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June 25, 2019

Chair Mallory and General Plan Subcommittee
330 W. 20th Avenue
San Mateo, CA 94403

Dear Chair Mallory and Members of the General Plan Subcommittee:

RE: San Mateo General Plan Visioning

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Strive San Mateo.

Greenbelt Alliance is the San Francisco Bay Area's leading organization working to protect natural and agricultural landscapes from sprawl development and help our cities and towns grow in smart ways to make the region great for everyone. We are the champions of the places that make the Bay Area special, with more than 10,000 supporters and a 60-year history of local and regional success.

The General Plan will shape the future of our community for years to come, as it establishes the overall vision for the neighborhoods throughout the city. This is an exciting opportunity for San Mateo to provide meaningful solutions that addresses the region's interrelated challenges of housing affordability, transportation, and sustainability. The Plan can create a more climate-friendly, sustainable future, strengthen our local economy, and improve the quality of life for everyone in our community.

As you proceed with the General Plan, we urge you to consider the following recommendations:

1. Create Ample Housing Opportunities

Job growth in the Bay Area has far outstripped housing supply. According to recent data from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, from 2011 to 2015, only one home was built for every eight new jobs across the Bay Area. This is leading to an escalating crisis in housing affordability, putting tremendous strain on new and longtime residents alike. When people are no longer able to afford to live in communities near jobs and transit, they often move to less-expensive neighborhoods at the edges of the region and beyond. This creates additional traffic, congestion, and pollution and creates new sprawl development pressure in these edge communities, threatening the greenbelt lands that benefit us all.

San Mateo can play an important part in addressing this crisis by providing ample housing opportunities in infill locations to help eliminate the area's severe jobs-housing imbalance.

2. Create Homes We Can All Afford

The lack of housing opportunities is particularly acute for our low-income neighbors. It is critical that the city ensures that homes are available for a full range of needs and incomes by creating inclusive and diverse neighborhoods. The General Plan Update should include new tools to increase the supply of homes for low and very-low income individuals and increase community stability so that current residents can continue to remain a vital part of the community.

3. Foster Thriving Neighborhoods

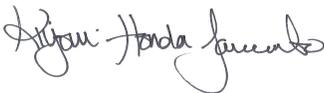
The Plan can help create more vibrant, attractive, healthy neighborhoods by encouraging a compact, walkable neighborhood design that makes efficient use of our limited urban land. These types of neighborhoods strengthen local businesses' customer bases, provide more options for transit-friendly living, and bring life to empty sidewalks. They also help meet the needs of people of all ages and reflect the strong and growing preference for walkable communities. The city should also incorporate urban greening improvements to improve quality of life and increase community resilience to heat, storms and other stressors.

4. Set Bold Goals for Transportation

Everyone who lives and works in San Mateo deserves to have an array of sustainable transportation choices—where walking, biking, and transit are safe and accessible and driving is not the only option. All people should have the opportunity to live close to where they work to avoid lengthy commutes on our congested roads to find an affordable place to live. These approaches will reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, improve community health, and reduce traffic and congestion. The General Plan should include strong targets for the reduction of Vehicle Miles Traveled per person as well as vehicle mode-share goals for increasing the share of trips made by walking, cycling, and transit.

We look forward to continuing to work with you to make San Mateo an even better place to live.

Sincerely,



Kiyomi Honda Yamamoto
South Bay Regional Representative, Greenbelt Alliance