

**From:** Jan Stokley <jan@housingchoices.org>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 26, 2018 2:42 PM  
**To:** Julia Klein <jklein@cityofsanmateo.org>  
**Cc:** Leora Tanjuatco <leora@hlcsmc.org>; chelsea@snkids.org; keldridge@cbnorcal.com  
**Subject:** Information for the General Plan subcommittee

Dear Julia,

It was nice to meet you at the first General Plan subcommittee meeting. As we discussed, Housing Choices is interested in supporting the participation of people with developmental disabilities in the process. Inclusion of people with cognitive, communication, and social disabilities requires somewhat more forethought than simply hosting a meeting at a physically accessible location (though that is, of course, also necessary).

With other community partners, we hope to support families and adults served by the Golden Gate Regional Center to have a voice in the process so that the blueprint created by the General Plan envisions a community in 2040 that is truly inclusive of San Mateo residents of all incomes and abilities. I believe there were other people at the initial meeting who would support such a goal, and I have taken the liberty to copy them on this email.

As a first step, I have created a housing needs assessment for this part of your community, which is attached, using data from the CA Department of Developmental Services. As you know, the CA Housing Element law requires the city to assess and plan for the housing needs of its residents with developmental disabilities, who experience the highest rates of housing discrimination of any protected class.

Please let me know how we can help you support an inclusive, community-building planning process.

Thank you.

Jan

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## The Housing Needs of the City of San Mateo's

### Residents with Developmental Disabilities

**Introduction.** The City of San Mateo faces a growing need for permanent supportive housing for people with developmental disabilities, who are diagnosed with, for example, autism, Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, intellectual disability, and other conditions that severely impair functioning in the activities of daily living. Under California's Lanterman Act, the Golden Gate Regional Center provides the city's residents with developmental disabilities with the services they need to live successfully in integrated community housing. But without access to affordable housing, this is an empty promise.

**Current Unmet Housing Need.** According to the California Department of Developmental Services, the City of San Mateo is home to **956 people with developmental disabilities**, of whom **579 are adults and 377 are children**. Of the adult population, **only 58 (10%) live in their own apartment, while 217 (38%) are living at home with aging parents**. Three hundred and four (304) adults in the City of San Mateo live in a licensed facility.

Without access to affordable housing, many adults with developmental disabilities remain in the home of an aging parent or in a restrictive care facility, not by choice, but because of the lack of other residential options.

**Demographic Factors Contributing to the Growth in Housing Need.** The number of people with developmental disabilities in San Mateo County **increased by 35% in the decade since 2008**. Two demographic factors will continue to fuel this growth.

First, this growth correlates with a significant increase in the diagnosis of children with autism that began more than 25 years ago--now seen in a **dramatic increase in the number of adults approaching their 30s**. For example, San Mateo County now has **260% more adults with developmental disabilities in the age group 18 to 31 years compared to the age group 32 years to 41 years**, representing the first wave of the autism "tsunami" that is entering adulthood. Most adults with developmental disabilities in their 20s and 30s are still living at home, but as their parents reach their 60s and 70s, these families need to find permanent supportive housing options for their adult children with developmental disabilities.

Another demographic factor contributing to the unmet housing need among people with developmental disabilities is **the continuing gains in life span due to improvements in medical care and social services**. For example, as recently as ten years ago, there was a 36% decrease in the San Mateo County population of adults with developmental disabilities as they aged out of the group aged 42 to 51 years and joined the group aged 52 to 61 years of age. In contrast,



in March 2018, the group that is age 52 to 61 years of age is actually larger than the group that is age 42 to 51 years of age. Similarly, the number of adults living past their 62<sup>nd</sup> birthday is almost the same size as the group age 52 to 61. In just 10 years, the number of San Mateo County seniors (age 62 and older) with developmental disabilities has more than doubled.

**Community Factors Contributing to the Growth in Housing Need.** Dramatic rent increases in the City of San Mateo limit the ability of adults with developmental disabilities to move out of the family home or restrictive care facilities. Many rely on SSI benefits of only \$900/month, and those who work are often employed in low-wage, often part-time jobs. The San Mateo market rent can easily be three times the individual's gross income. Many adults with developmental disabilities are able to live in affordable housing with Independent Living Services or Supported Living Services provided by the Golden Gate Regional Center. But **affordable housing remains the missing piece of the puzzle.**

The lack of affordable housing takes a particular toll on the City of San Mateo's children with developmental disabilities. Overcrowding and frequent housing moves, associated with high housing costs, directly undermine the benefits of special education and other investments that would contribute to better long-term outcomes as an adult.

**Solutions to the City of San Mateo's Housing Crisis for People with Developmental Disabilities.** Although the Golden Gate Regional Center can provide supportive services to enable the city's residents with developmental disabilities to live in community rental housing, the Regional Center is unable to pay for the actual cost of housing. Over the past 21 years, a number of Silicon Valley cities have overcome this barrier by fostering **long-term partnerships between the Regional Center service system and housing developers who have set aside a percentage of units at specific properties for rent to people with developmental disabilities with resident supportive services funded by the Regional Center.**

This housing model works, but it requires the sustained leadership of cities like San Mateo to ensure that, as the City of San Mateo creates its blue print for the future and addresses its community's affordable housing needs, the city is intentional about including a percentage of rental units for extremely low-income people with developmental disabilities.

For more information about creating inclusionary affordable housing for San Mateo residents with developmental disabilities, both families with children and adults seeking to live independently, please contact Jan Stokley, Executive Director, Housing Choices, [jan@housingchoices.org](mailto:jan@housingchoices.org) or telephone (408)713-2613 and visit us at [www.housingchoices.org](http://www.housingchoices.org).