

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

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**To:** General Plan <generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org>; Julia Klein <jklein@cityofsanmateo.org>; Lily Lim <llim@cityofsanmateo.org>; Amourence Lee <alee@cityofsanmateo.org>; Clifford Robbins <crobbins@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>

**Subject:** General Plan Vision

December 12, 2018

RE: San Mateo general plan visioning

Julia Klein, Principal Planner

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I am a 35+-year resident of San Mateo and we raised four kids here. I'd like to provide some points on the General Plan's vision statement

To provide meaningful guidance for the next 20 years of development, you must acknowledge the displacement and hardship that the current policies have had on low- and middle-income people, diversity, young people and families, and renters, and propose real solutions, including the urgent need for housing, especially affordable housing. If San Mateo is to continue being a strong, diverse community, 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, particularly housing affordability and traffic congestion. 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 low- and medium-income workers, who are vital to the functioning of our community, have to commute into San Mateo, from neighboring counties, which causes traffic congestion, strains our infrastructure and pollutes our air. It also weakens the families of these workers, as they have reduced time, funds and energy to spend on their family, particularly their children. This is weakening our entire region.

- More room: We need to have much greater density and height allowances near our major transportation routes. These are the Caltrain stations and along El Camino Real. This will still leave most of San Mateo neighborhoods as single-family homes, but will allow for the added housing to help solve our challenges. Higher height does not mean all buildings near transit need to be tall, but if some are, it makes the community more livable. For example, I recently visited Singapore. Most of their neighborhoods have high

rise condos, but the condos are surrounded with low rise stores, restaurants, schools, parks and services all within walking/biking distance to the condos. There is also a train or major bus station nearby. This works well and by allowing some housing buildings to be tall, they have the scale that can support the businesses, schools and parks to be close by. If you limit density and heights as we have in the past, you limit the ability to provide the needed services nearby, thus increasing the need to drive and add to traffic congestion.

Right now, the height and density limits greatly constrain affordable housing developers from building affordable housing. If we want to maintain our diverse community, we must build much more affordable housing.

- Diversity: One of the greatest assets of San Mateo has been our diversity of cultures, ethnicities, and languages. Many ethnic community members have been priced out or displaced by current exclusionary policies in place.

I hope you will take these suggestions into consideration when revising the vision statement; I 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,

Ken Abreu