It All Adds Up: The Cost of Housing Development Fees in Seven California Cities,” March, 2018. Accessed at: <http://turnercenter.berkeley.edu/other-publications>.

### III. The Effects and Recent Responses to the Affordable Housing Shortage

As the housing affordability crisis has deepened in California, the effects on residents have become more pronounced. Rent levels for apartments in the major urban areas are increasing rapidly and home ownership is shrinking.

California has 6 of the nation's 11 most expensive large metropolitan rental markets: San Francisco, San Jose, Oakland, Orange County, San Diego, and Los Angeles. Estimated median rent for a two-bedroom apartment ranges from \$1,798 in Los Angeles to \$3,377 in San Francisco. In the past couple years, rents have increased 44 percent in San Francisco and 37 percent in the Oakland–Fremont metro areas. The rental vacancy rate is around 3.3 percent, 2 percentage points lower than in 2010 and far below the 5.9 percent nationwide rate. Low vacancy rates have contributed to the tightness of the rental market.<sup>16</sup>



Homeownership rates have declined during the past 10 years, falling to 53.6 percent of occupied units in 2015, compared with 64.2 percent in the rest of the country. Owner-occupied units fell by about 190,000, while rented units increased more than 930,000.<sup>17</sup> Much of the increase in rental units has occurred among formerly owned single-family detached housing units. Foreclosed homes in many California cities were purchased in bulk by corporations during the Great Recession who in turn then rented the homes out.

The rapid rise in rents has triggered a predictable response, with residents and local elected officials calling for the imposition of rent control, greater tenant protections, and other housing initiatives. In addition, to increase the amount of new affordable housing, more cities are adopting local “inclusionary housing” regulations that require new market-rate housing projects over a certain size to include affordable units set aside for low-income families within the project, or to pay an “in lieu” housing fee.

Homelessness has become widespread and the evidence is unmistakable in many California cities. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development estimates that on a single night in January 2016, about 118,000 individuals in California were homeless—21 percent of the national total. Only 36 percent of California's homeless are in shelters or other residential programs—the lowest rate in the nation. The largest number of homeless people live in Los Angeles County, but homelessness affects most counties, even small and rural ones. As homelessness becomes more and more visible, voters are pressing their elected officials to address the problem.

The growing housing crisis will continue to feed the increase in inter-regional commute travel, as workers travel farther and farther out into the far suburbs and inland cities of the Central Valley, the Inland Empire, and elsewhere to find affordable housing. The result is, of course, more traffic congestion on the major, already over-crowded freeways that serve our metropolitan areas.

As the State Legislature began acting assertively on the housing problem in 2017, some bills targeted the root of the problem and included bond and tax measures that raise money to construct new housing. Other bills included provisions that target the regulation of housing project approvals at the local level, and the perceived abuse of public hearings and environmental review laws. The Club's positions on some of these recent bills is discussed in Chapter IV and V of this report.

16. Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC), op cit.

17. PPIC, op cit. and PPIC, Housing paper, January 2017.



## IV. CEQA and Sierra Club California's Position

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) became law in 1970. It is an environmental bill of rights for all Californians. Its success has been copied in several other major urban states in the country, including New York and Washington. The federal equivalent of CEQA, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), was signed into law by President Richard Nixon in 1971.

CEQA is designed to ensure that people in every California community can understand how land use decisions will impact their communities and health and can hold public agencies accountable to local and state environmental and land-use laws.

The California Environmental Quality Act:

- Is the only state law that ensures the public has an opportunity to be informed about and participate in major land-use decisions;
- Gives communities a voice in shaping development in a way that supports quality of life by encouraging transit, bike, and pedestrian-friendly development;
- Provides important public health protections by requiring agencies to explain to the public the air and water pollution that will be caused by major land use projects and to consider feasible measures to reduce these effects; and
- Ensures that developers mitigate, to the extent feasible, the environmental impacts of new construction.

### CEQA Lawsuits: Truth and Myths

Often, the use of legal challenges under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is blamed for stopping a significant number of housing projects. Much of the recent rhetoric we hear or read on this issue that claims CEQA is a key source of housing shortages is simply false. Numerous studies on the issue have largely debunked the complaint that CEQA is a major factor in preventing construction of new housing.

The number of lawsuits filed under CEQA has

actually been low. The total number of development projects subject to CEQA review throughout the state ranged between 17,300 and 18,800 projects in a recent three-year period, and the number of these projects challenged average fewer than 200 a year. The rate of litigation compared to all projects receiving environmental review under CEQA is also very low, with lawsuits filed for fewer than 1 out of every 100 projects reviewed under CEQA that were not considered exempt. The estimated rate of litigation for all CEQA projects undergoing environmental review (excluding exemptions) was 0.7 percent for the three-year period from 2013 - 2015. This is consistent with earlier studies, and far lower than what some press reports about individual projects may imply.<sup>18</sup>



A more recent survey by the California State Senate Environmental Quality Committee shows that CEQA rarely affects most projects when the state is the lead agency. The study examined all state-led projects over a five-year period from 2011 to 2016. The study concluded that CEQA "doesn't block development from actually happening." The study found that 1 percent of these state projects required detailed analyses under CEQA while less than 1 percent of them were sued.

More recently, a study by UC-Berkeley Law School examined the local land use entitlement process in five Bay Area cities and documented similar results.

*In these cities, the pace of housing development appears to be driven by the amount and sequence of discretionary review, not the CEQA process. These*

18. Rose Foundation, CEQA in the 21st Century. prepared by BAE Urban Economics, August 2016. Accessed at: <https://rosefdn.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/CEQA-in-the-21st-Century.pdf>.

*five local governments are choosing to opt into CEQA through their choice to embed discretionary review into the entitlement process. The problem (and potential costs) associated with environmental review do not appear to originate with state environmental regulation...While op-eds, research, and reform proposals often focus on EIRs and CEQA litigation, the data from these five cities indicates that some of the largest projects, those that are the most likely to have significant environmental impacts, did not require EIRs (although EIR projects do tend on average to be larger than non-EIR projects). This data also shows how these cities, while preserving their discretionary review, are often employing tools to facilitate CEQA compliance.<sup>19</sup>*

## **The Need for CEQA "Reform"**

CEQA is meant to encourage thoughtful, informed, transparent decision-making in a way that lessens the environmental harm of projects and plans as they move forward. CEQA compliance creates a process for the public, environmental and public health trustee and regulatory agencies, and other stakeholders, to ensure accurate environmental impact analysis, consideration of project alternatives, and adoption of feasible mitigation measures for a project's significant impacts. Importantly, CEQA also requires an examination of cumulative impacts, thereby stimulating debates around issues such as disproportionately impacted communities, climate change, water supply, growth management, loss of farmland or forestland, effects on endangered or protected animal species, and a host of other impacts.

Some developers have asserted that environmental review is too expensive and unnecessarily delays or even kills important projects intended to advance California's policy objectives. Real estate and other interest groups also express concern about litigation under CEQA—or even the threat of litigation—in the event a public agency mismanages a procedural step or fails to conduct sufficiently comprehensive analysis. Because of these built-in tensions around environmental review

costs, time delays, and outcomes, there have been regular periodic calls for "CEQA reform", and these cries have only accelerated in recent years due to the housing crisis.

As Professor Sean Hecht of the UCLA School of Law noted in 2015:

*Every August, as the California legislative session comes to a head, lobbyists attempt to gain support for dramatically scaling back California's landmark environmental law, CEQA (the California Environmental Quality Act). This year was no exception. Last month, the law firm Holland and Knight, which has been a leading force on this issue, issued a new report designed to gain support for dramatic changes to the law.<sup>20</sup>...Unfortunately, this report, which has been widely covered uncritically in the media, makes claims that are not supported by the data.*

Professor Hecht effectively debunks the central points of the 2015 Holland and Knight report, namely that the evidence demonstrates that CEQA is disproportionately used to attack projects that have environmental benefits. Hecht convincingly argues that CEQA lawsuits do not disproportionately target infill development projects; CEQA lawsuits do not often target transit systems; and CEQA lawsuits are not frequently targeted at renewable energy projects.

For example, Hecht argues the Holland & Knight CEQA study claims that infill projects suffer the most under CEQA are fallacious, since that study defined the term so broadly that almost 90 percent of housing projects in the state are classified as infill.

Hecht concludes that "The report's credibility thus stands or falls in large measure on the report's ability to support these claims with specific empirical evidence. Upon close review, the report does not succeed."<sup>21</sup>

Holland & Knight partner Jennifer Hernandez responded in late 2017 with a new update report that

19. UC-Berkeley Center for Law, Energy & the Environment, "Getting it Right: Examining the Local Land Use Entitlement Process in California to Inform Public Policy and Process." February, 2018. Accessed at: <https://www.law.berkeley.edu/research/clee/research/land-use/getting-it-right>.

20. Holland & Knight, 2015, "In the Name of the Environment: How Litigation Abuse Under the California Environmental Quality Act Undermines California's Environmental, Social Equity and Economic Priorities – and Proposed Reforms to Protect the Environment from CEQA Litigation Abuse." Accessed at: [http://issuu.com/hollandknight/docs/ceqa\\_litigation\\_abuseissuu?e=16627326/14197714](http://issuu.com/hollandknight/docs/ceqa_litigation_abuseissuu?e=16627326/14197714).

21. Sean Hecht, "Anti-CEQA Lobbyists Turn to Empirical Analysis, But Are Their Conclusions Sound? Influential Attacks on California's Environmental Impact Law Aren't Supported By the Data," Legal Planet (Berkeley-UCLA blog), September 28, 2015. Accessed at: <http://legal-planet.org/2015/09/28/anti-ceqa-lobbyists-turn-to-empirical-analysis-but-are-their-conclusions-sound>.



alleges affordable infill housing remains the top target of CEQA lawsuits. The new study uses the same methodology as the firm's earlier three-year study (2010-2012) of statewide CEQA litigation and, as Professor Hecht noted in the earlier study, "the empirical results of the study do not support the rather strident claims of the author."<sup>22</sup>

Despite critics often citing CEQA as a "major barrier to development," no evidence supports that assertion. There are no studies available that quantify the cost of CEQA compliance or its impact on development projects.<sup>23</sup>

**LOCAL AGENCIES ARE EITHER UNAWARE OF THE CEQA EXEMPTIONS THEY COULD USE FOR HOUSING PROJECTS, OR THEY ARE HESITANT TO USE THE EXEMPTIONS BECAUSE OF POLITICAL PRESSURE.**

California's housing supply and demand, as well as financing, are affected by many factors as previously mentioned in this document. Unfortunately, CEQA is increasingly blamed for causing the most recent housing crisis in California, despite substantial evidence to the contrary.

### **CEQA Exemptions**

For several years, business and real estate interests, along with the administration of Governor Jerry Brown and some members of the Legislature, have been outspoken in their criticism of CEQA and abuse of the public hearing process for curtailing housing development at the local level, especially in coastal cities. The solution that is advocated is usually to exempt projects from CEQA review and from public hearings, and allow most, if not all, housing projects to be approved "by right," with no public hearings or CEQA review.

This simplistic solution ignores the fact that CEQA

already contains many exemptions for infill and affordable housing projects. Over the years, the California Legislature has passed a number of laws to simplify the CEQA process for projects that are in line with state laws and policy priorities, including infill, transit-oriented development, and affordable housing projects. These legislative changes serve to expedite the environmental review of qualifying projects or to carve out exemptions. These exemptions could be further clarified and improved.

A list of existing exemptions in the law is quite long, as cited in the *CEQA in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* study. The problem may be that local agencies are either unaware of the exemptions they could use for housing projects, or they are hesitant to use the exemptions because of political pressure. Among the exemptions are the following:

- CEQA State Guidelines section 15183 exempts projects that are consistent with the development density established by existing zoning, community plans, or general plans for which an EIR was certified, except if there are impacts specific to the project or site;
- SB 1925, passed in 2002, created an exemption for infill residential development that meets certain criteria related to size, location, uses, and affordable housing;
- SB 375, passed in 2008, included provisions designed to streamline CEQA review for infill residential, mixed-use, and transit priority projects (TPPs);
- SB 226, passed in 2011, created an alternative streamlining method for eligible infill projects by limiting the topics subject to review at the project level where the environmental impacts of infill development had previously been addressed in a planning level decision;
- AB 900, passed in 2011, provided a streamlined review process for "environmental leadership development projects" that the Governor certifies as providing environmental benefits, meeting wage requirements, and contributing substantial in-state investment; CEQA challenges to

22. Jennifer Hernandez, "California Environmental Quality Act Lawsuits and California's Housing Crisis," published in the UC Hastings School of Law Environmental Law Journal, Volume 24, Number 1, Winter 2018. Accessed at: <http://journals.uchastings.edu/journals/websites/west-northwest/index.php>.

23. CEQA in the 21st Century 2016, op cit.

such development projects are heard directly in the court of appeals and must be decided within 175 days (subject to potential extensions);

- SB 743, passed in 2013, created a new exemption from CEQA for transit priority projects that are consistent with a previously adopted Specific Plan and the relevant regional Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS); and
- SB 674, passed in 2014, expanded the statutory exemption for infill residential housing by increasing the allowable percentage of neighborhood-serving commercial uses within a project.

### **SB 827: By Right Mandates**

In January 2018 State Senator Scott Wiener (D-San Francisco) introduced Senate Bill 827 in an attempt to increase new high-density housing. After much public debate, the bill failed to clear its first policy committee in the Senate in April 2018.<sup>24</sup> The proposal would have dramatically increased zoning densities near major transit stops, but with substandard inclusionary requirements and no labor standards or other community benefits that local government often require as a condition of upzoning. The legislation did not sufficiently consider the infrastructure that would be needed. It would have also dramatically scaled back local zoning control. SB 827's sponsor, California YIMBY, and other bill proponents, including the Chamber of Commerce and the Building Industry Association, correctly argued that zoning restrictions by local governments have prevented new housing from being built in precisely the job- and transit-rich locations where the need is greatest.

The bill's approach was unusual. Rather than taking a traditional approach and requiring an offending jurisdiction to change the regulations in local zoning ordinances that address areas around transit, the bill directly stripped away local control, including opportunities for city council, planning commission and general public engagement in certain zoning decisions. There would be no analysis of potential environmental impacts

such as air quality and traffic impacts, impacts related to previous hazardous materials on the site, analysis that could be used to require infrastructure improvements, or requirements for community benefits.<sup>25</sup> The bill made no distinction between transit stops in leapfrog communities or transit stops in urban areas.

Some of the procedural restrictions that are placed on cities and counties when a large apartment building is exempt from normal discretionary review and subject only to a "by right" process have unintended consequences. By right is what planners call a "non-discretionary" permit issued at the staff level, usually with just one or more building permits issued. There is no ability of local agencies to place unique "conditions of approval" on the development project, which is the normal process when a significant new project is subject to a "discretionary" review such as a subdivision map, use permit, or rezoning action. With the abbreviated by right process, only broad development standards that are attached to all building permits can be imposed. Thus, the local agency may lose the ability to require mitigation for specific impacts.

For example, an apartment building approved by right through only a building permit could be required to pay standard water or sewer hook-up fees for the new residents, but a local agency may not be able to require the developer to pay for additional improvements to the existing trunk line or other infrastructure improvements that would be needed to serve the project. In another example, a perfunctory by right process could fail to require mitigation for biological impacts (e.g. application of a loss-of-habitat fee that applies only to discretionary projects), or fail to disclose hazardous materials contamination of the project site.

When radical legislation that upends the status quo is proposed, there is always the potential for unintended consequences. A list of opponents grew to include many city mayors, environmental justice, transit, tenants' rights, affordable housing, and labor organizations. Sierra Club California opposed the bill, too. Opponents argued that the bill would have wreaked havoc on local affordable housing incentive programs

24. SB 827 failed to be voted out of its first policy committee on April 17, 2018, so the legislation was killed for the year. However, the author has stated his intent to introduce a revised version of the bill during the 2019 legislative session.

25. The second amended version of SB 827 (April 2018) dropped the height requirement to 55 feet and includes a section that allows a developer under the new bill provisions to apply for a CEQA exemption under SB 35 (the author's bill enacted in 2017). The second amendments clarify that projects not eligible for a CEQA exemption would be subject to CEQA.

in Los Angeles and elsewhere. As the Los Angeles Times editorialized in January 2018:<sup>26</sup>

*So, yes, the state needs to play a larger role in pushing local governments to approve more housing near metro stops. But what is the appropriate role for state lawmakers and how much local control should they take away?*

*The bill would have a major impact on Los Angeles, where huge swaths of the city are close to transit stops or bus lines. Los Angeles has recently embarked on an ambitious effort to work with neighborhoods to update the city's 35 community plans and to rezone land around transit stations—much of which could be rendered moot by SB 827.*

*But here's a potential problem with the bill: By setting blanket height and density increases statewide, the bill, as currently written, could eliminate key affordable housing incentives and protections designed to reduce displacement in gentrifying neighborhoods.*

*California clearly needs to make it easier to build housing. And it makes sense to concentrate new housing near mass transit to encourage people to get around without cars. Surely lawmakers can come up with legislation to push cities to approve taller, more dense housing near transit without completely overriding local control or undermining existing efforts to incentivize the building of affordable housing.*

Less draconian than the by right approach would be an approach that would offer incentives to cities to "upzone" single-family zoning to at least medium-, if not high-density, zoning districts. Or a state bill could mandate that cities that have not met local housing goals must rezone lands around transit stations.

The Sierra Club is committed in its support of urban infill development and the attainment of social and environmental justice goals. While Sierra Club acknowledges there is room to improve our state's environmental laws, many of the recent proposals discussed in the legislature in the last few years, like SB 827, go too far, adding huge loopholes to exempt all housing development projects from any environmental review and even from discretionary review by local officials, thereby eliminating public appeals. Moreover, during periodic negotiations about CEQA reform legislation, so-called reform proponents, including the California Chamber of Commerce and the Building Industry Association, have refused to allow procedural improvements without also requiring substantial rollbacks in transparency and public participation guaranteed by CEQA.

CEQA is integral to development review process and safeguarding the environment, especially for medium-sized and large development that could have significant effects. Within the context of any discussion of CEQA reforms, there is a need to always consider an appropriate balance of discretionary (public hearing and CEQA review) vs. ministerial (no hearings or review) of development projects based on size and potential for environmental impacts. Application of sweeping legislation reform that guts public review and paints all housing development applications with a "one-size-fits-all" law that mandates "by right" approval is unfair to all parties, including state, federal, and public agencies, who normally participate during the CEQA process.

THE SIERRA CLUB IS COMMITTED  
IN ITS SUPPORT OF URBAN INFILL  
DEVELOPMENT AND THE ATTAINMENT OF  
SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE  
GOALS.

26. Los Angeles Times editorial, January 23, 2018. Accessed at:  
<http://www.latimes.com/opinion/editorials/la-ed-housing-near-transit-20180123-story.html>.

## V. Sierra Club's Housing Policies and Recent Positions on Housing Issues

Sierra Club "speaks with one voice." That means that any and all Sierra Club entities, whether at the group, chapter, or national level, must advocate policies and positions that are consistent with national and state adopted policy positions.

Thirty years ago, the Club adopted an urban environment policy that strongly supports "Attractive, compact and efficient urban areas; with densities and mixtures of uses that encourage walking and transit use, and encourage more efficient use of private autos in balance with other transportation modes."

The national transportation policies that were adopted in 1994 likewise support land use patterns "to improve pedestrian access, encourage shorter trips, increase public transit use, enhance the economic viability of public transit and decrease private motor vehicle use (auto mobility). Therefore zoning, financing, land-use controls and other policies should:

- concentrate employment near transit stations or stops;
- densify residential areas to allow shorter trips;
- integrate pedestrian-oriented neighborhood commerce into residential neighborhoods;
- provide pedestrian amenities;
- reduce parking requirements and eliminate parking subsidies;
- provide adequate parks, natural areas and plantings for humans and wildlife."

The extensive energy resources policies, adopted in 2006, also reinforce this concept of dense urban infill and mixed-use communities. The policies call for reducing the need to drive passenger vehicles by shortening the distance between workplace, home, shopping, and school, using "smart growth" planning and improved transportation options.

The Sierra Club also adopted an Environmental Justice policy in 1993, that supports environmental justice related to housing and land use issues. Specifically, the

Club believes that people have the right to participate in the development of rules, regulations, and plans at every level of decision-making. Cultural, linguistic, geographic, economic, and other barriers to participation should be addressed. People have a right to know the information necessary for informed environmental decision-making, and a right to a safe and healthful work and home environment.

### Sierra Club California's Growth Management Guidelines

Sierra Club California has adopted *Growth Management Guidelines* that address much more specific California housing and growth issues.<sup>27</sup> The *Guidelines* were last amended in 2001 and are now in the process of being revised to address the critical housing issues outlined in this report.



The current *Guidelines* build upon the national policies to strongly support infill growth. The Sierra Club believes the production of affordable housing for California's families and workers is one of the most important challenges facing California. We support incentives for housing production within infill areas, including commercial areas, and will support state legislation to encourage the development of affordable and infill housing, especially within designated growth areas within an adopted urban growth boundary.

The *Growth Management Guidelines* note that:

"The increased provision of affordable and low-income housing is compatible with environmental protection when sited and constructed in line with the above

27. Growth Management Guidelines, original adoption in 1990. Updated and re-adopted May, 2001, by California-Nevada Regional Conservation Committee. Amended September, 2002.



policies for urban infill, mixed use, compact development, and neighborhoods. Further, we recommend the following local government programs and policies:

- Adoption of inclusionary zoning policies;
- Development of programs for local funding of low-income housing through the establishment of housing trust funds;
- Incentives for low-income housing development including exemptions from parking and traffic limitations;
- Funding for the rehabilitation of older housing to affordable units.
- Legalization of "in-law" or second units without additional parking requirements.
- Broadening of zoning ordinances to more readily accommodate quality manufactured housing as an alternative to more expensive conventional housing.
- Inclusion of housing in commercial areas, by adding residential use to new and existing commercial areas and by redeveloping vacant or underused retail/office/industrial areas with mixed use and housing."

However, California's serious shortages of housing, especially low-income and affordable housing cannot be solved through land use policies alone. Other factors, such as income levels, mortgage rates, job demand and demographics are far greater influences. There will never be enough housing as long as the pace of job development exceeds the pace of nearby residential development. And housing will never be affordable as long as cost of living increases exceed the rate of wage growth.

The *Growth Management Guidelines* call for "effective State and regional planning and decision making [that] are necessary to address the complex environmental protection (air and water quality, open space, habitat), transportation, waste management, jobs and housing needs of metropolitan areas." We recommend state legislation to create a land-use decision-making process that locates urban growth to optimize the use of existing and committed future transportation systems.

To accomplish this, the *Growth Management Guidelines* call for the State to adopt a State Comprehensive

Plan, based on analysis of growth projections, environmental constraints, and infrastructure requirements, to guide the conservation and development of the state. The State should develop a program to mandate coordination of land use, transportation, and infrastructure decision-making at the local and regional level.

**THE CLUB ADOPTED THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT POLICY THAT STRONGLY SUPPORTS "ATTRACTIVE, COMPACT AND EFFICIENT URBAN AREAS; WITH DENSITIES AND MIXTURES OF USES THAT ENCOURAGE WALKING AND TRANSIT USE, AND ENCOURAGE MORE EFFICIENT USE OF PRIVATE AUTOS IN BALANCE WITH OTHER TRANSPORTATION MODES."**

### **Sierra Club's Support Positions on Recent Housing Legislation**

Sierra Club California has supported numerous pro-housing bills in the California Legislature over the last decades. In 2017, we strongly supported SB 2 (Atkins), which was signed into law and enacted a \$75 transfer fee on certain real estate documents and dedicates the revenues to affordable housing programs. We supported the legislation that placed a \$4-billion bond aimed at the 2018 ballot that would fund low-income housing developments and subsidize home loans for California veterans (SB 3, Beall). We continue to work with legislators who are proposing other housing bills.

In Southern California, local Club leaders came under intense pressure from neighborhood activists to support Measure S, on the March 2017 ballot, in Los Angeles. The measure would have placed a two-year moratorium on major developments and required an overhaul of the city's land-use plans. Following vigorous debate, the Club's Angeles Chapter took no position on the controversial measure. Measure S lost at the polls.

More recently, Los Angeles voters approved Measure M, which increased the county sales tax by half a penny and is expected to generate \$120 billion in transit



improvements over the next four decades. The Sierra Club worked actively for the Measure M campaign.

In the San Francisco Bay Area, local Club leaders strongly supported Measure U1, Measure KK, and Measure A1. Measure U1 in Berkeley passed a business license tax increase in order to raise an estimated \$4 million annually for affordable housing and homelessness prevention. Measure KK authorized the City of Oakland to issue and sell up to \$600 million in bonds to invest in affordable housing and infrastructure improvements. Measure A1 authorized the County of Alameda to issue and sell up to \$580 million in bonds for affordable housing. The San Francisco Bay Chapter has frequently supported initiatives for rent control and eviction protections for tenants and families.

The Sierra Club has consistently supported efforts to enact inclusionary housing programs and housing mitigation fees at the local level. Inclusionary programs require developers of medium-sized and large market-rate housing projects to dedicate a certain portion of the total housing units, often in the range of 5 percent to 15 percent, for moderate and low-income families, or else to pay an in-lieu fee that goes to fund affordable housing elsewhere.

anti-displacement and anti-gentrification policies. The Club consistently lends our strong support for passage of affordable housing bonds and other ballot measures that create more affordable housing opportunities.

**THE CLUB CONSISTENTLY LENDS  
OUR STRONG SUPPORT FOR PASSAGE  
OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING BONDS  
AND OTHER BALLOT MEASURES THAT  
CREATE MORE AFFORDABLE HOUSING  
OPPORTUNITIES.**

The Club also strongly supports tenants' rights and rent control. We have backed the repeal of the 1995 Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act, which restricts local rent control laws from applying to large amounts of housing, including all housing built after 1995, single-family homes, condos and duplexes. An initiative to repeal the 20-year old law has qualified for the November 2018 ballot which, if successful would allow local governments to pass their own versions of rent control.

It is clear that our members have worked tirelessly on local and regional programs directed at adopting

## VI. What are Some of the Solutions to the Housing Crisis?

As any casual student of California history is aware, the state has suffered from a “boom and bust” development pattern since the days of the Gold Rush. Unfortunately, there is no evidence that such uneven growth spurts and collapses won’t occur in the coming decades. We must always be cognizant that state policy on housing and other issues is often made in the heat of the moment, as we react to fleeting economic cycles.

The affordable housing crisis of the current time is not unusual, although the depths of the problem seem to be much more severe than in previous growth cycles. Indeed, some well-meaning residents are adamant that local land-use controls must be shunted aside so that developers can throw up new housing projects anywhere they can find buildable space.

The Sierra Club is skeptical that rushing to find a “one-size-fits-all” approach to the state’s housing crisis will result in meaningful reform, unless there is a careful, deliberative proposal to adopt statewide comprehensive planning goals that could be implemented at the local levels through financial incentives and regulatory sticks. We must support better state planning that sets growth goals and then helps local cities and counties fulfill these goals. Reform of some existing laws, such as 2008’s landmark SB 375 and the Regional Housing Needs Assessment program, could be incremental improvements.

At some point, the State of California must step in and work with local and regional planning agencies to address the jobs/housing imbalances that are worsening in the Bay Area and Southern California. Unfortunately, supposedly visionary new laws such as SB 375, in place now for ten years, have not proven to be effective. As explained below, they fail to connect all the dots in terms of requiring a direct link between regional transportation programs and local general plans.

### Recent Upsurge in Multi-Family Housing

While homelessness is rising in most urban areas, this most obvious symptom of the affordable housing crisis is masking the multi-family housing growth that is occurring in many cities. In fact, recent economic and real estate forecasts indicate that multi-family, infill

housing construction has been booming for several years and is leading the real estate rebound in California. For example, the 2015 Allen Matkins/UCLA Anderson Forecast California Commercial Real Estate Survey, a leading annual publication, noted that “multi-family construction will achieve a 25-year high during the next three years” and that “[t]hough overall residential construction has remained at depressed levels in the state, multi-family construction has rebounded sharply.”



The Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) latest update of housing in the state for January 2018 reports that:

*New residential construction permits are set to exceed 100,000 in 2017—up from 33,000 in 2009 but still far below the 200,000 units permitted annually from 2003 to 2005...New home construction permits are almost back to 2007 levels but housing is especially unaffordable in coastal areas, where two-thirds of Californians live. Looking ahead as the state’s population grows, housing demand continues to increase. California needs short- and long-term policies that improve housing affordability and remove unnecessary barriers to expanding supply, while meeting environmental goals. State efforts must interact with local land-use and zoning policies; this means that addressing California housing problems will take many years of sustained work and cooperation between state and local officials.*

*State and local land-use policies should encourage more housing. California’s tight housing market reflects not only a scarcity of developable land*

*but also an array of policy choices and regulations. Promotion of commercial development, such as tax incentives for businesses that relocate, should be balanced by policies that encourage new housing...*

*Balancing environmental goals with housing development will be a challenge. California has passed legislation to encourage local land-use planning that reduces driving—and lowers harmful emissions. The goal is to coordinate new housing development with current and planned transportation networks. Infill (new construction in built-up areas) is one way to achieve this goal, but there is a trade-off. In the past, much of California's most affordable new housing was built on vacant land at the edge of urbanized areas. Infill development tends to be more expensive and usually produces fewer units. Identifying water sources for new development is also an issue in some parts of the state.<sup>28</sup>*

### **The Promise of SB 375 is Unfulfilled**

The state has pledged to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. Since 2008, state law (SB 375) has required the Southern California Association of Governments and California's other regional governments to plan their residential growth to meet these climate goals. But those efforts haven't been enough. In a series of reports over the last year, climate regulators have said California needed to reduce driving by an additional 15 percent—over what regional governments have already planned—to meet the 2030 greenhouse gas targets. That means even more dense housing than previously anticipated will be needed.

Such efforts would concentrate growth in cities and the suburbs immediately next to them.

*Nowhere is going to look like Singapore or Hong Kong or Manhattan, but there will be intensification of development in central areas and in some outlying areas," said Steve Winkelman, director of the Center for Clean Air Policy, a Washington, D.C., non-profit that has studied the land-use implications of the state's climate targets. "The central areas will look a lot more like European cities, with good transit access and pedestrian access.*

Those changes could require California cities to encourage home building at an unprecedented rate in neighborhoods that are already developed. In the United States, a BuildZoom study found that no city's housing growth has kept pace with increased demand through development centered in an urban core since at least the 1940s. Cities where housing supply met demand only achieved that balance by sprawling outward.

Should California cities attempt to grow rapidly within existing urban areas, it will mean supporting redevelopment of some single-family neighborhoods that planners have long considered untouchable because of local resistance, according to Issi Romem, BuildZoom's chief economist. "I can't imagine it happening," Romem said. "It doesn't feel realistic to me."<sup>29</sup>

**CALIFORNIA NEEDED TO REDUCE DRIVING BY AN ADDITIONAL 15 PERCENT—OVER WHAT REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS HAVE ALREADY PLANNED—TO MEET THE 2030 GREENHOUSE GAS TARGETS. THAT MEANS EVEN MORE DENSE HOUSING THAN PREVIOUSLY ANTICIPATED WILL BE NEEDED.**

Nearly 15 years ago, Sacramento-area planners developed a blueprint for the region's growth that aimed to direct development toward existing urban neighborhoods or near transit stations. But a 2015 study in the Journal of the American Planning Association found that builders continued to construct more new homes in the Sacramento suburbs. The study concluded that economic conditions, demand, and neighborhood resistance to tightly packed housing were far more important factors in deciding where homes were built than the regional plan.<sup>30</sup>

28. Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC), Housing report, January, 2018. Accessed at: <http://www.ppic.org/publications>.

29. Los Angeles Times, March 6, 2017, op cit.

30. As cited in Los Angeles Times, March 6, 2017, op cit.



## **More State Involvement in Housing Policy?** **The Double-Edged Sword**

A key issue that must be addressed when we discuss potential solutions to the housing crisis is local land use control or “home rule.” California has always had a very strong streak of local cities resisting any attempts by Sacramento to dictate, or intrude in any way upon, the decisions made by city councils and county boards of supervisors on approving subdivisions, shopping centers, and all other local development applications. Even liberal residents and lawmakers who would normally trust governmental institutions and would support government programs to better the lives of residents and the environment, are loath to risk the wrath of governmental lobbyists descending from the League of California Cities, the California State Association of Counties, and others to defend local land use decision-making power.

While State intervention in local growth decisions has been generally met with reflexive suspicion, if not hostility, the last three decades of economic boom and bust periods have seen many interesting attempts to strengthen the state’s role in housing and growth issues. The recent attempts by Senator Scott Wiener to dictate zoning to cities were preceded by vigorous debates over appropriate “growth management” programs that began in the 1970’s in California and other coastal states.

Legislative attempts to impose “smart growth” housing policies at the state level have had a decidedly mixed success rate. Growth management almost gained traction in the early 1990’s under Governor Pete Wilson and Assembly leader Willie Brown but then evaporated as the economy worsened and there was no more growth to manage.

Yet, there is a strain of state planning history in California that can serve as the basis for a renewed reform of progressive housing and land use laws. Governor Jerry Brown, in his first incarnation in 1978, had the foresight to allow his Office of Planning and Research to publish the visionary *An Urban Strategy for California*.<sup>31</sup> This remains a visionary document far ahead of its time. As noted in the most recent 2015 iteration of the document, “The Urban Strategy for California remains

a highly relevant document, reflecting many of the sustainability concepts that shape current policies and goals for the state and its communities.”

Most legislative attempts to insert more state policies and involvement in housing issues have been defeated over the last two decades largely as the result of pressure from the League of California Cities and others who feared loss of home rule due to expanded state involvement in land use policies.

However, some organizations such as the Sierra Club still hold out hope that the housing crisis may have become so severe that state intervention in comprehensive planning (as opposed to top-down regulatory controls) will become considered seriously by our lawmakers in Sacramento again.

Nowhere is state involvement in housing policy needed more than in solving the conundrum of the jobs/housing imbalance in key growth areas. While many legislators and planners had high hopes that SB 375 would accomplish the goal of marrying land use and transportation planning to achieve greenhouse reduction goals, the law has been only a limited success. The Achilles heel, the weakest part of SB 375, is the law’s failure to require a direct link between the new smart growth principles and the local General Plans that guide all local growth decisions. We advocate that this broken link could be corrected with new state legislation.

## **The Promise of Housing Elements**

State law requires every city and county to adopt a Housing Element as part of their local General Plan. Housing Elements have been required for 30 years but few would argue that they have had a significant impact on the production of housing. Local agencies do not produce housing—homebuilders do. Local cities and counties have limited ability to affect the local market. Housing projects either “pencil out” or they do not.

Reform of the existing Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) program, a key part of the Housing Element law, has possibilities but the devil is in the details. Some charge that RHNA, which is how California determines how much housing each local community should build, is based on a flawed methodology

31. Office of Planning and Research , *An Urban Strategy for California*, 1978. Accessed at: [http://www.opr.ca.gov/docs/urban\\_strategy.pdf](http://www.opr.ca.gov/docs/urban_strategy.pdf).

that significantly underestimates population growth and how much housing will be needed. Sierra Club California agrees that the RHNA process is ripe for reform. However, the function of housing growth projections prepared by the Department of Finance must be transferred over to a more credible planning-oriented state agency such as the Natural Resources Agency. As we have advocated for years, the entire RHNA process should be made part and parcel of a new state comprehensive plan program.

## **Conclusion**

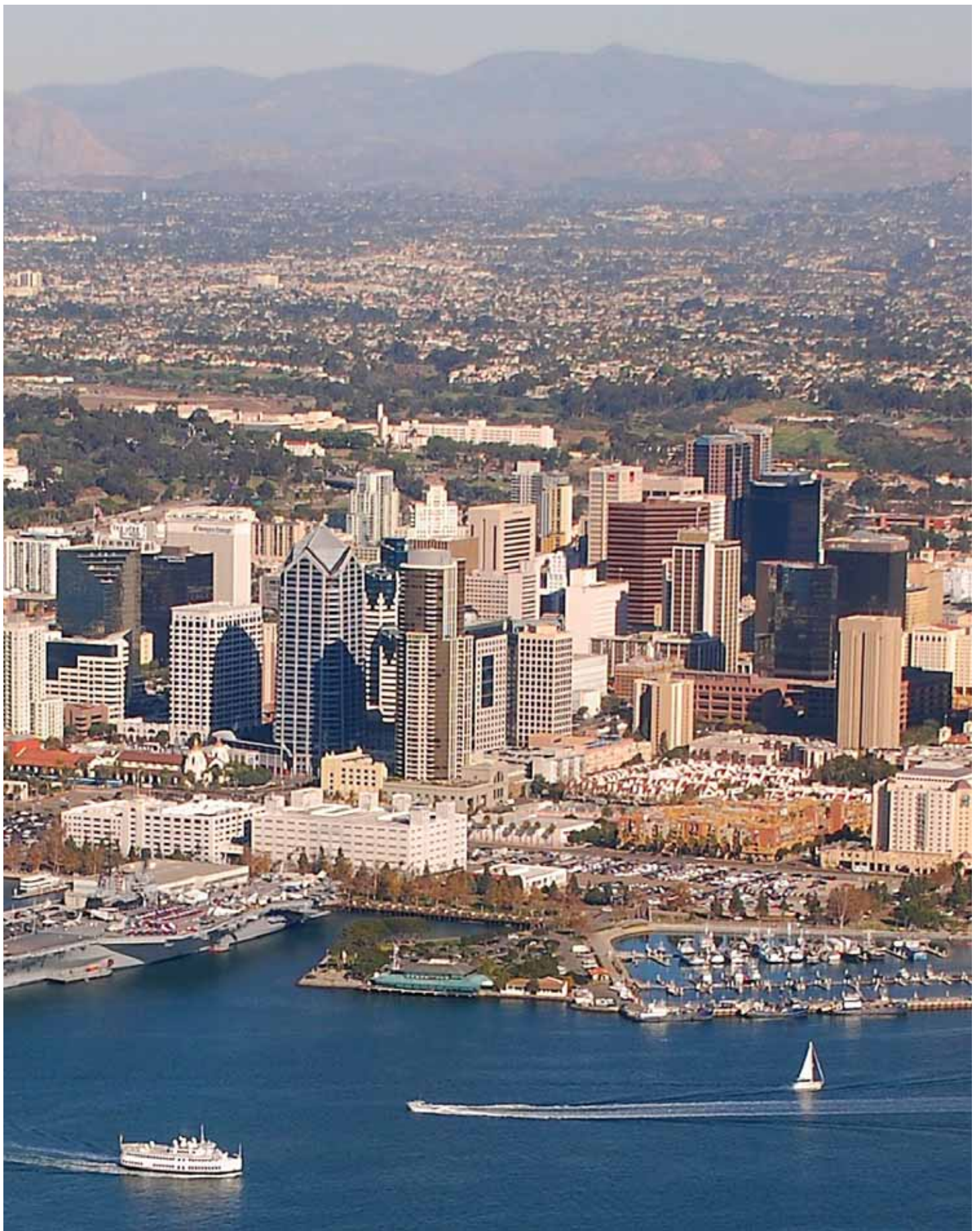
There is a clear need to produce more affordable housing in California, just as there is a clear need to protect wildlands, prevent displacement, and reduce greenhouse gases. It is possible to accomplish all of these goals, but it will require early consultation and collaboration among all parties through the legislative process.



## VII. Recommendations

Listed here in brief are a several recommendations for policies that could and should be considered to help make affordable housing easier to build near jobs without displacing local residents or pushing more development into environmentally sensitive wildland areas:

1. Mandate that cities that fall behind in their RHNA goals must rezone lands around transit stations.
2. Reform the RHNA process by transforming it into a state planning program.
3. Re-establish a more narrowly defined redevelopment-like program that focuses on creating affordable housing.
4. Allow local affordable housing bonds to be passed by the voters by a simple majority, rather than a two-thirds majority.
5. Support the repeal of the Hawkins-Costa Act to return to cities and counties the option of enacting rent eviction controls and rent stabilization measures.
6. Mandate that local agencies reduce building and development fees for qualifying affordable housing projects.
7. Develop incentive programs that encourage local agencies to adopt inclusionary housing ordinances that require housing projects to include affordable units.
8. Plug the SB 375 loophole by requiring a direct link (and a finding of consistency) between the new smart growth principles of adopted Sustainable Community Strategy Plans and the local General Plans that guide all local growth decisions.
9. Identify ways to help ensure local planning departments are adequately staffed and trained to implement existing measures that can accelerate housing production.





## Appendix

### Adopted Sierra Club Policies

#### Urban Environment (excerpts from national policy)

##### Conservation of Open Space

1. Preservation of hills, coasts, wetlands, other outlying natural areas and agricultural lands by zoning, curbing suburban highway development, control of municipal services and other devices to eliminate "leap-frog" sprawl.
2. Abundant, convenient public open spaces, including parks, playgrounds and natural "unimproved" areas.
3. "Infill" residential and commercial development on unused or under-used land within city boundaries and already served with streets, water, sewer and other public services, but excluding parks, park-like lands, agricultural lands, and sensitive and hazardous areas.
4. Opening up of waterfronts to public access and use.

##### Protection and Enhancement of the Quality of Urban Life

1. Protection and enhancement of the quality of urban life by preservation of our architectural and cultural heritage.
2. Preservation and revitalization of urban neighborhoods, with residents protected from unreasonable economic and physical disruption; rehabilitation of housing and community facilities; jobs creation; a safe and healthy workplace environment; and elimination of "redlining" practices.
3. Attractive, compact and efficient urban areas; with densities and mixtures of uses that encourage walking and transit use, and encourage more efficient use of private autos in balance with other transportation modes.

##### Conservation of the Urban Infrastructure

1. Upkeep and improvement of the urban infrastructure, including water supplies, sewage, rail systems and waterfronts.
2. Improvement of transit systems, including operating and capital subsidies where necessary to maintain reasonable fares and safe, frequent service.

##### Wise Use of Resources and Safe Disposal of Waste

1. Energy- and material-efficient residential and commercial buildings and water-conserving development.
2. Incentives for reducing the generation of solid waste and for promoting recycling of materials.
3. Management of toxic and hazardous materials to decrease their use and to assure that public health and the environment are fully protected from any releases to air, water or land (during manufacture, use, storage, transport or disposal).
4. Full public disclosure of the uses, emissions, and potential effects of all hazardous and toxic materials.

These development patterns and transit improvements would conserve energy, water, land and building materials while enhancing the pleasure and safety of urban life and reducing travel distances. This and the control of toxic substances would improve air and water quality and make better use of existing urban infrastructure. Additionally, these patterns would reduce developments in forest lands, on coasts, in coastal wetlands, and other natural areas.

*Adopted by the Board of Directors, February 1, 1986.*

## **Growth Management Guidelines (excerpts from California policy)**

### **I. Urban Growth Boundaries**

All cities and unincorporated urban centers must establish permanent urban growth boundaries (UGBs) that will define the area of ultimate urbanization and protect the county's or region's open space lands. Development shall be directed toward areas within UGBs, in order to avoid adverse impacts upon productive agriculture, wildlife habitat, critical watershed lands, historical and archeological resources, open space lands, and scenic values.

Local governments may establish other means of managing the impacts of growth, such as annual limits and growth caps, provided these methods do not preclude compact development in appropriate locations.

1. Lands within the urban boundary will be devoted to compact residential, commercial, and industrial development that makes efficient use of land and infrastructure. Natural systems and environmentally sensitive habitat areas within the urban boundary must be protected.
2. Lands outside of the urban growth boundaries—lands that form the area's greenbelt—will encompass recreational open space, watershed, agricultural, wetlands, wildlife habitat/corridors, shoreline, forest/woodland, and other lands which are essential. To protect biodiversity, these lands must be zoned for uses and in parcel sizes consistent with economically viable units for the agricultural, recreational or resource conservation uses proposed.
3. Annexations of new land outside UGBs to cities shall not be approved by Local Agency Formation Commissions, except in instances when annexation would lead to improved environmental protections. Spheres of influence, areas designated by County Local Agency Formation Commissions to show the ultimate boundaries of each city, should conform to UGBs. County general plans should require that all urban development shall be within cities.

4. New large lot residential development (ranchettes) outside urban boundaries and dependent on wells and individual septic systems should be prohibited in designated metropolitan greenbelts and on all resource lands, i.e. watersheds, productive agricultural lands, and lands zoned for timber production.

### **II. Open Space Planning and Protection**

We recommend State legislation mandating that the existing Open Space Element of local General Plans be improved to include the following:

5. All cities and counties as well as all metropolitan regions shall prepare Comprehensive Open Space Plans which must include:
  - (a) A Biodiversity Inventory identifying...
  - (b) Policies for the Protection of these Environmental Systems.
  - (c) An Implementation Plan to acquire or otherwise protect these environmental systems.

### **III. Land Use Patterns within Urban Growth Boundaries: Infill and Compact Urban Development**

These policies are intended for implementation in local plans and ordinances, except as otherwise indicated.

6. Urban development should take place only within urban boundaries. Generally, new development should respect the character of the existing neighborhood. Residential densities and commercial floor area ratios must be sufficient to facilitate public transit and nonmotorized transportation and to achieve increased energy efficiency and affordability of housing. Compact redevelopment should be promoted within one-half mile of high service transit nodes and corridors.
7. Commercial development must take place primarily in major central business areas, in order to assure transit destinations of sufficient scale, and a full range of job choice and services to

businesses and employees. Such commercial development must have sufficient density to provide for these advantages.

8. Any other major commercial development must take place at locations served by existing or committed future transit lines or hubs. Such future transit hubs shall be located in such a way as to improve the relationship between jobs and housing in the region.
9. To enhance community identity and interaction, a balance of compatible commercial, industrial, residential, and civic uses, enjoyable public places and local parks should be distributed in close proximity in urban neighborhoods. Such mixed-use development will encourage walking, bicycling and use of public transit. Public services, especially the schools, should be improved to encourage revitalization of urban neighborhoods.
10. When working to achieve urban infill, mixed-use neighborhoods and increased densities, it is important to also respect the historical, aesthetic, cultural and human scale values of neighborhoods. New construction shall be designed to be consistent with and/or complementary to existing neighborhood qualities.

#### IV. Housing

The increased provision of affordable and low-income housing is compatible with environmental protection when sited and constructed in line with the above policies for urban infill, mixed use, compact development, and neighborhoods. Further, we recommend the following local government programs and policies:

11. Adoption of inclusionary zoning policies, which mandate that a percentage of low-income units be included in new residential development, and adoption of requirements for housing impact fees by commercial development.
12. Development of programs for local funding of low-income housing through the establishment of housing trust funds to be financed by fees on commercial development and taxes such as employee tax, payroll tax and business license tax.

13. Incentives for low-income housing development including exemptions from parking and traffic limitations.
14. Funding for the rehabilitation of older housing to affordable units.
15. Legalization of “in-law” or second units without additional parking requirements.
16. Broadening of zoning ordinances to more readily accommodate quality manufactured housing as an alternative to more expensive conventional housing.
17. Utilization of certain publicly owned urban lands such as HUD properties and unused CALTRANS rights of way which are served by transit for the construction of affordable housing.
18. Inclusion of housing in commercial areas, by adding residential use to new and existing commercial areas and by redeveloping vacant or underused retail/office/industrial areas with mixed use and housing.
19. The Sierra Club believes the production of affordable housing for California’s families and workers is one of the most important challenges facing our State. We support incentives for housing production within infill areas, including commercial areas, and will support State legislation to encourage the development of affordable and infill housing, especially within designated growth areas within an adopted Urban Growth Boundary.

However, California’s serious shortages of low-income and affordable housing cannot be solved through land use policies alone. Other factors (such as income levels, mortgage rates, job demand and demographics) are far greater influences. Housing will never be affordable as long as the pace of job development exceeds the pace of nearby residential development.

#### VI. Urban Air Quality/Transportation

Urban development shall be managed to achieve and sustain clean air by integrating land use and transportation planning, particularly by the following means



25. The rate and intensity of growth shall be carefully monitored to assure that air quality attainment plans are not compromised.
26. Air districts shall have indirect source review powers that allow them to veto local and regional development projects threatening attainment of air quality standards.
27. Local governments shall implement land use and other policies that maximize pedestrian, mass transit and bicycle access to job, entertainment, and commercial centers.
28. Only areas well served by mass transit shall be zoned for commerce, offices, and manufacturing.
29. Lands around transit stations shall be zoned for higher density development in order to facilitate transit use.
30. Urban transportation planning shall place an increased emphasis on public transit, carpooling, van-pooling, pedestrian and bicycle routes as well as related trip reduction and congestion management techniques.
31. Public transit services shall be coordinated to enable easy and timely transfers between them, with information on routes readily available, and preferential rights of way and the ability to preempt traffic signals wherever possible.
32. Parking in business, commercial and industrial centers shall be limited or made more expensive in order to encourage transit use.

*Original adoption 1990 Updated and re-adopted May, 2001, by California-Nevada Regional Conservation Committee; amended September, 2002.*

## **Transportation (excerpts from national policy)**

The Sierra Club supports transportation policy and systems that:

- minimize the impacts on and use of land, airspace and waterways, minimize the consumption of limited resources, including fuel, and reduce pollutant and noise emissions;
- provide everyone, including pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users, with adequate access to jobs, shopping, services and recreation;
- provide adequate and efficient goods movement and substitute local goods for those requiring long distance movement, where feasible;
- encourage land uses that minimize travel requirements;
- strengthen local communities, towns and urban centers, and promote equal opportunity;
- eliminate transportation subsidies which handicap achievement of the above goals; and ensure vigorous and effective public participation in transportation planning.

*Adopted by the Board of Directors, February 19-20, 1994; amended May 7-8, 1994.*

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### *Guidelines Adopted by the Transportation Committee:*

The Sierra Club favors the most energy and land conserving, and least polluting systems and vehicles.

Walking and bicycling are best, along with electronic communications to reduce trips. Next are buses, minibuses, light rail and heavy rail (as corridor trips increase); electrified wherever feasible. Rail systems are most effective in stimulating compact development patterns, increasing public transit patronage and reducing motor vehicle use. Station access should be provided by foot, bicycle and public transit, with minimal, but full-priced, public parking.

Accommodation of pedestrians, bicycles and public transit should be given priority over private automobiles.

Public transit service should be coordinated, and transit facilities should facilitate intermodal transfers, including convenient and safe bicycle access to public transit vehicles, and secure bicycle storage in public places and stations. Multiple occupancy vehicles should be favored over single occupancy vehicles. Roads and traffic laws should be designed and enforced to enhance safety. All parking costs should be fully and directly charged...

Land use patterns should be designed to improve pedestrian access, encourage shorter trips, increase public transit use, enhance the economic viability of public transit and decrease private motor vehicle use (auto mobility). Therefore zoning, financing, land-use controls and other policies should:

- concentrate employment near transit stations or stops;
- densify residential areas to allow shorter trips;
- integrate pedestrian-oriented neighborhood commerce (markets, restaurants, services, etc.) into residential neighborhoods;
- provide pedestrian amenities (such as a complete regular pedestrian street grid; sidewalks on both sides of the road; slow streets [traffic calming], speed limits and stop signs or lights to keep traffic safe and comfortable for pedestrians; auto-free town and urban centers; street furniture and shelters; and buildings that front onto the sidewalk rather than be isolated behind parking or landscaped areas);
- reduce parking requirements and eliminate parking subsidies;
- provide adequate parks, natural areas and plantings for humans and wildlife, aesthetic enhancement, pedestrian protection and building/ sidewalk cooling; and
- protect land outside presently developed areas from urban sprawl through urban limit lines or other restraints.

Existing communities should be revitalized or retrofitted, as necessary, to achieve these qualities and to enhance their quality of life.

Planning And Public Participation. Urban transportation systems and land use should be planned for whole regions. Transportation-land use models should fully project the reduction in driving and increase in transit experienced when transit is improved and areas are made more pedestrian accessible (see above); and modelers should provide decision-makers with compact, transit-oriented alternatives.

The National Environmental Policy Act, and the Clean Air and Water Acts should be complied with fully. Meaningful public participation must take place from the start of development of state and regional transportation plans. Opportunities for participation should be enhanced. The participation of environmental, public transit and low-income community groups, including legal help and research, should be publicly funded.

## **Energy Resources (excerpts from national policy)**

Guided by the conservation ethic, the Sierra Club has crafted this comprehensive Energy Resources Policy to promote a positive vision of a sustainable energy future. The Sierra Club's clean energy strategy will wean us from oil, coal and other fossil fuels, minimize energy waste, work in harmony with natural systems, and define the technologies and smart energy solutions that will meet our nation's energy needs.

As these changes unfold, other important benefits will follow. For example, bringing home and work closer together through better land-use planning will not only save energy, but also build a greater sense of community and allow us more time to enjoy it.

## **VII. Energy Resources and the Transition to a Clean Energy Future**

### **A. Energy Efficiency**

Energy efficiency – using improved technology and operations to deliver the same energy services with less fuel – is the foundation on which all of our other recommendations are based.

The Sierra Club identifies these key approaches for immediate action:

1. **Clean, Efficient Vehicles**  
Decrease CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from passenger vehicles through a combination of electrification, more efficient engines and vehicle design, and if they can genuinely be produced sustainably, biofuels. Increase vehicle efficiency by raising standards for cars and light trucks to at least 60 mpg by 2025 and 143 grams/mile CO<sub>2</sub>. Promote rapid expansion of electrification in passenger vehicles and truck fleets. Standards for the full range of trucks must continue to improve after the initial 2014-2018 standards. These standards must encourage hybrid and other advanced technologies.
2. **More Efficient Transportation Modes**  
Adopt a concerted national program to enhance the rail system to shift freight and inter-

city passenger transportation away from highway use and aircraft. Railroads move freight much more efficiently than trucks and aircraft and moving freight from trucks to rail will reduce damage to existing roads. Transportation produces one-third of all CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in the United States. Effective and affordable transportation is essential to a modern society, so substantial changes will be needed to reduce energy use and dramatically decrease CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gas emissions. These changes must occur in four basic areas: vehicles, fuels, alternative modes and changes in travel patterns. The heavy transportation industry is very sensitive to energy prices and has already invested substantially in energy efficient trucks, trains, airplanes and watercraft.

3. **More Efficient Communities** – in both new and existing development footprints  
The following policies should govern both new development and be applied wherever feasible to our existing developed areas:

Reduce the need to drive passenger vehicles by shortening the distance between workplace, home, shopping and school, using “smart growth” planning and improved transportation options. Provide safe and appealing options for walking, bicycling and mass transit, including light rail passenger trains, which will reduce vehicle trips, emissions, fuel consumption, and the demand for new roads and pavement. Well-designed mixed-use communities create long-term reductions in energy usage. Appropriately designed public transportation systems are an essential component of a sustainable energy society.

Appropriate pricing for parking and highway access and better planning for distribution of goods can also achieve energy savings. Congestion pricing should be applied, when feasible. Parking costs should be efficiently and conveniently unbundled to give consumers and employees more control over how they choose to spend their money. Expansion of alternatives is directly tied to land use and transportation

planning, as shown in the success of new developments such as the light rail systems in many U.S. cities. For more details refer to the entire transportation policy at [sierraclub.org/policy/conservation/trans.aspx](http://sierraclub.org/policy/conservation/trans.aspx).

4. Building and Appliance Efficiency Standards
5. Clean Energy Funding
6. Distributed Generation

*Adopted by the Board of Directors in 2006; amended in 2009, 2011, 2014, 2015, and 2016.*

## **Environmental Justice (excerpts from national policy)**

1. We support the right to a clean and healthful environment for all people

### **A. The Right to Democracy**

We support government by the people. Corporate influence over governments must be constrained to stop the erosion of the peoples' right to govern themselves and governments' ability to establish justice and to promote the general welfare.

### **B. The Right to Participate**

People have the right to participate in the development of rules, regulations, plans, and evaluation criteria and at every level of decision-making. Environmental decision-making must include the full range of alternatives to a proposed action or plan, including rejection of the proposed action or plan. Barriers to participation (cultural, linguistic, geographic, economic, other) should be addressed.

### **C. The Right to Equal Protection**

Laws, policies, rules, regulations, and evaluation criteria should be applied in a nondiscriminatory manner. Laws, policies, regulations, or criteria that result in disproportionate impact are discriminatory, whether or not such a result was intended, and should be corrected. We support environmental restoration and the redressing of environmental inequities.

### **D. The Right to Know**

People have a right to know the information necessary for informed environmental decision-making.

### **E. The Right to Sustainable Environmental Benefits**

People are entitled to enjoy the sustainable aesthetic, recreational, cultural, historical, scientific,

educational, religious, sacred, sustenance, subsistence, cultural, and other environmental benefits of natural resources. However, actions that tend to ruin the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community are unethical.

#### F. The Right to Equity

Environmentally degrading land uses should be avoided, but when such uses occur, they should be equitably sited taking into account all environmental and community impacts including the cumulative and synergistic ecological and health effects of multiple facilities. All people have the right to a safe and healthful work and home environment.

#### G. The Right to Generational Equity

Future generations have a fundamental right to enjoy the benefits of natural resources, including clean air, water, and land, to have an uncontaminated food chain, and to receive a heritage of wilderness and a functioning global ecosystem with all species naturally present.

#### H. The Rights of Native People

We oppose efforts to dispossess indigenous peoples of their lands, their cultures, and their right to self-determination. We support Native Peoples' wielding of their sovereign powers to protect the environment and to establish environmental justice.

### 2. We support an end to pollution

The long-range policy goal priorities for environmental protection must be:

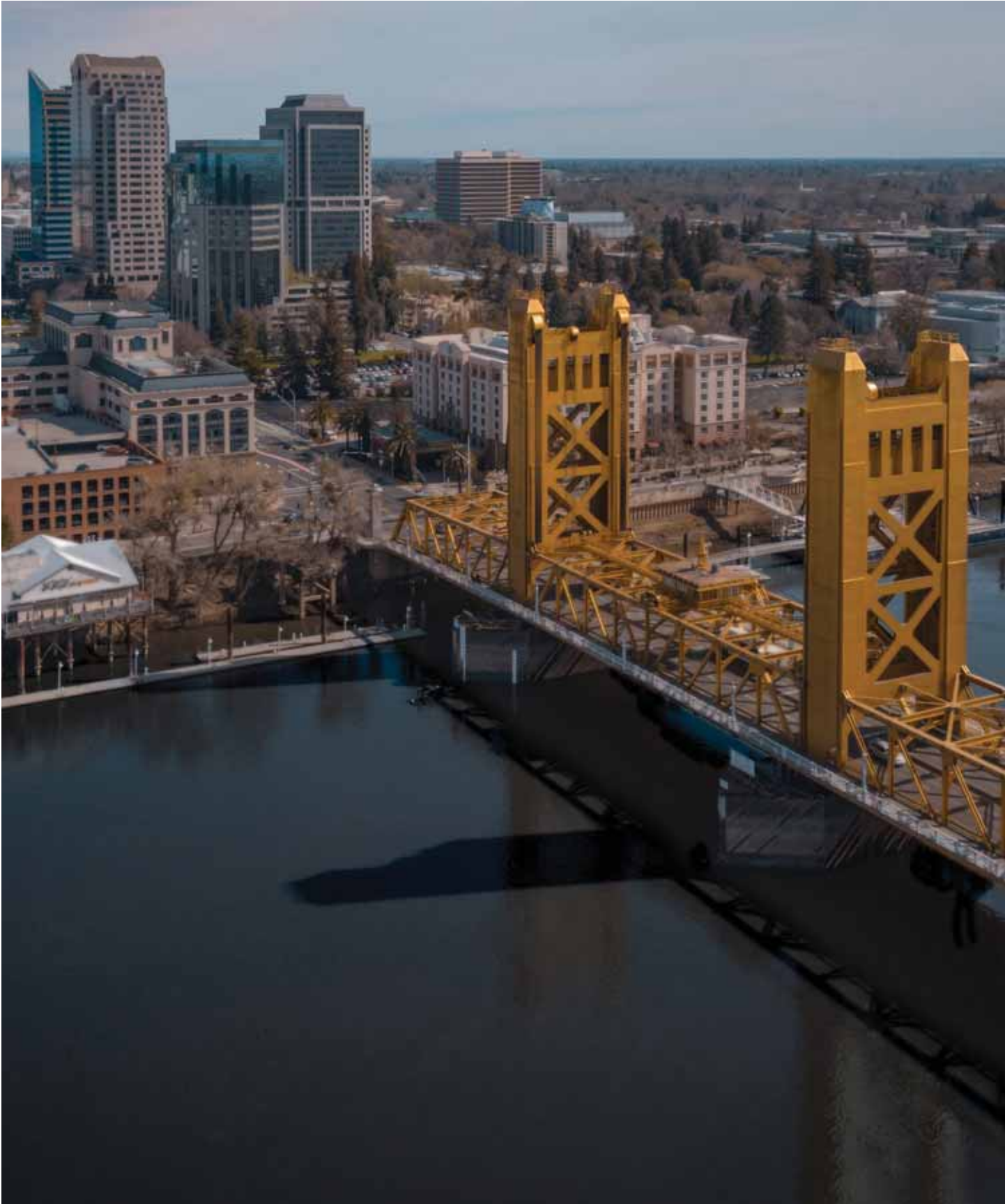
- (1) to end the production of polluting substances and waste through elimination, replacement, redesign, reduction, and reuse (zero waste),
- (2) to prevent any release of polluting substances (zero emissions, zero discharge),
- (3) to prevent any exposure of plants, animals, or humans to polluting substances, and
- (4) to remediate the effects of any such exposure.

### 3. We support the precautionary principle

When an activity potentially threatens human health or the environment, the proponent of the activity, rather than the public, should bear the burden of proof as to the harmlessness of the activity. Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing measures to prevent environmental degradation.

*Adopted by the Board of Directors, February 17, 2001.*





**Sierra Club California**

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**From:** General Plan

**Sent:** Friday, November 9, 2018 3:11 PM

**To:** Adam Nugent <adam.william.nugent@gmail.com>; General Plan <generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org>; Jon New <jonnew@gmail.com>

**Subject:** RE: General Plan 2040 - Example codes

Hi Adam,

Thank you for sending in your comments. Your email will be provided to the General Plan Subcommittee and included in the project file as part of the official records for the General Plan Update project.

Thanks and should you have any additional comments, please email [generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org).

Best,

Julia Klein  
Principal Planner  
City of San Mateo  
(650) 522-7216

 Please consider the environment before printing this email.

**From:** Adam Nugent <[adam.william.nugent@gmail.com](mailto:adam.william.nugent@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** Thursday, October 18, 2018 10:53 AM

**To:** Julia Klein <[jklein@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:jklein@cityofsanmateo.org)>; General Plan <[generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Jon New <[jonnew@gmail.com](mailto:jonnew@gmail.com)>

**Subject:** General Plan 2040 - Example codes

Hi Julia,

I wanted to follow up my last email with a response to a subcommittee member's query about finding good, contemporary examples of general plans and zoning updates that other cities have developed that we could emulate and learn from. As an interested and invested resident, I would like to kickoff that endeavor with Cincinnati, Ohio.

Cincinnati has recently produced an [excellent new code](#) that is remarkably accessible, focusing attention on the design and structure of the city and downplaying the 20th-Century-era focus on who or what activities are allowed at each property, which spurred heavy automobile use. I encourage the subcommittee members to check it out.

The Form-Based Code Institute offers great resources for our city to use as well. I recommend everyone check out their [website](#). They maintain a library of form-based codes [here](#).

Best,

Adam Nugent, PLA

Cincinnati's Code: [https://formbasedcodes.org/content/uploads/2014/07/Cincinnati-Form-Based-Code\\_FinalDraft\\_Web.pdf](https://formbasedcodes.org/content/uploads/2014/07/Cincinnati-Form-Based-Code_FinalDraft_Web.pdf)

Form-Based Code Library: <https://formbasedcodes.org/codes/>

**From:** Julia Klein

**Sent:** Tuesday, November 6, 2018 1:37 PM

**To:** Lisa Maley <[lmaley@pacbell.net](mailto:lmaley@pacbell.net)>; General Plan <[generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org)>

**Subject:** RE: General Plan Update comments

Hi Lisa,

Thanks for emailing your written comments again.

This is to confirm receipt and to let you know that your email will be forwarded to the General Plan Subcommittee and included in the project file along with other public comments.

Should you have additional comments, please send your emails to [generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org).

Thanks,

Julia Klein  
Principal Planner  
City of San Mateo  
(650) 522-7216

 Please consider the environment before printing this email.

**From:** Lisa Maley <[lmaley@pacbell.net](mailto:lmaley@pacbell.net)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, November 6, 2018 9:06 AM

**To:** Julia Klein <[jklein@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:jklein@cityofsanmateo.org)>

**Cc:** Lily Lim <[llim@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:llim@cityofsanmateo.org)>

**Subject:** Re: General Plan Update comments

Dear Ms. Klein and Ms. Lim:

I did not receive any reply to my email below. Will you please confirm that you received it and that it was forwarded to the GP Subcommittee.

Thank you,  
Lisa Maley  
Sent from my iPad

On Oct 26, 2018, at 2:54 PM, <[lmaley@pacbell.net](mailto:lmaley@pacbell.net)> <[lmaley@pacbell.net](mailto:lmaley@pacbell.net)> wrote:

Dear Ms. Klein and Ms. Lim:

I attended the General Plan Subcommittee meeting of October 16, 2018 and I have the following comments:

1. I agree with the speakers who suggested that we need to quantify tax liability implications. Specifically, it is important that taxpayers understand the monetary impact of the general plan and that these ongoing costs are minimized.
2. I agree that TDM needs back checking. A lot of assumptions are made but only hard data can confirm the validity of these assumptions. While there are claims of 50% Survey Monkey employees using the train we need to substantiate these numbers.
3. It is important to address traffic in terms of LOS; a concept people are familiar with and gauges traffic congestion. VMT may be required, but how does this measure address traffic congestion,



air quality, emergency vehicle access response time, all very much quality of life and safety issues?

4. There is a daily influx of 107,000 vehicles (16,000 during peak hours alone) coming from Hwy 92 during the morning commute and a similar number leaving in the afternoon commute. The Alameda de las Pulgas is a now thoroughfare during commute hours and neighborhoods are experiencing cut through traffic. Eastbound Hwy 92 commonly backs up to beyond the Hillsdale exit. Hwy 101 towards the Hwy 92 bridge is at a standstill. San Mateo is profoundly affected by east bay traffic and we need to have data to understand if building dense rental units along traffic corridors will have any impact on the number of commuters from the east bay.
5. Hillsdale Mall is 10 only miles from Stanford Mall, a thriving shopping center that is among the nation's top 10 in sales per square foot. So why is Stanford thriving and Hillsdale Mall not when the location and demographic are so similar? Stanford Mall has innovated and kept up with the times; Simon Properties has made it a desirable place to go to, a place of community with charming gathering spots, a garden like setting, and great shops. The Hillsdale Mall is completely outdated and aesthetically appalling; it will never attract anchor tenants in its current state. The Bohannon Group has lost out on opportunities to attract the large desirable tenants leaving Burlingame Avenue due to lack of parking and high rents. Even though I live less than a mile from Hillsdale Mall I'd much rather make the trek to Stanford. I'm sure there is a heavy loss of tax revenue for all of us shopping at Stanford instead of Hillsdale.
6. If housing diversity is desirable, then the General Plan should enumerate the number one, two and three bedrooms that would create a balance. Most of the rental units that have been recently built and/or are currently proposed are studio and 1-bdrm units. This essentially is creating tech work force housing that is only desirable to a single demographic. Longer lease term availability in new projects may offer those staying longer more stability.
7. I may be mistaken but I thought I heard a speaker report that our jobs/dwelling units ratio is 1.5. Our current General Plan 2030 has buildout of 1.35 jobs/dwelling units and requires that the city monitor housing production against new job creation and report this to the Planning Commission and City Council annually. This is particularly important considering the July 16<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting where the Mayor and Council Members spoke about "the huge job growth causing the housing shortage", "the dramatic change in the economic environment that no one could have envisioned", "the housing imbalance", and in one case, "the housing shortage of epic proportions". Our current General Plan set out to monitor and report the jobs/housing balance to guide development decisions and yet we are in this predicament. I recognize this is a regional issue, but San Mateo residents should have confidence that our city and our city government are adhering to its' General Plan and that measures are included in the General Plan update to address accountability.

Sincerely,

Lisa M. Maley

**From:** Evelyn Stivers <estivers@hlcsmc.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 7, 2018 10:05 AM  
**To:** Julia Klein <jklein@cityofsanmateo.org>  
**Subject:** Re: Meeting to discuss General Plan

Yes  
Sent from my phone.

On Nov 7, 2018, at 9:50 AM, Julia Klein <jklein@cityofsanmateo.org> wrote:  
I have time this afternoon at 2 pm. Does that work for you?

Julia Klein  
Principal Planner  
City of San Mateo  
(650) 522-7216  
 Please consider the environment before printing this email.

**From:** Evelyn Stivers <estivers@hlcsmc.org>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 6, 2018 6:54 PM  
**To:** Julia Klein <jklein@cityofsanmateo.org>  
**Subject:** Re: Meeting to discuss General Plan

Do you have time tomorrow or Thursday?

Evelyn Stivers  
Executive Director  
Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo County  
2905 S El Camino Real  
San Mateo, CA 94403  
510-334-3362 cell  
[www.hlcsmc.org](http://www.hlcsmc.org)

On Tue, Nov 6, 2018 at 5:36 PM Julia Klein <jklein@cityofsanmateo.org> wrote:  
Hi Evelyn,

I'm following up on your email. Let me know if there is a good time to discuss your suggestions.

Thanks,

Julia Klein  
Principal Planner  
City of San Mateo  
(650) 522-7216  
 Please consider the environment before printing this email.

**From:** Evelyn Stivers <estivers@hlcsmc.org>  
**Sent:** Friday, October 26, 2018 11:21 AM  
**To:** Planning <planning@cityofsanmateo.org>  
**Cc:** Sandra Council <scouncil@cityofsanmateo.org>; Rick Bonilla <rbonilla217@gmail.com>; Rich Hedges <hedghogg@ix.netcom.com>  
**Subject:** Meeting to discuss General Plan

I am writing because we are concerned that the GP process is too focused on home owners and is disregarding the opinions of renters, workers, low income people, and people of color. We have some suggestions to improve the outreach and I am hopeful that you would be willing to meet with us to discuss.

Evelyn Stivers  
Executive Director  
Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo County  
2905 S El Camino Real  
San Mateo, CA 94403  
510-334-3362 cell  
[www.hlcsmc.org](http://www.hlcsmc.org)

**From:** General Plan

**Sent:** Friday, November 9, 2018 3:09 PM

**To:** Eldridge, Karyl <KEldridge@cbnorcal.com>; General Plan <generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org>

**Subject:** RE: Existing Conditions/Feedback from One San Mateo

Hi Karyl,

Thank you for sending in your comments. Your email will be provided to the General Plan Subcommittee and included in the project file as part of the official records for the General Plan Update project.

Thanks and should you have any additional comments, please email [generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org).

Best,

Julia Klein

Principal Planner

City of San Mateo

(650) 522-7216

Please consider the environment before printing this email.

**From:** Eldridge, Karyl <[KEldridge@cbnorcal.com](mailto:KEldridge@cbnorcal.com)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, October 30, 2018 3:58 PM

**To:** General Plan <[generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org)>

**Subject:** Existing Conditions/Feedback from One San Mateo

Hi Julia,

First, I want to acknowledge the considerable accomplishment involved in compiling the information contained in the Existing Conditions Report. The sheer volume of the information is impressive, and in its entirety the report provides a broad and revealing look at many aspects of the city's life and landscape.

I do believe, however, that there are two areas where the report should be augmented. Both of these relate to the issue of housing, which is arguably the most pressing issue affecting San Mateo today and thereby deserving of considerable attention in the Existing Conditions Report.

#### *1. Jobs-Housing Indicators*

Jobs-Housing Balance. As I expressed during Public Comment at the last General Plan Subcommittee meeting, the recently created Housing Element for the City of San Mateo indicates that the jobs-housing balance for the City of San Mateo is 1.5 to 1, a ratio that is considered favorable. It is important to mention this in the Existing Conditions Report because it reflects the mindset and commitment of a city that is trying to act responsibly. But it is also important to mention because the robustness of the commercial pipeline threatens to disturb the current balance. The city will need to adopt great resolve to assure that housing creation keeps pace with job creation in the coming years. Losing ground on this would only serve to aggravate the affordability problem, and it could easily occur.

Jobs-Housing Fit. In addition to jobs-housing balance, there is a newer metric referred to as jobs-housing fit. This measures the relationship between a city's total number of low-wage workers and the quantity of homes affordable to them. According to the Nonprofit Housing Association of Northern



California, a ratio of 2 reflects a situation of sufficiency. Data compiled by NPH showed that as of 2013, San Mateo's ratio of low-wage jobs to housing was 8.25. This is a sobering indicator that bears mentioning in the report, not only for its relevance to current conditions but because it speaks of the need to throw open every door to the creation of affordable homes.

## 2. *Discussion of Displacement*

Since the Existing Conditions Report aims to provide demographic conditions and trends that are relevant to informing the General Plan process, the absence of any discussion devoted to the subject of displacement would seem a rather stark omission. There is probably no other existing condition that has more relevance to the future health and viability of San Mateo than the fact that so many middle-and lower-income people are being forced from their homes and being made to leave the city altogether.

The Existing Conditions Report contains a wealth of interesting information relating to, among other things, the income levels of San Mateo households and the rents they are required to pay. From this data a thoughtful reader could infer that a displacement problem exists. But as presented, the data fails to capture the dynamic aspect of the situation. It does not describe the *movement* of people that is occurring as large numbers of middle-and lower-income people are evicted from their homes and compelled by high rents to move permanently away.

While the problem is difficult to face, its importance to both current and future conditions in San Mateo is paramount, and any realistic rendering of the current situation requires that it be discussed. We are losing people who are essential to our community—teachers, restaurant workers, child care workers, administrative personnel, and many more. We are also losing one of the most celebrated features of our community, its diversity economically, racially and ethnically. The impacts of the displacement problem are widespread and profound.

Below are some resources that I thought could prove useful in the effort to incorporate a discussion of displacement in the report:

- a) An eviction report published in 2016 by Community Legal Services of East Palo Alto in conjunction with Legal Aid and the Anti-Eviction Mapping Project

[https://clsepa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/sanmateocounty\\_eviction\\_report-2016.pdf](https://clsepa.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/sanmateocounty_eviction_report-2016.pdf)

- b) An eviction report prepared *specifically for the City of San Mateo* by Legal Aid of San Mateo County in September 2018. This report provides insight into the rate of eviction in San Mateo and identifies which demographic groups are being disproportionately impacted.

<https://onesanmateo.org/2018/10/29/an-alarmingly-high-frequency-legal-aid-report-on-san-mateo-evictions/>

- c) The San Mateo Regional Assessment of Fair Housing dated September 25, 2017. Because San Mateo is an entitlement jurisdiction, the report contains data specific to it. Page 21 in Section II contains a chart with data for the City of San Mateo.

<https://housing.smcgov.org/sites/housing.smcgov.org/files/SMC%20Regional%20AFH%20Final%20Report%2020171002.pdf>

- d) UC Berkeley's Urban Displacement Project maps that show areas where the largest demographic shifts have occurred

<http://www.urbandisplacement.org/map/sf>

Finally, I want to thank you for your willingness to consider my thoughts about possible additions to the Existing Conditions Report. I hope my feedback and that of other community members will enable you to provide a more robust depiction of present conditions and create a stronger starting point for planning how to meet the challenges of the next 20 years.

Sincerely,

Karyl Eldridge  
Vice Chair of One San Mateo



//

//

\*Wire Fraud is Real\*. Before wiring any money, call the intended recipient at a number you know is valid to confirm the instructions. Additionally, please note that the sender does not have authority to bind a party to a real estate contract via written or verbal communication.

**From:** General Plan

**Sent:** Friday, November 9, 2018 3:13 PM

**To:** Nicklas Johnson <[nick@spatula.net](mailto:nick@spatula.net)>; General Plan <[generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org)>

**Subject:** RE: The integrity of this process

Hi Nicklas,

Thank you for sending in your comments. Your email will be provided to the General Plan Subcommittee and included in the project file as part of the official records for the General Plan Update project.

Thanks and should you have any additional comments, please email [generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org).

Best,

Julia Klein  
Principal Planner  
City of San Mateo  
(650) 522-7216

 Please consider the environment before printing this email.

**From:** Nicklas Johnson <[nick@spatula.net](mailto:nick@spatula.net)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, October 30, 2018 6:56 PM

**To:** General Plan <[generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org)>

**Subject:** The integrity of this process

I have serious concerns about the integrity of the entire process in which the City is engaged to update the General Plan.

For example, you've placed a survey on the open Internet, which anyone in the WORLD can respond to, in a time when we know that outside actors have been deliberately manipulating our democratic processes in the United States for their own ends.

You have no integrity checks to ensure that someone responds only once.

You have no integrity checks to ensure that someone responding is a resident of the City of San Mateo.

On your Facebook page, you told me that you're relying on community members' "good judgment"? Could you seriously be that naive?

If I were a developer intent upon manipulating San Mateo's general plan to favor development, all I'd need to do is pay off a few hundred people to submit the answers I wanted. Similarly, if I were a NIMBY who wanted to halt all development in town, I could do the same thing. You'd have no way of knowing, no way of cross-checking, no way of verifying credentials.

You haven't even asked for a street address for the person responding.

That isn't how you take a credible, scientific survey, and you should know that.

How do you intend to prevent developers from outside the city hiring people to attend community meetings, posing as citizens of San Mateo to inject the opinions they find most advantageous into those sessions?

If your answer is, "we don't have a plan" then I don't think you are taking your responsibility seriously, and you don't value honesty in this process... because again, any adult ought to know better than to just trust whoever shows up to be who and what they claim to be.

I seriously hope you plan to do a little better. So far this attempt is shamefully poor.

Nick

--

"Courage isn't just a matter of not being frightened, you know. It's being afraid and doing what you have to do anyway."

-- Doctor Who - Planet of the Daleks

This message has been brought to you by Nick Johnson 2.3b1 and the number 6.



**From:** General Plan

**Sent:** Friday, November 9, 2018 3:44 PM

**To:** Mara Fazio <mcfazio@gmail.com>; General Plan <generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org>

**Subject:** RE: Planning sessions

Hi Mara,

Thank you for sending in your comments. Your email will be provided to the General Plan Subcommittee and included in the project file as part of the official records for the General Plan Update project.

Regarding your email, the two Vision Workshops were held on Saturday, November 3, 2018. One in mid-morning (10 am – Noon) and one in the afternoon (2:30 pm – 4:30 pm). They were located in different parts of the city, the morning session was held at Central Park Recreation Center and the afternoon session was held at Hillsdale High School cafeteria, so that meeting locations are spread out.

The city is currently working with neighborhood representatives to co-host four additional meetings during the last week of November to provide further opportunities for community members to share their input during the “visioning” phase of the General Plan Update effort. The neighborhood representatives I am working with are looking at weekday evenings and on weekend days. Once the meeting details are confirmed, the information will be posted online and shared.

If you should have questions regarding the above, please let us know by emailing [generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org).

Thanks,

Julia Klein  
Principal Planner  
City of San Mateo  
(650) 522-7216

 Please consider the environment before printing this email.

**From:** Mara Fazio <[mcfazio@gmail.com](mailto:mcfazio@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** Thursday, November 1, 2018 12:41 PM

**To:** General Plan <[generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org)>

**Subject:** Planning sessions

Hello,

Why would both sessions be held during normal 9am-5pm working hours?

Do you realize this cuts out the large portion of adults who have to work for a living?

Wouldn't it make sense to host one session in the early evenings so that you could get the perspective of a large portion of SM County residents? I can't imagine that only retirees or the unemployed should be considered in these planning decisions.

Just a thought...

**From:** General Plan  
**Sent:** Friday, November 9, 2018 3:46 PM  
**To:** Tom Thompson <[talltom@rwthompsonproperties.com](mailto:talltom@rwthompsonproperties.com)>; General Plan <[generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org)>  
**Cc:** Gina Zari ([ginazari@hotmail.com](mailto:ginazari@hotmail.com)) <[ginazari@hotmail.com](mailto:ginazari@hotmail.com)>  
**Subject:** RE: Workforce and Environmental Justice... Solving our housing shortage in San Mateo

Hi Tom,

Thank you for sending in your comments. Your email will be provided to the General Plan Subcommittee and included in the project file as part of the official records for the General Plan Update project.

In consideration of the Brown Act and in an abundance of caution, I have moved the City Council, some of whom are on the General Plan Subcommittee, to the BCC line on this reply.

Thanks and should you have any additional comments, please email [generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org).

Best,

Julia Klein  
Principal Planner  
City of San Mateo  
(650) 522-7216

 Please consider the environment before printing this email.

**From:** Tom Thompson <[talltom@rwthompsonproperties.com](mailto:talltom@rwthompsonproperties.com)>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 2, 2018 7:16 AM  
**To:** General Plan <[generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org)>  
**Cc:** Rick Bonilla <[RBonilla@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:RBonilla@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Diane Papan <[dpapan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:dpapan@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Maureen Freschet <[mfreschet@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:mfreschet@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Joe Goethals <[jgoethals@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:jgoethals@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Eric Rodriguez <[erodriguez@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:erodriguez@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Gina Zari ([ginazari@hotmail.com](mailto:ginazari@hotmail.com)) <[ginazari@hotmail.com](mailto:ginazari@hotmail.com)>; Tom Thompson <[talltom@rwthompsonproperties.com](mailto:talltom@rwthompsonproperties.com)>  
**Subject:** Workforce and Environmental Justice... Solving our housing shortage in San Mateo

I will be unable to attend the San Mateo Nov 3<sup>rd</sup> public meeting on housing. Here are my observations, concerns and recommendations for an even better San Mateo.

In just my lifetime, world population has more than tripled. World population growth, high housing cost and traffic gridlock are closely related. Some of us have an emotional reaction to these factors, and want to "stop more people" from being near us. Paradoxically though, this quickly makes our housing/ jobs imbalance and traffic worries even worse. People are taking these new high paying jobs and commuting long distance to provide for their families. I would too in their shoes. Local governments have approved these new jobs, by approving workplaces. I'm glad they did. Remember the job market 2009 to 2014? Now we need to approve more workforce housing for these workers. I view this as a humanitarian and environmental mandate. *Workforce and Environmental Justice.*

Problem: Jobs/Housing Imbalance

- 1) Our severe housing shortage developed over decades and has created a humanitarian and environmental mess. San Mateo (and neighboring cities) approved massive amounts of office

and technology workplace buildings. This has added tens of thousands of jobs... without adding adequate housing to shelter these additional workers. These are the good paying jobs America needs for a thriving economy and social mobility of working families. Now though, there is horrific traffic gridlock on our freeways. Our surface streets get jammed with commuters trying to navigate around the gridlock.

- 2) A typical "super-commuter" lives in Tracy CA and commutes 65 miles one way to the San Mateo area. That's 130 miles roundtrip, 200+ work days per year. With 4 additional hours behind the wheel; equivalent to an additional 20 hour a week half-time job. I admire them for doing this to provide a decent income for their family. That's 26,000 miles a year and 1,000 extra hours (another half-time job) behind the wheel annually! Yikes.
- 3) This is both a humanitarian and environmental crisis. And it gets worse if we don't implement solution. Think *Workforce and Environmental Justice*.

Solutions: Let's do the math.

- 1) One (1) Additional housing unit: If we build one housing unit a commuter (or maybe 2) can move to within 5 miles of their job. This reduces their commute by a) 4 Hours a day, and b) by 120 less miles a day. This one new housing unit saves this person 1,000 commute hours and 24,000 driving miles a year!
- 2) 10 new units: Saves 10,000 commute hours and 240,000 driving miles a year.
- 3) 100 new units: Saves 100,000 commute hours and 2,400,000 driving miles a year.
- 4) 1000 new units: Saves 1,000,000 commute hours and 24,000,000 driving miles a year.
- 5) 10,000 new units: Saves 10,000,000 commute hours and 240,000,000 driving miles a year.

Note: *These are real and direct humanitarian and environmental solutions to help real people and our planet. Workforce and Environmental Justice.*

Public Policy... How do we build more housing? *Workforce and Environmental Justice*. Here are just a few ways:

- 1) Simply build more housing. My economics professor was right. More supply really does bring down price too!  
We already build workplace jobs centers and have approved more. Now we need to catch up on housing.
- 2) Accelerate building ADUs (In-law Units).  
Relaxing parking requirements is the 1<sup>st</sup> step. Then look at which building codes to use. For instance, codes in effect when the home was built, or current codes. Important stuff.
- 3) Relax/Reduce parking requirements for new projects  
Maybe even deed restrict parking
- 4) Eliminate parking requirements for projects near Caltrain and other transit hubs.  
Already being done in San Francisco & Oakland
- 5) Require employers to build workforce housing, as a condition of workspace approval and expansion.  
Already done in Europe and Asia for decades  
FYI, employers can sub-contract to expert housing providers to make this happen. Not as tough as it sounds
- 6) Eliminate additional parking requirements for employer built housing near employment centers
- 7) Fast Track Approvals  
Already being done in San Francisco & Oakland
- 8) Smaller Units  
Very popular in Europe & Asia
- 9) Higher Density per acre  
100 units/ acre is reasonable, especially in downtowns and near transit hubs
- 10) Increase heights

100 feet is reasonable, especially in downtowns and near transit hubs

- 11) Real and substantial density bonuses for building affordable units. Make affordable housing cost-effective, not punishment.
- 12) Think “workforce housing”
- 13) Let’s talk about all these factors. I’m sure we can brainstorm even more solutions.

In a nutshell... think *Workforce and Environmental Justice*.

*Every new housing unit gets a commuter off the road and save 1,000 hours behind the wheel plus 24,000 highway miles a year!*

All for now. Looking forward to talking with you and brainstorming more solutions.

Tom Thompson

San Mateo Homeowner, Business Owner & Voter



CA RE Broker License 01343030

177 Bovet Road, Suite 600

San Mateo CA 94402

Office 650/ 312-1819

Direct 650/ 678-0252

Email: [talitom@rwthompsonproperties.com](mailto:talitom@rwthompsonproperties.com)

Website [www.rwthompsonproperties.com](http://www.rwthompsonproperties.com)



**From:** General Plan

**Sent:** Friday, November 9, 2018 3:47 PM

**To:** Barbara Kilpatrick <barbarakilpatrick@icloud.com>; General Plan <generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org>

**Subject:** RE: I apologize for not hearing the other participants but

Hi Barbara,

Thank you for sending this in. Your email will be provided to the General Plan Subcommittee and included in the project file as part of the official records for the General Plan Update project.

Thanks and should you have any additional comments, please email [generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org).

Best,

Julia Klein  
Principal Planner  
City of San Mateo  
(650) 522-7216

 Please consider the environment before printing this email.

**From:** Barbara Kilpatrick <[barbarakilpatrick@icloud.com](mailto:barbarakilpatrick@icloud.com)>

**Sent:** Saturday, November 3, 2018 3:41 PM

**To:** General Plan <[generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org)>

**Subject:** I apologize for not hearing the other participants but

being at work, four areas, I value, and could use your help!

Station Park Green

Yumi 🍦 Yogurt

Macy's

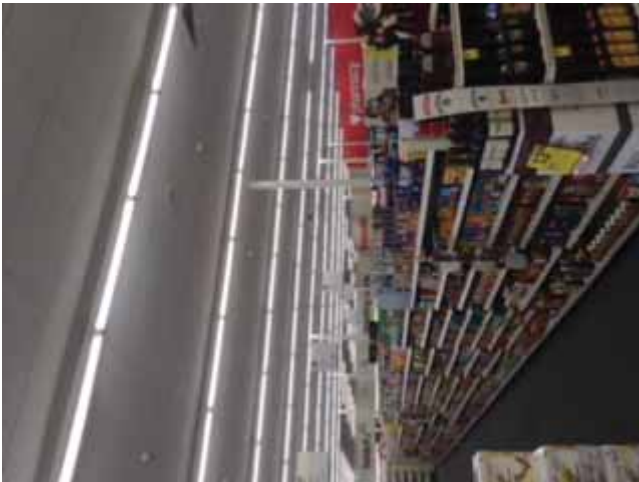
CVS Metro Center

In the learning process..

Thank you, City of San Mateo and HHS.

Barbara Kilpatrick 650-315-2774





Sent from my iPhone

**From:** General Plan  
**Sent:** Friday, November 9, 2018 4:00 PM  
**To:** Barbara Kilpatrick <barbarakilpatrick@icloud.com>; General Plan <generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org>  
**Subject:** RE: Visioning Workshop 2040

Hi Barbara,

Thank you for sending this in. Your email will be provided to the General Plan Subcommittee and included in the project file as part of the official records for the General Plan Update project.

Thanks and should you have any additional comments, please email [generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org).

Best,

Julia Klein  
Principal Planner  
City of San Mateo  
(650) 522-7216

 Please consider the environment before printing this email.

**From:** Barbara Kilpatrick <[barbarakilpatrick@icloud.com](mailto:barbarakilpatrick@icloud.com)>  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 4, 2018 12:14 PM  
**To:** General Plan <[generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org)>  
**Subject:** Fwd: Visioning Workshop 2040

Sent from my iPod

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Evelyn Stivers <[estivers@hlcsmc.org](mailto:estivers@hlcsmc.org)>  
**Date:** November 3, 2018 at 20:40:29 PDT  
**To:** Barbara Kilpatrick <[barbarakilpatrick@icloud.com](mailto:barbarakilpatrick@icloud.com)>  
**Subject: Re: Visioning Workshop 2040**  
Thank you!

Sent from my phone.

On Nov 3, 2018, at 2:26 PM, Barbara Kilpatrick <[barbarakilpatrick@icloud.com](mailto:barbarakilpatrick@icloud.com)> wrote:

I am on the way to work but I included you.

Thank you.

Barbara Kilpatrick 430 Station Park Circle #322 San Mateo 95402

<IMG\_0586.JPG>

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Julia Klein

**Sent:** Friday, November 9, 2018 2:30 PM

**To:** Keith Weber <[keithmax2@gmail.com](mailto:keithmax2@gmail.com)>; General Plan <[generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org)>

**Cc:** Ronald "Ron" Munekawa <[munekawa@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:munekawa@cityofsanmateo.org)>

**Subject:** RE: General Plan Subcommittee Meeting #3

Hi Keith,

"Project file" refers to the official records for the General Plan update project.

Yes, a copy of my response to your email, your email and your attachment will be provided to the General Plan Subcommittee as part of the meeting packet for the next General Plan Subcommittee meeting, along with other public comments. We inadvertently left out the attachment to one of your emails last time. It was a staff mistake and it is not our intent to repeat that again.

Per the City Attorney's Office, the General Plan Subcommittee (GPS) is subject to the Brown Act which includes all communications. This was mentioned at the September 26, 2018 General Plan Subcommittee meeting #1. To reduce the likelihood of unintended "reply-all" by any of the GPS members, we moved them to the BCC line. If you have further questions about this, please let us know.

Best,

Julia Klein  
Principal Planner  
City of San Mateo  
(650) 522-7216

 Please consider the environment before printing this email.

**From:** Keith Weber <[keithmax2@gmail.com](mailto:keithmax2@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** Friday, November 9, 2018 2:10 PM

**To:** Julia Klein <[jklein@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:jklein@cityofsanmateo.org)>

**Subject:** Re: General Plan Subcommittee Meeting #3

Hi Julia,

Thank you for your email response. To be sure I understand you correctly, can you please clarify what you mean by "project file" and specifically what is included in it.

Also, please confirm that a copy of the full report, as well as my email "will be provided to the Subcommittee as part of the meeting packet for the next meeting."

Also, can you please explain why the Brown Act applies to this email communication.

Thank you,  
Keith Weber

On Thu, Nov 8, 2018 at 8:41 PM Julia Klein <[jklein@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:jklein@cityofsanmateo.org)> wrote:

Hi Keith,

Thanks for sending this. It will be included in the project file for the General Plan update effort.

Public comments, including your email, that we've received since the last General Plan Subcommittee meeting will be provided to the Subcommittee as part of the meeting packet for the next meeting.

Lastly, in consideration of the Brown Act, I've moved the GPS members to BCC on this reply email.

Best,

Julia Klein  
Principal Planner  
City of San Mateo  
330 W. 20th Ave  
San Mateo CA 94403  
(650) 522-7216

---

**From:** Keith Weber <[keithmax2@gmail.com](mailto:keithmax2@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, November 7, 2018 3:42:54 PM

**To:** Julia Klein

**Cc:** Ellen Mallory; Adam Loraine; Rick Bonilla; Amourence Lee; Ramiro Maldonado; Clifford Robbins; Eric Rodriguez; Drew Corbett

**Subject:** General Plan Subcommittee Meeting #3

Julia,

Germane to the ongoing General Plan Update process, I have attached a report, ***Balancing Transit Oriented Growth with Community Livability: The case for renewing San Mateo's height, density and affordable housing protections.*** Prepared in 2018 by San Mateans for Responsive Government, the report is particularly relevant to discussions around housing and jobs, circulation and traffic, economic growth and development, community design and sustainability.

Please ensure it is included in the meeting materials for the December 17, 2018 meeting of the GP Subcommittee and made part of the permanent public record.

Thank you,

Keith Weber

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# Balancing Transit Oriented Growth with Community Livability

*The case for renewing San Mateo's  
height, density and affordable housing protections*



Prepared by San Mateans for Responsive Government  
July, 2018



# San Mateo's Height, Density and Affordable Housing Protections

## *Balancing Transit Oriented Growth with Community Livability*

\* \* \* \* \*

In the eight year period between 2010 and 2017, the Silicon Valley tech industry exploded, flooding San Mateo County with 80,000 new jobs<sup>1</sup>. The torrent of job growth drove rents through the roof and home prices to astronomical levels. Left in its wake are displaced families, unrelenting traffic, and a housing affordability crisis of insurmountable magnitude.

The City of San Mateo's voter-adopted height, density, and affordable housing protections, known as Measure P, and codified in the general plan, did not create the housing affordability crisis, despite assertions to the contrary. Nor will the elimination of these protections solve it. The crisis is much larger than one community and rooted in the heart of an unregulated 'free market' system. Measure P is just one tool, used by one community, to help modulate and manage economic growth. For twenty-five years Measure P has helped San Mateo grow at a sustainable pace. Measure P has stood the test of time.

Created in 1991, Measure H was San Mateo's original voter adopted height, density and affordable housing initiative. It was crafted by local grassroots environmentalists, open space activists, affordable housing advocates, historic preservationists, sustainable growth enthusiasts and small business owners. It was designed as a responsible alternative to the threat of unrestrained development running roughshod over the community.

Measure H established land use guidelines that promoted intensification of development near transit, yet discouraged wholesale redevelopment of irreplaceable architectural and cultural resources. It mandated a minimum of 10% affordable below market rate (BMR) housing in every new development of more than 10 residential units, while giving the city council the flexibility to increase that percentage at any time. Beyond that, it allowed substantial office, commercial and residential development into the 21st century while maintaining the community character and quality of life that continues to draw people to this wonderful city. In 2004, as it was due to expire, Measure H was renewed by voters as Measure P. It has proven to be far sighted, environmentally responsible and beneficial for the City of San Mateo.

\* \* \* \* \*

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<sup>1</sup> Industry Employment Data, Annual Averages for San Mateo County, Civilian Employment. 2010-2017. State of California Economic Development Department.

# WHAT IT DOES

Measure P and its renewal do three things:

First, it addresses the critical importance of providing housing that is affordable to a diverse range of incomes. A bold and almost unprecedented move in 1991, Measure H established one of the few affordable inclusionary housing programs in the Bay Area. Since that time, it has resulted in more than half of the Below Market Rate housing produced in the city of San Mateo<sup>2</sup>.

Second, Measure P includes height protections in the 2030 General Plan that enable significant increases in office and residential development, especially near transit, but still retain the walkable, pedestrian friendly scale of our community. Areas surrounding San Mateo's three train stations are designated "high density" in the current general plan to support transit-oriented development (TOD). These areas allow building heights up to 55' and densities of 68 units per acre (including the state density bonus). Millions of square feet of office space and thousands of housing units have been built within the smarter growth envelope of these measures.

Third, with the understanding that the historic center of downtown is a valuable community resource worth preserving for future generations, it ensures the protection of certain historic structures. Downtown height allowances also provide a disincentive to replacing our designated historic district with high-rise towers.

The Measure P renewal initiative is consistent with current state housing laws, including AB 1505, allowing off-site building, or other alternative means of providing affordable housing. In order to coincide with our current general plan's expiration date of 2030, a 10-year extension period was selected. Once a revised general plan is finalized, even if well before 2030, it can be presented to the voters for approval. Nothing is locked in that can't be changed by a vote of the people at any time.



**Richly patterned terra cotta facade,  
art deco Merkel Building, 1931.**

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<sup>2</sup> According to the city of San Mateo, between 1991 and 2017 there were 5,298 total housing units built in San Mateo or in the development pipeline. Of those, 864 units were affordable (below market rate), and more than half were the direct result of Measures H and P.

# AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Renewing Measure P confirms the city's commitment to much needed affordable housing. In 1991, and again in 2004, voters found that Measure P "encouraged the production of San Mateo's fair share of affordable housing," and that "it was necessary to increase the City's commitment to the production of affordable housing." The renewal initiative complies with recently enacted state housing laws and gives the city council the flexibility to increase the inclusionary housing percentage at any time. The following are a few excerpts from the Measure P language in San Mateo's 2030 General Plan that support affordable housing.

- "Maintain an inclusionary housing ordinance."
- "At a minimum, all projects which include more than 10 residential units, including mixed-use projects, shall be required to include 10% of the residential units for exclusive use as affordable housing units."
- "Develop...a commercial/housing linkage program."
- "San Mateo's multi-family zoning districts allow relatively high densities in an effort to encourage the production of housing."
- "Encourage the construction of affordable housing in the redevelopment of commercial areas."

**"San Mateo's multi-family zoning districts allow relatively high densities in an effort to encourage the production of housing."**

The state density bonus, designed as an incentive to increase affordable housing production, ironically has the opposite effect in San Mateo and other cities with inclusionary housing mandates like Measure P. Under the state density bonus law, as long as development projects meet the minimum 10% BMR threshold set by Measure P, they can build up to 35% more market rate or luxury units without having to provide any additional affordable units. The result is a reduction in the percentage of affordable units from 10% to 7.5% of the total. The unintended consequence is a widening of the affordability gap.





# HIGH DENSITY TOD PROJECTS

The following examples of high density TOD projects illustrate that Measure P is compatible with smart growth and TOD planning principles. Both phases of Bay Meadows, the largest and perhaps most notable higher density, transit oriented mixed-use development in San Mateo County, were built within the parameters of Measure P. Others, such as those listed below, are just a few recent examples of higher density, transit oriented infill development projects.

All are within the envelope of Measure P and all concentrate new homes, jobs, and services near transit. These projects are walkable, bike-able, and transit-accessible, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and providing a variety of housing types, sizes, and affordability. Renewal of Measure P enables and encourages the kind of development that is both good for the community and good for the environment.

## UNDER CONSTRUCTION

### Station Park Green



Adjacent to the Hayward Park Caltrain station, this project contains 599 housing units (60 BMR), 11,000 square feet office space, and 26,000 square feet retail, services and a 1.1 acre park.

In a letter to the City of San Mateo on 2/6/15, Gita Dev, architect and co-chair of the Sustainable Land Use committee of the Sierra Club Loma Prieta chapter said, “We particularly applaud the city because this transit-oriented housing

development addresses the Peninsula’s existing jobs-housing imbalance. Station Park Green can help provide the density at Hayward Park station required for transportation improvements.”

## APPROVED APPLICATION

### 2775 S. Delaware Street (BRIDGE Housing)



Less than a half mile from the Hillsdale Caltrain station, this project at Bay Meadows includes 68 units of below market rate rental housing with a mix of studios, 1, 2 and 3BR units. Bay Meadows Phase II was required by Measure P to provide a minimum of 10 percent BMR units within the project site (approx. 108 total units), and these additional 68 units will increase

the overall number of BMR units at the Bay Meadows Phase II to 176 units, or 15.3% of the total units.

## UNDER REVIEW

### **The Essex at Central Park**



Within a half mile of Caltrain in downtown San Mateo and adjacent to Central Park, this five story rental development proposes 80 new one to three bedroom units over 7,000 sf of retail. Six are BMR for very-low income households.

### **303 Baldwin**



Across the street from the San Mateo Caltrain station and adjacent to the downtown National Register Eligible Historic District, this 131,636 square-foot four and five story mixed-use building proposes office, ground floor retail and 64 residential units. Parking is provided underground.

## PRE-APPLICATION

### **Concar Passage**



A proposed mixed-used project of 935 residential units (72 BMR), 35,000 square feet of retail, and 191,850 square feet of common open space within a half mile of a Caltrain station. A mobility hub in the center of the development is intended to facilitate non-auto dependent living for residents and surrounding neighborhoods.

It should be noted that Concar Passage is drawing community attention because it is the last and largest of three major projects concentrated at the same intersection. This project along with Station Park Green and the Hines office development, both nearing completion, will have significant cumulative traffic impacts.

# DISPELLING THE MYTHS

## MYTH 1 – NOT HIGH ENOUGH



Some say the only way to meet our housing needs is to go up - way up. The implication being that enough housing can't be built unless height limits are abolished. Actually, the five aforementioned projects with 1,746 housing units clearly demonstrate high density TOD development can produce a substantial amount of housing in a five story world.

One of the distinguishing design characteristics of a built-environment is the heights of buildings. The existing height allowance of 55' was chosen to enable substantial growth while being compatible with the majority of the one-two story buildings throughout the community. It also favors less costly, wood-frame construction instead of the more costly, steel-frame construction needed for tall buildings.

Five-story building heights emulate the livable, pedestrian scale of many of the most loved and visited American and European cities. These heights promote human-scaled urban design based on the principles of how cities and towns have been built for the last several centuries. These principles are increasingly in favor today under the headings of Smart Growth and the New Urbanism.

Bay Area residents who prefer to live in high-rise buildings can live in one of the region's three major urban centers - San Francisco, Oakland, or San Jose.

What then, is an appropriate height for a small city like San Mateo? For many residents, the answer is unequivocal: 'high density, five story growth is high enough.' Height limit opponents don't seem to know what height is right, only that whatever height is allowed is not high enough. And for those who know there's money to be made and profit to be had if height limits are abolished, the answer just might be 'the sky's the limit.'

**Five-story  
building  
heights  
emulate the  
scale of the  
most loved  
and visited  
American  
and  
European  
cities.**

## MYTH 2 – BUILD TALL AND PRICES WILL FALL



One reason we have a housing affordability crisis is that housing prices are set at what the market will bear, not what people can afford. The “market” does not produce affordable housing on its own. Building housing that is affordable for families earning less than \$120,000 per year is complicated and costly. Increasing the supply of market rate/luxury housing in the hope that affordability will somehow “trickle down” to those of modest means has been proven a mistaken notion and false promise.

Between 2010 and 2015, within San Mateo County there were 19 new jobs added for every one housing unit<sup>3</sup>, tilting the jobs/housing ratio way out of balance. Yes, we need more housing. However, doubling, tripling, or even building 10 times more housing units over the same period still would not be enough to keep pace with such runaway job growth.

Put simply, without managing job demand along with housing supply, there is no realistic way for housing to catch up or prices to come down, no matter how high we build. Hong Kong and New York City construct skyscraper after skyscraper yet have some of the most expensive housing costs in the world.

As long as we allow unsustainable job growth, the upward pressure of “what the market will bear” will continue to push prices higher, and housing affordability will continue to worsen. And as prices rise, increasing building heights without corresponding increases in affordability requirements serves only to widen the affordability gap.

There is scant chance that housing prices will come down to an affordable level, or housing supply catch up to the demand, unless we begin to manage job growth and office construction. Only then will we have a chance to return to a reasonable jobs/housing balance, and perhaps even stabilize housing prices.

**Without managing job demand along with housing supply, there is no way for housing to catch up, no matter how high we build.**

<sup>3</sup>California Economic Development Department (EDD). U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2010-2015. 72,800 new jobs, 3,844 new homes built, a 19:1 ratio.

## MYTH 3 - MORE BUILDING = LESS TRAFFIC

Time spent in weekday traffic has skyrocketed by 80% between 2010 and 2016 according to the Metropolitan Traffic Commission<sup>4</sup>. Dramatic increases in traffic, it turns out, parallel steep rises in job growth. Caltrain, the transit option that is supposed to take cars off the road, is routinely 139% of capacity during weekday commutes<sup>5</sup>. The long-awaited electrification will apparently add only one extra train during each peak hour. A drop in the proverbial bucket.



Perhaps more than any other single issue, traffic has infuriated just about everyone. Traffic gridlock has become unbearable. Commute times have lengthened dramatically and tempers are growing short. Despite the rhetoric that assures us that TOD will induce people to forsake their cars and turn instead to trains and bicycles, traffic congestion continues to worsen.

**The fact is -  
and  
everyone  
knows this -  
the more we  
build, the  
worse traffic  
gets.**

The fact is - and everyone knows this - the more we build, the worse traffic gets. The MTC's John Goodwin, as told to ABC 7 news, said that the traffic "is absolutely directly related to the economy and to the jobs/housing imbalance."<sup>6</sup>

The *only* solution put forth, however, is to increase housing supply. The reality is that the demand side of the equation got us into this untenable situation and it is the demand side that must be part of any reasonable solution.

We can't possibly become the sustainable communities we desire to be if we simultaneously promote unsustainable growth. Excessive growth, like any over indulgence, has left us with a painful hangover: housing prices we can no longer afford, traffic we can no longer bear, families uprooted from their homes, and widening economic inequality. The cure for our excess, we're repeatedly told, is just add more: more jobs, more housing, more height. Like a drunk on a bender, we can't seem to stop. At some point, infinite growth stops working on a finite planet with limited resources. Does more equal less? It's a question worth considering.

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<sup>4</sup> NBC Bay Area News, September 19, 2017.

<sup>5</sup> Caltrain 2017 Annual Passenger Count Key Findings.

<sup>6</sup> ABC 7 News, September 19, 2017.



## MYTH 4 – INTERFERES WITH THE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE

If residents believe that Measure P will expire before the end of the general plan revision, they know there is little hope of a fair and equitable process. Property owners, real estate interests, building trade unions, and the tech industry, all of which have a disproportionate share of money, power and influence, will do whatever they can to tilt the playing field in their favor. If this happens, San Mateo just might end up with the best general plan ‘money can buy.’

This is not speculation; indeed, it is already happening. At the June 18th San Mateo City Council meeting - after midnight and with most of the public gone home - three city council members made a blatant attempt to “carve out” exemptions to the height limits for influential special interests to build high rise buildings on their own properties. These carve-outs would be added to a competing ballot measure the city council was considering in an effort to confuse voters.

Just a few days later, a deceptive and biased internet survey was circulated with the intent to sway, not gauge, public opinion. Filled with misleading questions, misinformation and outright lies, the survey was little more than a thinly veiled attempt to undermine both the renewal of Measure P and the legitimacy of the general plan update itself. Sadly, these questionable political maneuvers are available to those with money and used to skew the political process to their own benefit.

On the other hand, continuing San Mateo’s height, density & affordable housing protections will provide stability, predictability and reliability for the general public and development community while land use changes are debated. Past experience tells us this will take years. Moreover, it will maintain existing baseline development standards with which new ideas and proposals can be compared. And it will put working families and concerned residents on a more equal footing with high paid development representatives.

The general plan update is an important opportunity for the entire community to fully and openly discuss the inter-related issues of housing, heights, transit and infrastructure that impact all of us. And that will happen with more cooperation and less divisiveness if citizen-voted safeguards are in place.

Letting Measure P expire in the midst of the general plan revision changes the rules of the game. Like moving the goal posts, changing the rules can unfairly change the outcome. Backing this extension keeps current rules in place as a safety net for the general public. It is a way to level the playing field while the entire community considers what it wants to be.



# TEN GOOD REASONS TO RENEW MEASURE P

San Mateo has grown substantially under the protections of Measure P and captured much new development fueled by the tech boom, including new office and residential neighborhoods at Bay Meadows and Station Park Green. But even this growth strained the community's ability to absorb it incrementally and without destroying why people live here in the first place. Unlike the move fast and break things model prevalent in the tech industry, successful cities have a long-term perspective that maintains their community's values. Renewal of Measure P:

1. Advances sound land-use planning policies and principles
2. Embraces sustainable smart growth development principles
3. Concentrates higher heights and densities near transit centers
4. Helps preserve open space and reduce sprawl
5. Ensures mandate for a *minimum* 10% inclusionary affordable housing
6. Complies with current state housing laws, including AB 1505
7. Enables significant increases in market rate housing
8. Allows for continued office, commercial and economic growth
9. Reduces threats to irreplaceable architectural and cultural resources
10. Supports the General Plan, Downtown Specific Plan, Sustainable Streets Plan, Rail Corridor TOD Plan, Bicycle Master Plan



**Hines office complex (left) and Station Park Green (right) at Concar and Delaware, San Mateo.**

# CONCLUSION

There are many reasons for the Bay Area's sky high housing costs, but Measure P is not one of them. Abolishing building height and affordable housing protections that have served San Mateo well for more than a quarter of a century will do nothing to stem the tide of rising rents, displaced residents or excessively long commutes. Rather, the effort to eliminate these protections is divisive and destructive.

Lately, there has been a growing recognition that residents who live here should have a say in their future, not just real estate interests and global tech corporations. When external forces cause a city's growth to become so out of balance that the community can no longer absorb it, and representative democracy fails its citizens, California voters are lucky to have an initiative process to give power back to the people.

San Mateans understand their true power lies in the vote. Only through the ballot can we counter the vast sums of money that distort our government at every level. Local volunteers recently collected over 7,000 signatures to place the renewal of Measure P on the November 2018 ballot so residents directly affected by these land use decisions could express their point of view. Yet, from the very beginning, private interests have made a concerted effort to suppress that right and prevent the issue from ever reaching the voting public. Residents and voters are increasingly standing up and fighting back against those who view our community as nothing more than an economic opportunity - a resource to be exploited.

For generations, San Mateo has grown responsibly and changed with the times. It is a desirable small city with a diversity of residents and a wide range of housing choices. San Mateans have invested in building a better tomorrow by protecting the best of yesterday and integrating it with what works for the community today. It is what old timers and new faces alike find attractive about San Mateo. Renewal of Measure P continues this tradition.

\* \* \* \* \*



**Rose Garden, Central Park, San Mateo.**

**From:** Julia Klein

**Sent:** Thursday, December 6, 2018 4:39 PM

**To:** Laurence Kinsella <taragroups@astound.net>; General Plan <generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org>

**Subject:** FW: Is this the kind of San Mateo we want?

Hi Laurence,

Thank you for your email. It will be forwarded to the General Plan Subcommittee and included as part of the official records for the General Plan Update effort.

Best,

Julia Klein  
Principal Planner  
City of San Mateo  
(650) 522-7216

*Please consider the environment before printing this email.*

**Notice of Holiday Closures**

*City Hall will be closed on the following days:*

*Monday & Tuesday, December 24 & 25, 2018, and*

*Monday & Tuesday, December 31, 2018 & January 1, 2019.*

*Happy Holidays!*

**From:** Laurence Kinsella <taragroups@astound.net>

**Sent:** Thursday, November 15, 2018 10:45 AM

**To:** Lily Lim <llim@cityofsanmateo.org>

**Subject:** Is this the kind of San Mateo we want?

Hello Ms. Lim,

I was wondering if it would be possible to distribute the following to the general plan update committee:

A [new report](#) out from the Legislative Analyst's Office shows that the groundwork for the housing shortage was laid a long time ago, and it's going to be hard work undoing it.

If California had added 210,000 new housing units each year over the past three decades (as opposed to 120,000), California's population would be much greater than it is today. **We estimate that around 7 million additional people would be living in California. In some areas, particularly the Bay Area, population increases would be dramatic. For example, San Francisco's population would be more than twice as large (1.7 million people versus around 800,000).**

In order to keep housing prices in check, California overall would have had to build more (70,000 to 110,000 additional units each year), **build denser, and build especially in the coastal areas (including Los Angeles)** and central cities (as opposed to building mostly inland and in areas way outside of cities as has been done in the past). California also should have been doing this for decades already. Because it didn't, "the state probably would have to build as many as 100,000 additional units annually—almost exclusively in its coastal communities—to seriously mitigate its problems with housing affordability." And that's in addition to the 100,000 to 140,000 units that the Golden State is already planning to build.

If the state had done all that, California's housing prices still would have continued to grow and would still be higher than the rest of the country's now, but the disparity between them would have been less gaping.

**The report says, the 2010 state median housing price would have been a solid 80 percent higher than the US median, instead of 200 percent higher, which is what actually happened.**

<https://la.curbed.com/2015/3/18/9979526/housing-crisis-los-angeles-construction>

California builds 100,000 to 140,000 housing units a year. The LAO said the state probably needs 100,000 additional units annually, **almost exclusively in coastal communities**, to dent the housing shortage.

<http://www.sacbee.com/opinion/editorials/article167974537.html>

I would appreciate it. If it is not possible, would you let me know how to get the message to the members.

Thank you.

Laurence Kinsella



**From:** General Plan  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 5, 2018 5:14 PM  
**To:** Deborah Kohn <[dkohn@daksystcons.com](mailto:dkohn@daksystcons.com)>; General Plan <[generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org)>  
**Subject:** RE: Additional Comments

Hi Deborah,

Thanks for your email. It will be forwarded to the General Plan Subcommittee and included in the official records for the General Plan Update effort.

Regards,

Julia Klein  
Principal Planner  
City of San Mateo  
(650) 522-7216

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Happy Holidays!*

**From:** Deborah Kohn <[dkohn@daksystcons.com](mailto:dkohn@daksystcons.com)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 28, 2018 11:13 AM  
**To:** General Plan <[generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org)>  
**Subject:** Additional Comments

Under the Heading OTHER:

In 2040, I hope that the City of San Mateo will be able to have ZERO TRASH. In other words, 1) the City of San Mateo will provide regular cleaning of the streets; and, 2) all City of San Mateo business-owners and home-owners will clean up the outdoor grounds of their establishments and outdoor grounds of their homes, respectively, to collect ALL trash that gets thrown out by drivers and tossed by pedestrians.

--

Deborah Kohn  
505 Madera Drive  
San Mateo, CA 94403-1237  
650.345.9900  
[dkohn@daksystcons.com](mailto:dkohn@daksystcons.com)

From: General Plan  
Sent: Wednesday, December 5, 2018 5:16 PM  
To: Barbara Kilpatrick <kilpatrickabarbara@gmail.com>; General Plan <generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org>  
Subject: RE: AirNow

Hi Barbara,

Thanks for your email. It will be forwarded to the General Plan Subcommittee and included in the official records for the General Plan Update effort.

Regards,

Julia Klein  
Principal Planner  
City of San Mateo  
(650) 522-7216  
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Happy Holidays!

-----Original Message-----

From: Barbara Kilpatrick <[kilpatrickabarbara@gmail.com](mailto:kilpatrickabarbara@gmail.com)>  
Sent: Thursday, November 29, 2018 4:12 PM  
To: General Plan <[generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org)>  
Subject: AirNow

Please consider this new site as I am hoping they improve the water quality of both San Mateo and Foster City. Tied to the air flow! ☁️

Salt water ☁️ 🌊 water taffy!

Thank you.

Barbara Kilpatrick 650-315-2774

<https://airnow.gov/>

Sent from my iPhone

From: General Plan

Sent: Wednesday, December 5, 2018 5:22 PM

To: Luba Boyko <lzenboyko@hotmail.com>; General Plan <generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org>; Sue-Ellen Atkinson <seatkinson@cityofsanmateo.org>

Subject: RE: BIKE LANES.

Hi Luba,

Thanks for your email. It will be forwarded to the General Plan Subcommittee and included in the official records for the General Plan Update effort.

Given your interest in bike lanes, you may be interested in the update of the citywide Bicycle Master Plan. Information on the effort is available online at: <https://www.cityofsanmateo.org/3944/Bicycle-Master-Plan-Update>

Additionally, Sue-Ellen Atkinson, project manager, she is copied on this email so she is aware of your specific comment.

Regards,

Julia Klein

Principal Planner

City of San Mateo

(650) 522-7216

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Happy Holidays!

-----Original Message-----

From: Luba Boyko <lzenboyko@hotmail.com>

Sent: Saturday, December 1, 2018 4:37 PM

To: General Plan <generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org>

Subject: BIKE LANES.

The big green bike lanes thrust upon the city of San Mateo is an attempt to get us out of our cars and into RENTED city bikes. I have yet to see one person on the big fat green bike lane, nor have I seen anyone, legitimate, person renting your city bikes, except abandoned all over the neighborhood by kids playing with the bikes.

This AGENDA that you have thrust upon this citizen to try to get me out of my car is your Agenda. Crumbling streets — here, unfortunately, not working in Los Angeles, San Diego and won't work here — will work if you continue to dictate this extreme radical ridiculous stackem and packum Agenda.

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** Julia Klein

**Sent:** Thursday, December 6, 2018 4:37 PM

**To:** Geno <[genecondon@sbcglobal.net](mailto:genecondon@sbcglobal.net)>; General Plan <[generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org)>

**Subject:** FW: planning letter

Hi Geno,

Thanks for sending in your letter. It will be forwarded to the General Plan Subcommittee and included as part of the official records for the General Plan update effort.

Best,

Julia Klein  
Principal Planner  
City of San Mateo  
(650) 522-7216

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*Happy Holidays!*

**From:** Geno <[genecondon@sbcglobal.net](mailto:genecondon@sbcglobal.net)>

**Sent:** Saturday, December 1, 2018 10:11 AM

**To:** Julia Klein <[jklein@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:jklein@cityofsanmateo.org)>

**Subject:** planning letter

# Condon & Sons Lumber Company

117 East 25<sup>th</sup> ave  
San Mateo, Ca 94403  
Since 1957

To: City of San Mateo Planning Dept.  
Dec 1, 2018

We have been serving the City of San Mateo for over 60 years. During that time we have seen many changes to our City. We remember the open fields and the families lined up during the City wide parades. We have seen the property values increase over 500%.

Our employees have always been local people from nearby friends and families. Over the years we started to notice our employees were coming from farther and farther distances so that they could afford housing to live. We also realized our need for increases in benefits to cover the travel costs and tolls to keep a good employee.

Now in our present times, we find it nearly impossible to find local employees due to the housing costs verses the wages needed to survive. When you combine the housing costs and the wages needed, then add the newer travel times with the current traffic conditions, we found employees on the road for hours. It was not hard to realize when travel time vrs family time, that employees were not wanting the travel and with the growth in the bedroom communities, more jobs for the same pay are readily available locally and they do not need to travel as far.

This now shortage of local available affordable labor for the smaller brick and mortar stores has made it extremely difficult. We now find ourselves as owners working longer harder hours to make up for the employee shortage but as we are getting older, it is that much more work.

We look at the future of our business with our four generations that have grown up within our business and realize that our retirement is near. We look at our open space property and do not see it as an efficient space for the future. Our location is walking distance to the train station as well as a located close the highway intersections, airport, walking distance to the local shopping district. So the need for a car would be minimal.

We would like to see higher density "affordable" housing with mixed use below at our location as Europe as developed over time so we must we. We feel that locals should be able to afford to live and work in the same city.

Gene Condon  
Condon & Sons Companies





**From:** General Plan  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 5, 2018 5:24 PM  
**To:** laura.b.porter@gmail.com; General Plan <generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org>  
**Subject:** RE: New message on Strive San Mateo

Hi Laura,

Thanks for your message. It will be forwarded to the General Plan Subcommittee and included as part of the official records for the General Plan Update effort.

Regards,

Julia Klein  
Principal Planner  
City of San Mateo  
(650) 522-7216

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Monday & Tuesday, December 31, 2018 & January 1, 2019.  
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**From:** Strive San Mateo <[email@strivesanmateo.org](mailto:email@strivesanmateo.org)>  
**Sent:** Monday, December 3, 2018 10:43 PM  
**To:** General Plan <[generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org)>  
**Subject:** New message on Strive San Mateo

Name: Lau

Email: [laura.b.porter@gmail.com](mailto:laura.b.porter@gmail.com)

Message: I would love to see more environmentally conscious options in San Mateo. When shopping downtown, there aren't recycling or compost options in many shops. These should be required for all businesses, and there should be options in the Park as well. Any new changes to Park structures should consider using renewable materials and have energy provided through solar and non-fossil fuel options. Please make sure that sustainability is front and center in any plans!

**From:** General Plan  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 5, 2018 5:26 PM  
**To:** rabbit121208@yahoo.com; General Plan <generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org>  
**Subject:** RE: New message on Strive San Mateo

Hi Shirley,

Thanks for your message. It will be forwarded to the General Plan Subcommittee and included as part of the official records for the General Plan Update effort.

Regards,

Julia Klein  
Principal Planner  
City of San Mateo  
(650) 522-7216

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**From:** Strive San Mateo <[email@strivesanmateo.org](mailto:email@strivesanmateo.org)>  
**Sent:** Monday, December 3, 2018 11:36 PM  
**To:** General Plan <[generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org)>  
**Subject:** New message on Strive San Mateo

Name: Shirley C Liu

Email: [rabbit121208@yahoo.com](mailto:rabbit121208@yahoo.com)

Message: We love to live in San Mateo, it's peaceful and restful, not so crowded, easier to find a free parking space and nice weather in the Bay area! However, the rental is too high that many people can not afford it, we really need more affordable housing in San Mateo.

**From:** General Plan  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 5, 2018 5:05 PM  
**To:** Barbara Kilpatrick <kilpatrickabarbara@gmail.com>; General Plan <generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org>  
**Subject:** RE: Stand with us: December 6

Hi Barbara,

From the content of the emails below, it appears your comment is regarding Caltrain's work on developing their transit-oriented development policy.  
It might be best for you to forward your comment directly to Caltrain. Below is contact info from Caltrain's website.

<http://www.caltrain.com/about/contact.html>

Caltrain Customer Service  
(Weekdays: 7 am - 7 pm / Weekends & Holidays: 8 am - 5 pm)  
Information 1.800.660.4287  
Information for hearing impaired: (TTY) 650.508.6448

Mailing Address:  
P.O. Box 3006  
San Carlos, CA 94070-1306

Office Address:  
1250 San Carlos Ave.  
San Carlos, CA 94070-1306  
Office Hours: weekdays 8 am - 5:30 pm  
650.508.6200

Regards,

Julia Klein  
Principal Planner  
City of San Mateo  
(650) 522-7216

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**From:** Barbara Kilpatrick <kilpatrickabarbara@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 4, 2018 10:43 PM  
**To:** General Plan <generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org>; [StationParkGreen@essex.com](mailto:StationParkGreen@essex.com)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Stand with us: December 6

I say no.

May I pass this along to others in the profession?

Thank you. 🌲 🌲 🌲 🌲 🌲

Barbara Kilpatrick #322 SPG

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Leora Tanjuatco Ross <[leora@hlcsmc.org](mailto:leora@hlcsmc.org)>  
**Date:** December 4, 2018 at 4:20:36 PM PST  
**To:** Kilpatrickabarbara <[kilpatrickabarbara@gmail.com](mailto:kilpatrickabarbara@gmail.com)>  
**Subject: Re: Stand with us: December 6**

Hey Barbara,

It's time for us to advocate for affordable homes on Caltrain land! Are you ready?

Again, here are the details for the Caltrain board meeting:

December 6 @ 10 am

Bacciocco Auditorium, 2nd Floor

1250 San Carlos Avenue, San Carlos CA 94070

**We will speak at the beginning of the meeting, during public comment.**

Here are the talking points:

- Hello, my name is Barbara Kilpatrick and I'm here to thank you for moving forward with the Transit-Oriented Development policy. We are asking you to pass an affordable housing policy that prioritizes housing on all Caltrain land, and requires at least 20% of those homes to be affordable.
- After talking to staff, we understand that discussion of this policy will begin in January or February of 2019. We are so excited to move forward, and we look forward to working with you.
- Staff is already making decisions on certain sites, and the business plan is moving forward. We need you, as the Board, to set the priorities of the agency, before you make decisions on how to allocate resources in the future. The data is clear - our priority needs to be affordable homes.
- Ten of thousands families in our region need affordable housing, and we need to move quickly to build homes for them. Thank you for all of your work on this!

See you there! I'll be in the auditorium bright and early. :)

On Wed, Nov 21, 2018 at 8:23 PM Barbara Kilpatrick <[kilpatrickabarbara@gmail.com](mailto:kilpatrickabarbara@gmail.com)> wrote:  
Thank you!

My father worked for Southern Pacific the old Caltrain. Work permitting, I will try and come.

Where I live, SPG, is the Hayward station.

I am vying for a better income to handle affordable housing.

Happy Thanksgiving 🍁

Barbara Kilpatrick 650-315-2774

On Wed, Nov 21, 2018 at 8:19 PM Leora Tanjuatco Ross <[leora@hlcsmc.org](mailto:leora@hlcsmc.org)> wrote:  
Dear Barbara,



Back in June, Caltrain staff discussed their work on a transit-oriented development policy. They committed to bringing a draft policy to the board by the end of 2018, and that it would include an affordable housing component. However, it's the end of 2018 and there hasn't been another discussion of the affordable housing policy!

Join us to remind Caltrain to prioritize this policy. The next board meeting is:  
Thurs., December 6 @ 10 am  
Bacciocco Auditorium, 2nd Floor  
[1250 San Carlos Avenue, San Carlos CA 94070](#)  
We will speak at the beginning of the meeting, during public comment.

Let me know if you can come! A system-wide affordable housing policy at Caltrain would open up over 30 acres of land for affordable housing.

In solidarity,  
Leora

--

**Leora Tanjuatco Ross**  
Organizing Director  
Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo County  
(650) 201-9889  
[2905 S El Camino Real](#)  
[San Mateo, CA 94403](#)  
[www.hlcsmc.org](http://www.hlcsmc.org)

- - -

■

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**Leora Tanjuatco Ross**  
Organizing Director  
Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo County  
(650) 201-9889  
2905 S El Camino Real  
San Mateo, CA 94403  
[www.hlcsmc.org](http://www.hlcsmc.org)

- - -

**From:** General Plan  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 5, 2018 5:11 PM  
**To:** davidrhunt@gmail.com; General Plan <generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org>  
**Subject:** RE: New message on Strive San Mateo

Hi David,

Thanks for your email. It will be forwarded to the General Plan Subcommittee and included in the official records for the General Plan Update effort.

Regards,

Julia Klein  
Principal Planner  
City of San Mateo  
(650) 522-7216

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**From:** Strive San Mateo <[email@strivesanmateo.org](mailto:email@strivesanmateo.org)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 4, 2018 12:13 PM  
**To:** General Plan <[generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org)>  
**Subject:** New message on Strive San Mateo

Name: David Hunt

Email: [davidrhunt@gmail.com](mailto:davidrhunt@gmail.com)

Message: I would love to see the City of San Mateo consider making an area of downtown walking only. Closing a portion of the downtown to cars would make San Mateo stand out on the peninsula as a progressive city that is focusing on livability. Currently when walking downtown I do not feel safe as a pedestrian and having an area of downtown car-free would increase safety and livability.

**From:** General Plan

**Sent:** Thursday, December 6, 2018 11:42 AM

**To:** Jan Stokley <[jan@housingchoices.org](mailto:jan@housingchoices.org)>; General Plan <[generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org)>

**Subject:** RE: Comments on Existing Conditions Report and Vision

Hi Jan,

Thanks for your email and letter. They will be forwarded to the General Plan Subcommittee and included as part of the official records for the General Plan Update effort.

Regards,

Julia Klein  
Principal Planner  
City of San Mateo  
(650) 522-7216

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**From:** Jan Stokley <[jan@housingchoices.org](mailto:jan@housingchoices.org)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, December 5, 2018 6:46 PM

**To:** General Plan <[generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org)>

**Cc:** Julia Klein <[jklein@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:jklein@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Lily Lim <[llim@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:llim@cityofsanmateo.org)>

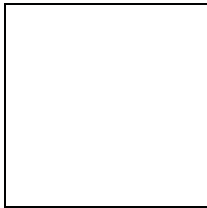
**Subject:** Comments on Existing Conditions Report and Vision

Attached please find our comments on the Existing Conditions report and the guiding principles which we hope will be adopted in the Vision Statement.

Thank you so much.

Jan

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December 5, 2018

via email: [generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org)

Julia Klein, Principal Planner  
Lily Lim, Associate Planner  
Members of the General Plan subcommittee  
City of San Mateo City Hall  
330 West 20th Avenue  
San Mateo, CA 94403

RE: San Mateo general plan visioning

Dear General Plan Subcommittee, Julia and Lily:

On behalf of Housing Choices, I am writing to provide comments on the Existing Conditions Report and the Vision Statement for the revised General Plan. Housing Choices is a nonprofit organization that assists San Mateo residents with developmental disabilities in their effort to find an affordable home in the City where they grew up and have networks of formal and informal support. The revised General Plan is the key to the ability of the City to provide housing that is inclusive of this population.

We strongly believe that the revised Plan must address past and current exclusionary zoning policies that have had a negative impact on many San Mateo residents. To provide meaningful guidance for the next twenty years of development, the revised Plan must acknowledge the displacement and hardship that current land use policies have had on low income people, people of color, young families, renters, and people with disabilities.

Only yesterday, at our Burlingame office, Sherwin, a Comcast technician, told me that as the parent of three children, one of whom has severe autism, he has made the difficult decision to re-locate his family to Elk Grove because he can no longer afford to live in San Mateo on his salary. Because salaries for the same job in Elk Grove are lower than in San Mateo, he will commute from Elk Grove to his current Comcast job, contributing to traffic problems and taking away hours each day when he could otherwise support his wife in raising their three children, including his son with autism, whose care demands prevent his wife from working.

Sherwin's story is typical of thousands of others. The ongoing economic displacement of hardworking families and people with disabilities shows the need for systemic

solutions to the city's urgent need for housing, especially affordable housing that is inclusive of people of all incomes and all abilities.

The Existing Conditions Report, on which the revised General Plan will be based, fails to document the destructive impact that robust job growth with no accompanying building of housing has had on the San Mateo community. The Existing Conditions Report does not describe the displacement, overcrowding, housing instability, and health toll created by the jobs-housing imbalance of the past two decades. It ignores the dramatic increase in no-cause evictions in the city, most of which have affected low-income families with children, even though we referred you to the report documenting these trends prepared by Community Legal Services. The omission of these existing conditions is simply unforgivable and must be addressed in order to create a vision statement that is grounded in an honest assessment of the failings of past policies and the need for significant change.

The General Plan's vision statement should be a forward-looking document that aims to solve the problems outlined in the Existing Conditions Report. This vision should be an active, goal-based document that helps SOLVE the land use challenges, not gloss over them.

Therefore, we encourage the following as guiding principles for the vision statement:

- **Racial diversity:** One of the greatest assets of San Mateo is its diversity of cultures, ethnicities, and languages. Latino communities are at the greatest risk of displacement, and have been for the past several years. Many other ethnic community members have been priced out or displaced by current exclusionary policies in place.
- **Income diversity:** In order to be a sustainable community, the City of San Mateo needs housing for workers of all incomes, including the child care worker, the gas station attendant, the administrative assistant, the restaurant server, the independent living aide, the senior home visitor, the nurse's aide and many others who work in critical but lower-paid jobs. Creating a General Plan that allows for housing only for the well-to-do is not simply unjust, it is also economically unsustainable. Such short-sighted policies will leave San Mateo's growing population of senior homeowners without the support systems that they require to age in place.
- **Ability diversity:** People with disabilities are an important part of our community and have much to contribute. But without access to housing that is affordable to extremely low-income people (defined as 30% of area median income and below), San Mateo's adults with disabilities will be forced into homelessness or driven out of the community altogether. Most of the people who work in the agencies that support this population are also extremely low-income or very low-income, and many agencies that employ the disability-serving workforce are closing programs due to the inability to pay wages to their workers that keep pace with the high housing.

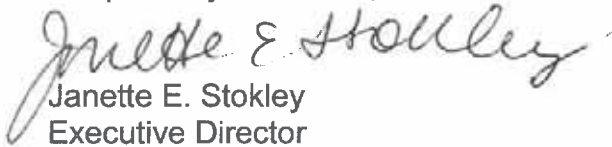


- **Decreased traffic and greenhouse gas emissions:** Because of the high cost of housing, more and more of our service workers have to commute into San Mateo from neighboring counties, which strains the capacity of our roads and bridges, compounds traffic problems, and pollutes our air.
- **More room for open space:** Greater density and heights will allow us to house the people in our community who are being forced out by high housing costs, while still maintaining our open space.
- **Increased equity:** Existing height and density limits in San Mateo's land use policies make it almost impossible for affordable housing developers to build affordable housing. If we want to maintain our diverse community, we must continue to build affordable housing with income targeting that ranges from extremely low-income to moderate-income.

We hope you will take all these factors into consideration when revising the Vision Statement. We believe that the future of San Mateo as a thriving, diverse and inclusive community depends on it.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important document.

Respectfully submitted,



Janette E. Stokley  
Executive Director

Email: [jan@housingchoices.org](mailto:jan@housingchoices.org)

Phone: 408-713-2613

**From:** General Plan

**Sent:** Wednesday, December 5, 2018 4:34 PM

**To:** Kiyomi Honda Yamamoto <[khondayamamoto@greenbelt.org](mailto:khondayamamoto@greenbelt.org)>; General Plan <[generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org)>

**Subject:** RE: Greenbelt Alliance Comment Letter - San Mateo General Plan Visioning

Hi Kiyomi,

Thank you for your email and letter. They will be forwarded to the General Plan Subcommittee and included in the official records for the General Plan Update effort.

Additionally, in consideration of the Brown Act, I've moved the elected and appointed city officials to BCC.

Regards,

Julia Klein  
Principal Planner  
City of San Mateo  
(650) 522-7216

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*Happy Holidays!*

**From:** Kiyomi Honda Yamamoto <[khondayamamoto@greenbelt.org](mailto:khondayamamoto@greenbelt.org)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, December 5, 2018 9:19 AM

**To:** General Plan <[generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Julia Klein <[jklein@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:jklein@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Lily Lim <[llim@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:llim@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Amourence Lee <[alee@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:alee@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Clifford Robbins <[crobbins@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:crobbins@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Rick Bonilla <[RBonilla@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:RBonilla@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Eric Rodriguez <[erodriguez@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:erodriguez@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Adam Loraine <[aloraine@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:aloraine@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Ellen Mallory <[emallory@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:emallory@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Ramiro Maldonado Jr. <[rmaldonado@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:rmaldonado@cityofsanmateo.org)>

**Subject:** Greenbelt Alliance Comment Letter - San Mateo General Plan Visioning

Good Morning,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the San Mateo General Plan. Attached, please find Greenbelt Alliance's letter.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Regards,

Kiyomi

--

Kiyomi Honda Yamamoto  
South Bay Regional Representative  
(408) 663-1735 | [LinkedIn](#)

**Greenbelt Alliance**

75 E. Santa Clara Street, Suite 600

[greenbelt.org](http://greenbelt.org) | [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#)

*Bay Area greenbelt lands are at risk of being lost to sprawl development. [Get the facts here](#).*

*If you would like to support Greenbelt Alliance, please don't forget to make your gift by December 31st to qualify for a 2018 calendar year tax deduction. Please donate at [greenbelt.org](http://greenbelt.org) or call (415) 543-6771 (Ext 302). Thank you for all you do to help us create a better Bay Area! Happy Holidays!*

December 4, 2018

Mayor Bonilla and San Mateo City Council  
330 W. 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
San Mateo, CA 94403

Dear Mayor Bonilla, Deputy Mayor Papan, and Councilmembers Freschet, Goethals, and Rodriguez:

**RE: San Mateo General Plan Visioning**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the San Mateo General Plan Visioning.

Greenbelt Alliance is the San Francisco Bay Area's leading organization working to protect natural and agricultural landscapes from sprawl development and help our cities and towns grow in smart ways to make the region great for everyone. We are the champions of the places that make the Bay Area special, with more than 10,000 supporters and a 60-year history of local and regional success.

The General Plan will shape the future of our community for years to come, as it establishes the overall vision for the neighborhoods throughout the city. This is an exciting opportunity for San Mateo to provide meaningful solutions that addresses the region's interrelated challenges of housing affordability, transportation and sustainability. The Plan can create a more climate-friendly, sustainable future, strengthen our local economic, and improve the quality of life for everyone in our community.

As you consider the the vision of the General Plan, we urge you to consider the following recommendations:

**1. Create Homes**

Job growth in the Bay Area has far outstripped housing supply. This is leading to an escalating crisis in housing affordability, squeezing out longtime residents. According to recent data from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, from 2011 to 2015, only one home was built for every eight new jobs across the Bay Area.

**2. Thriving Neighborhoods**

The Plan can help shape more vibrant and attractive community focused areas , by encouraging a compact design that take advantage of heights, making efficient use of land. These types of neighborhoods strengthen local businesses' customer bases, provide more options for transit-friendly living, and bring life to empty sidewalks. It will help meet the needs of people of all ages and reflect the strong and growing preference for walkable communities.

### **3. Create homes we can all afford**

The lack of housing opportunities is particularly acute for our low-income neighbors. It is critical that the city ensures that homes are available for a full range of needs and incomes by creating inclusive and diverse neighborhoods.

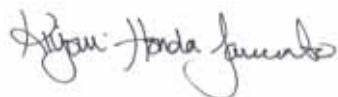
When people are no longer able to afford to live in communities near jobs and transit, they often move to less-expensive neighborhoods at the edges of the region and beyond. This creates additional traffic, congestion, and pollution and creates new sprawl pressure in these edge communities, threatening the greenbelt lands that benefit us all.

### **4. Set Bold Goals for Transportation**

Everyone who lives and works in San Mateo deserves to have an array of sustainable transportation choices—where walking, biking, and transit are safe and accessible and driving is not the only option. All people should have the opportunity to live close to where they work to avoid lengthy commutes on our congested roads to find an affordable place to live. These approaches will reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, improve community health, and reduce traffic and congestion. The General Plan should include bold targets for the reduction of Vehicle Miles Traveled per person as well as vehicle mode-share goals for increasing the share of trips made by walking, cycling, and transit.

We look forward to continuing to work with you to make San Mateo an even better place to live.

Sincerely,



Kiyomi Honda Yamamoto  
South Bay Regional Representative, Greenbelt Alliance

**From:** General Plan

**Sent:** Wednesday, December 5, 2018 4:12 PM

**To:** Melissa Platte <[melissap@mhasmc.org](mailto:melissap@mhasmc.org)>; General Plan <[generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org)>

**Subject:** RE: General Plan Visioning

Hi Melissa,

Thanks for your email and letter. They will be forwarded to the General Plan Subcommittee and included in the official records for the General Plan Update effort.

Also, in consideration of the Brown Act, I've moved the elected and appointed city officials to BCC.

Regards,

Julia Klein  
Principal Planner  
City of San Mateo  
(650) 522-7216

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*Happy Holidays!*

**From:** Melissa Platte <[melissap@mhasmc.org](mailto:melissap@mhasmc.org)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, December 5, 2018 9:32 AM

**To:** General Plan <[generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Julia Klein <[jklein@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:jklein@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Lily Lim <[llim@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:llim@cityofsanmateo.org)>

**Cc:** Amourence Lee <[alee@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:alee@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Clifford Robbins <[crobbins@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:crobbins@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Rick Bonilla <[RBonilla@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:RBonilla@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Eric Rodriguez <[erodriguez@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:erodriguez@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Adam Loraine <[aloraine@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:aloraine@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Ellen Mallory <[emallory@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:emallory@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Ramiro Maldonado Jr. <[rmaldonado@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:rmaldonado@cityofsanmateo.org)>; John Ebnetter <[jebnetter@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:jebnetter@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Mike Etheridge <[metheridge@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:metheridge@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Dianne Whitaker <[DWhitaker@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:DWhitaker@cityofsanmateo.org)>

**Subject:** General Plan Visioning

As a member of the community and a resident of San Mateo I would like to make some recommendations. Please see attached and let me know if you have any questions. Thank you in advance for your interest.

Melissa Platte, MS  
Executive Director  
Mental Health Association of San Mateo County  
2686 Spring Street  
Redwood City, CA 94063  
Direct: (650) 257-8814  
Fax: (510) 879-0354





## Mental Health Association of San Mateo County

2686 Spring St. Redwood City, CA 94063-3522

Phone (650) 368-3345

Fax: (510) 879-0354

December 5, 2018

RE: San Mateo general plan visioning

Julia Klein, Principal Planner

Lily Lim, Associate Planner

City of San Mateo

City Hall

330 West 20th Avenue

San Mateo, CA 94403

[generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org)

Dear City Planners:

Mental Health Association of San Mateo County has provided services to our community for 60 years. Our direct service programs include housing, community support programs, social and recreational services, and educational activities to improve access to and services for individuals living with serious mental illness and/or HIV/AIDS. We have worked with the City of San Mateo staff and volunteers over the years and we feel that our connection with and knowledge of San Mateo and its residents has always been constructive. To that end we would like to weigh in on your current General Plan revision process to strongly support meaningful change.

On behalf of MHA's clients, staff, volunteers and community of support, we strongly believe that the revised Plan must address real and significant issues facing all of us as a community, in particular the need for the development of affordable housing for individuals at the lowest levels of income. Without that, and without the increase in affordable housing for low income individuals, our community will face potential devastation as homelessness increases and nonprofit employees are priced out of the community leaving a gaping hole in the safety net of services.

The Existing Conditions Report, on which the revised General Plan will be based, in no way reflects the impact that robust job growth with no accompanying building of housing has had on the community. This disconnect has led to the displacement of large numbers of former residents, especially our most vulnerable residents, who must find more affordable housing elsewhere, even while commuting to jobs in San Mateo. If San Mateo is to continue being a community that takes pride in its diversity, it must tackle the displacement of large numbers of people caused by the lack of affordable and all forms of housing

The General Plan's vision statement should be a forward-looking document that aims to solve the problems outlined in the Existing Conditions Report. This vision should be an active, goal-based document that helps SOLVE the land use challenges, not gloss them over.

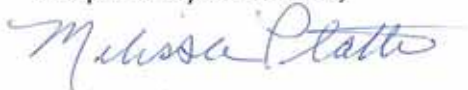
Please include the following as guiding principles for the vision statement:

- Decreased traffic and greenhouse gas emissions: The cost of living in San Mateo is currently astronomical, mostly due to the high cost of housing. This means that service workers have to commute into San Mateo, from neighboring counties, which strains our infrastructure and pollutes our air.
- More room for open space: Greater density and heights will allow us to continue to grow while still maintaining our open space.
- Increased equity: Right now, the height and density limits make it almost impossible for affordable housing developers to build affordable housing, and even more challenging to develop housing affordable to individuals at the lowest levels of income. If we want to maintain our diverse community, we must continue to build housing that is affordable to individuals at all levels of income.

We hope you will take all these factors into consideration when revising the vision statement; we believe that the future of San Mateo as a thriving and diverse community depends on it.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important document and please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Respectfully submitted,



Melissa Platte  
Executive Director

Cc: John Ebnetter  
Mike Etheridge  
Ramiro Maldonado  
Ellen Mallory  
Dianne Whitaker

**From:** General Plan  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 5, 2018 4:12 PM  
**To:** Melissa Platte <[melissap@mhasmc.org](mailto:melissap@mhasmc.org)>; General Plan <[generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org)>  
**Subject:** RE: General Plan Visioning

Hi Melissa,

Thanks for your email and letter. They will be forwarded to the General Plan Subcommittee and included in the official records for the General Plan Update effort.

Also, in consideration of the Brown Act, I've moved the elected and appointed city officials to BCC.

Regards,

Julia Klein  
Principal Planner  
City of San Mateo  
(650) 522-7216

*Please consider the environment before printing this email.*

***Notice of Holiday Closures***

*City Hall will be closed on the following days:*

*Monday, December 24 & Tuesday, December 25, 2018, and*

*Monday, December 31, 2018 & Tuesday, January 1, 2019.*

*Happy Holidays!*

**From:** Melissa Platte <[melissap@mhasmc.org](mailto:melissap@mhasmc.org)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 5, 2018 9:32 AM  
**To:** General Plan <[generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Julia Klein <[jklein@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:jklein@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Lily Lim <[llim@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:llim@cityofsanmateo.org)>  
**Cc:** Amourence Lee <[alee@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:alee@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Clifford Robbins <[crobbins@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:crobbins@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Rick Bonilla <[RBonilla@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:RBonilla@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Eric Rodriguez <[erodriguez@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:erodriguez@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Adam Loraine <[aloraine@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:aloraine@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Ellen Mallory <[emallory@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:emallory@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Ramiro Maldonado Jr. <[rmaldonado@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:rmaldonado@cityofsanmateo.org)>; John Ebnetter <[jebnetter@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:jebnetter@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Mike Etheridge <[metheridge@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:metheridge@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Dianne Whitaker <[DWhitaker@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:DWhitaker@cityofsanmateo.org)>  
**Subject:** General Plan Visioning

As a member of the community and a resident of San Mateo I would like to make some recommendations. Please see attached and let me know if you have any questions. Thank you in advance for your interest.

Melissa Platte, MS  
Executive Director  
Mental Health Association of San Mateo County  
2686 Spring Street  
Redwood City, CA 94063  
Direct: (650) 257-8814  
Fax: (510) 879-0354

**From:** General Plan

**Sent:** Wednesday, December 5, 2018 4:22 PM

**To:** Fahad Qurashi <[fqurashi@yli.org](mailto:fqurashi@yli.org)>; General Plan <[generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org)>

**Subject:** RE: Support for Affordable Housing - Youth Leadership Institute

Hi Fahad,

Thank you for your email and letter. They will be forwarded to the General Plan Subcommittee and included in the official records for the General Plan Update effort.

Also, in consideration of the Brown Act, I've moved the elected and appointed city officials to BCC.

Regards,

Julia Klein  
Principal Planner  
City of San Mateo  
(650) 522-7216

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*Monday, December 31, 2018 & Tuesday, January 1, 2019.*

*Happy Holidays!*

**From:** Fahad Qurashi <[fqurashi@yli.org](mailto:fqurashi@yli.org)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, December 5, 2018 12:38 PM

**To:** General Plan <[generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Julia Klein <[jklein@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:jklein@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Lily Lim <[llim@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:llim@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Amourence Lee <[alee@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:alee@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Clifford Robbins <[crobbins@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:crobbins@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Rick Bonilla <[RBonilla@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:RBonilla@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Eric Rodriguez <[erodriguez@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:erodriguez@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Adam Loraine <[aloraine@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:aloraine@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Ellen Mallory <[emallory@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:emallory@cityofsanmateo.org)>; Ramiro Maldonado Jr. <[rmaldonado@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:rmaldonado@cityofsanmateo.org)>

**Subject:** Support for Affordable Housing - Youth Leadership Institute

Hello San Mateo City Planners and subcommittee members,

Please see the attached letter from the Youth Leadership Institute.

Thanks,  
Fahad

--

Fahad Qurashi,  
Bay Area Director of Programs  
Youth Leadership Institute

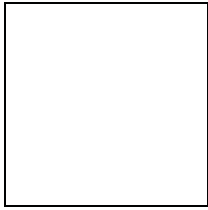
**Youth Leadership Institute**

1670 South Amphlett Boulevard, Suite 250

San Mateo, CA 94402

Cell: (408 ) 805-0553

<http://www.yli.org>



*Youth leading & creating equitable communities.*

December 4th, 2018

RE: San Mateo general plan visioning

Julia Klein, Principal Planner  
Lily Lim, Associate Planner

City of San Mateo  
City Hall  
330 West 20th Avenue  
San Mateo, CA 94403  
[generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org)

Cc: Sub-committee Members

Youth Leadership Institute (YLI) is committed to healthy communities and healthy housing for all. YLI's mission is to build communities where young people and their adult allies come together to create positive social change. YLI's work is based in the conviction that, if we invest in young people and help them uncover their authentic leadership style, the entire community will prosper as a result. YLI believes that everyone has the potential to be an engaged member of society no matter their age, gender, immigration status, socioeconomic status, or any other identifier so long as their skills are developed and the community is ready for their participation

Founded in 1991, YLI has sparked the leadership of 90,000 young people to solve pressing social issues and serve communities for nearly 30 years. YLI implements community-based programs throughout California in Marin, Merced, Fresno, Los Angeles, Riverside, San Francisco, and San Mateo Counties. Across 70 cohorts, YLI serves 1,700 youth leaders ages 12-26 each week, 90% of whom are youth of color, and 67% of whom qualify as low income. A nationally recognized leader in the field of youth development, YLI provides young people with tools and support to identify community needs and implement solutions, while also training adult allies to successfully partner with youth in community change efforts. We have led youth organizing efforts in San Mateo County for the past 15 years.

We are writing to you to express our concerns about the General Plan revision process. We strongly believe that the revised Plan must address past and current exclusionary zoning policies that have had a negative impact on many San Mateo residents. To provide meaningful guidance for the next 20 years of development, it must acknowledge the displacement and hardship that the current policies have had on low income people, people of color, young families, and renters, and propose real solutions, including the urgent need for housing, especially affordable housing.

The Existing Conditions Report, on which the revised General Plan will be based, in no way reflects the impact that robust job growth with no accompanying building of housing has had on the community. This disconnect has led to the displacement of large



numbers of former residents, especially our most vulnerable residents, who must find more affordable housing elsewhere, even while commuting to jobs in San Mateo. If San Mateo is to continue being a community that takes pride in its diversity, it must tackle the displacement of large numbers of people caused by the lack of affordable and all forms of housing

The General Plan's vision statement should be a forward-looking document that aims to solve the problems outlined in the Existing Conditions Report. This vision should be an active, goal-based document that helps SOLVE the land use challenges, not gloss them over.

Please include the following as guiding principles for the vision statement:

- Racial diversity: One of the greatest assets of San Mateo is our diversity of cultures, ethnicities, and languages. Latino communities are at the greatest risk of displacement, and have been for the past several years. Many other ethnic community members have been priced out or displaced by current exclusionary policies in place.
- Decreased traffic and greenhouse gas emissions: The cost of living in San Mateo is currently astronomical, mostly due to the high cost of housing. This means that service workers have to commute into San Mateo, from neighboring counties, which strains our infrastructure and pollutes our air.
- More room for open space: Greater density and heights will allow us to continue to grow while still maintaining our open space.
- Increased equity: Right now, the height and density limits make it almost impossible for affordable housing developers to build affordable housing. If we want to maintain our diverse community, we must continue to build affordable housing.

We hope you will take all these factors into consideration when revising the vision statement; we believe that the future of San Mateo as a thriving and diverse community depends on it.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important document.

Respectfully submitted,



Fahad Qurashi  
Youth Leadership Institute (YLI)  
Bay Area Director  
[fqurashi@yli.org](mailto:fqurashi@yli.org)  
(408) 805 – 0553

**From:** General Plan

**Sent:** Thursday, December 6, 2018 3:34 PM

**To:** smclcjulie@sbcglobal.net; General Plan <generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org>

**Subject:** RE: San Mateo General Plan Revision - Feedback

Hi Julie,

Thank you for your email. It will be forwarded to the General Plan Subcommittee and included in the official records for the General Plan Update effort.

Also, in consideration of the Brown Act, I've moved the elected and appointed city officials to BCC.

Best,

Julia Klein  
Principal Planner  
City of San Mateo  
(650) 522-7216

*Please consider the environment before printing this email.*

**From:** Julie Lind Rupp <smclcjulie@sbcglobal.net>

**Sent:** Thursday, December 6, 2018 2:10 PM

**To:** General Plan <generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org>

**Cc:** Julia Klein <jklein@cityofsanmateo.org>; Lily Lim <llim@cityofsanmateo.org>; Amourence Lee <alee@cityofsanmateo.org>; Clifford Robbins <crobbs@cityofsanmateo.org>; Rick Bonilla <RBonilla@cityofsanmateo.org>; Eric Rodriguez <erodriguez@cityofsanmateo.org>; Adam Loraine <aloraine@cityofsanmateo.org>; Ellen Mallory <emallory@cityofsanmateo.org>; Ramiro Maldonado Jr. <rmaldonado@cityofsanmateo.org>; Joe Goethals <jgoethals@cityofsanmateo.org>; Maureen Freschet <mfreschet@cityofsanmateo.org>; Diane Papan <dpapan@cityofsanmateo.org>; Planning Commission <PlanningCommission@cityofsanmateo.org>

**Subject:** San Mateo General Plan Revision - Feedback



December 6, 2018

RE: San Mateo General Plan Visioning

Julia Klein, Principal Planner  
Lily Lim, Associate Planner

City of San Mateo  
City Hall  
330 West 20th Avenue  
San Mateo, CA 94403  
[generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org)

Esteemed Colleagues:

I am writing on behalf of the San Mateo Labor Council; we represent 110 affiliates and approximately 75,000 members, over 7,000 of which reside in San Mateo. We'd like to express our concerns about the General Plan revision process. We strongly believe that the revised Plan must address past and current exclusionary zoning policies that have had a negative impact on many San Mateo residents. To truly move the City forward, it is incumbent upon the General Plan to acknowledge the disproportionate impact current policies have had on low income people, people of color, young families, and renters, and propose real solutions, including the urgent need for housing **at all income levels**.

The Existing Conditions Report, on which the revised General Plan will be based, in no way reflects the impact that robust job growth with no accompanying building of housing has had on our community. This disconnect has led to the displacement of large numbers of former residents, especially our most vulnerable, who must now find more affordable housing elsewhere even while commuting back to jobs in San Mateo. If San Mateo is to continue being a community that takes pride in its diversity, this issue must be addressed.

The General Plan's vision statement should be a forward-looking document that aims to solve the problems outlined in the Existing Conditions Report. This vision should be an active, goal-based document that helps SOLVE the land use challenges, not glosses them over.

Please include the following as guiding principles for the vision statement:

- Racial diversity: One of the greatest assets of San Mateo is our diversity of cultures, ethnicities, and languages. Latino communities are at the greatest risk of displacement, and have been for the past several years. Many other ethnic community members have been priced out or displaced by current exclusionary policies in place. Ensuring San Mateo remains a City that is accessible to all should be prioritized.
- Decreased traffic and greenhouse gas emissions: The cost of living in San Mateo is currently astronomical, mostly due to the high cost of housing. This means that service workers have to commute into San Mateo from neighboring counties, which strains our infrastructure and pollutes our air.
- More room for open space: Greater density and heights will allow us to continue to grow while still maintaining our open space.
- Increased equity: Right now, the height and density limits make it almost impossible for housing developers to build affordable housing. If we want to maintain our diverse community, we must continue to build housing at all levels of affordability.

We hope you will take all these factors into consideration when revising the vision statement; we believe that the future of San Mateo as a thriving and diverse community depends on it.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important document, and please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie Lind Rupp". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Julie Lind Rupp, Executive Secretary-Treasurer  
San Mateo Labor Council

*opeiu 29 AFL-CIO 174*

*Julie Lind Rupp, Executive Secretary-Treasurer  
San Mateo County Central Labor Council  
650-572-8848 office/650-572-2481 fax  
650-333-4110 cell  
[smclcjulie@sbcglobal.net](mailto:smclcjulie@sbcglobal.net)*

**From:** General Plan  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 6, 2018 11:41 AM  
**To:** eleniford2000@yahoo.com; General Plan <generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org>  
**Subject:** RE: New message on Strive San Mateo

Hi Eleni,

Thank you for your message. It will be forwarded to the General Plan Subcommittee and included as part of the official records for the General Plan Update effort.

Best,

Julia Klein  
Principal Planner  
City of San Mateo  
(650) 522-7216

*Please consider the environment before printing this email.*

**From:** Strive San Mateo <[email@strivesanmateo.org](mailto:email@strivesanmateo.org)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 6, 2018 11:25 AM  
**To:** General Plan <[generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org)>  
**Subject:** New message on Strive San Mateo

Name: Eleni

Email: [eleniford2000@yahoo.com](mailto:eleniford2000@yahoo.com)

Message: I would like to see more Vegan restaurants coming to the city. As you know, eating a plant-based diet is the most sustainable/green diet for the health of our planet, community and individual (of course, not to mention the animal!)