



# Sustainable San Mateo County

Economy. Equity. Environment.

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*Dedicated to the long-term health and vitality of our region*

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December 12, 2018

## RE: San Mateo general plan visioning

Attn: Julia Klein, Principal Planner  
 Lily Lim, Associate Planner

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Dear San Mateo staff and General Plan Sub-committee:

Sustainable San Mateo County (SSMC) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization who was established in 1992 by a group of San Mateo County residents who wanted to build awareness of the need for sustainability. Our aim is to encourage and accelerate sustainability implementation throughout San Mateo County, by addressing the “3 E’s” of sustainability: environment, economy and social equity. Some of our core programs include the Indicators Report program, which has been produced annually since 1997 and our annual Awards Event, which celebrates sustainability champions (organizations and individuals) – we are celebrating 20 years of Awards next year! In addition, SSMC engages regularly with a broad range of stakeholders including: cities and local governments, the business

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community, other non-profits and academia to advance a variety of projects, programs and other efforts that are consistent with the organization's vision and mission. More information about our organization can be found on our website at: <http://www.sustainablesanmateo.org>.

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.

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 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ch2 - Zaugg' with a stylized flourish at the end.

Christine Kohl-Zaugg  
Executive Director, Sustainable San Mateo County (SSMC)