

**From:** Adam Nugent [REDACTED]  
**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