

From: Eldridge, Karyl <KEldridge@cbnorcal.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 30, 2018 3:58 PM
To: General Plan <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

- 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



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