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RE: San Mateo general plan visioning

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Cc: Sub-committee Members

Youth Leadership Institute (YLI) is committed to healthy communities and healthy housing for all. YLI's mission is to build communities where young people and their adult allies come together to create positive social change. YLI's work is based in the conviction that, if we invest in young people and help them uncover their authentic leadership style, the entire community will prosper as a result. YLI believes that everyone has the potential to be an engaged member of society no matter their age, gender, immigration status, socioeconomic status, or any other identifier so long as their skills are developed and the community is ready for their participation

Founded in 1991, YLI has sparked the leadership of 90,000 young people to solve pressing social issues and serve communities for nearly 30 years. YLI implements community-based programs throughout California in Marin, Merced, Fresno, Los Angeles, Riverside, San Francisco, and San Mateo Counties. Across 70 cohorts, YLI serves 1,700 youth leaders ages 12-26 each week, 90% of whom are youth of color, and 67% of whom qualify as low income. A nationally recognized leader in the field of youth development, YLI provides young people with tools and support to identify community needs and implement solutions, while also training adult allies to successfully partner with youth in community change efforts. We have led youth organizing efforts in San Mateo County for the past 15 years.

We are writing to you to express our concerns about the General Plan revision process. We strongly believe that the revised Plan must address past and current exclusionary zoning policies that have had a negative impact on many San Mateo residents. To provide meaningful guidance for the next 20 years of development, it must acknowledge the displacement and hardship that the current policies have had on low income people, people of color, young families, and renters, and propose real solutions, including the urgent need for housing, especially affordable housing.

The Existing Conditions Report, on which the revised General Plan will be based, in no way reflects the impact that robust job growth with no accompanying building of housing has had on the community. This disconnect has led to the displacement of large

numbers of former residents, especially our most vulnerable residents, who must find more affordable housing elsewhere, even while commuting to jobs in in San Mateo. If San Mateo is to continue being a community that takes pride in its diversity, 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. 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:

- Racial diversity: One of the greatest assets of San Mateo is our diversity of cultures, ethnicities, and languages. Latino communities are at the greatest risk of displacement, and have been for the past several years. Many other ethnic community members have been priced out or displaced by current exclusionary policies in place.
- 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 service workers have to commute into San Mateo, from neighboring counties, which strains our infrastructure and pollutes our air.
- More room for open space: Greater density and heights will allow us to continue to grow while still maintaining our open space.
- Increased equity: Right now, the height and density limits make it almost impossible for affordable housing developers to build affordable housing. If we want to maintain our diverse community, we must continue to build affordable housing.

We hope you will take all these factors into consideration when revising the vision statement; we 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,



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