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Cc: Patrice Olds <polds@cityofsanmateo.org>

Subject: Draft Vision Statement for General Plan - Concerns/Input

To the General Plan Sub-Committee members, members of the Planning Commission, and City Council –

Firstly, a tremendous thanks for the countless hours and dedication of the General Plan Sub-Committee. Sub-Committee members, your disappointment last night could not have matched those of the residents when a number of you expressed concern over the pace of your role in this all important task, and that you did not feel adequately prepared to go forward since 1) your queries of City staff and Charlie Knox at your second meeting were yet to be answered, and, 2) videos of the community input meetings were not yet posted for you to view. City staff answered these concerns by noting that you were not charged with refining the Vision Statement or finding consensus. You were then advised that the Draft Vision Statement as presented at last night's meeting would be the one going forward to the Planning Commission, but perhaps your thoughts-to-date (which most of you planned to submit,) *could* be attached, or *maybe* even incorporated here and there if Knox could do so easily. (What are we paying this guy?)

I have to ask what use was the second meeting if you took the time to ask important questions which were not answered? And, what was the use of last night's meeting if the Draft Vision Statement was based solely on the community meetings?

It's important to note that Mr. Knox stated that the Vision Statement items were in order of 'frequency' in which they heard them at the community meetings. It's also important to note that Julia Klein confirmed that the status of the people who participated in the community meetings were *not* noted – so weight of resident input over a non-resident who worked for a housing organization, per se, would be equal. This should receive serious consideration since Knox placed **housing** at the top of the Vision Statement, yet it is widely known that Housing Leadership Council's Leora Ross circled the wagons by Tweeting to her 'Yes in My Back Yard' groups, encouraging them to get to these meetings so that "a bunch of white homeowners" would not be the ones making the decisions. A fact I am sure Mr. Knox is unaware of. So, while the Vision Statement *may* reflect what went on at these meetings, what actually went on at these meetings (with the few hundred attendees) *cannot and should not* be considered a genuine reflection of San Mateo's population. Resident Jean Dial reminded us all when she spoke at the microphone last night that 7,000 residents have already spoken on this subject by signing the height limits petition.

Council has asked the residents to believe in this process, and thus far it has been frustrating, skewed, limiting, rushed and excruciatingly disappointing.

The resultant haphazard Vision Statement draft will now prematurely be in the hands of the Planning Commission. We can only hope they will consider the valid concerns voiced by the Sub-Committee last night regarding protecting quality of life and neighborhoods, improving traffic flows, a commitment to mitigate development impacts, sufficient water, and sufficient schools. If we are bent on building at the pace we are now, in the words of the Sub-Committee, we must first seek how to make this feasible for our City to support it.

I will close with the subject of housing. The same organizations who appear at all city meetings with their one-sided requests for affordable housing, and continuously butt up against the express wishes of at least 7,000 tax-paying San Mateans, are either ignorant or indifferent in their failure to parlay the fact that all the housing in the world, of the kind we are currently building, *will NOT touch the tremendous need they purport to advocate for*. The small percentage of Below Market Rate units, coupled with the resulting numbers of lower income units, will be but a drop in the bucket – and the current brand of development will continue to viciously perpetuate regional gentrification with its trend toward tech employees, killing off the diversity we say we value. Therefore, their blind arguments for “taller and denser” and “build, build, build” are completely illogical. And bringing a thousand people to the microphone does not change that.

This General Plan process should be responsibly reviewed to give it the time it deserves. We residents watch and wait for the next steps in this journey to make the future of San Mateo better and brighter. Planning Commissioners and Council members, your decisions are your legacy *and* ours. I know you will tackle what is before you with deep consideration. May you also weigh every decision with logic, and the bravery and leadership needed when navigating a labyrinth. One wrong turn, and we are lost.

Most sincerely,

Lisa Taner
Resident