



December 11, 2018

SENT VIA EMAIL

Julia Klein, Principal Planner
Lily Lim, Associate Planner
City of San Mateo
City Hall
330 West 20th Avenue
San Mateo, CA 94403
generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org

RE: San Mateo GENERAL PLAN VISIONING

Dear Ms. Klein & Ms. Lim,

On behalf of the Bay Area Council, I am writing to express our concerns about the City of San Mateo's General Plan revision process. The foundation of any good General Plan should include a strong focus on the "Three Es" namely the economy, the environment and social equity.

Like the rest of our region, San Mateo is currently experiencing a period of unprecedented economic growth and alongside the many benefits this has brought, it has delivered a great many challenges as well, not least of which is our inability to accommodate all the people who would like to call San Mateo home. This is in large part due to out dated, auto centric, low density planning priorities that are no longer relevant in today's Bay Area.

We strongly believe that the revised Plan must address these 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 past mistakes that have led to the displacement and hardship that low income people, people of color, young families, and renters, are experiencing and propose real solutions, including the urgent need for a lot more housing, especially affordable and "missing middle" income 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 commensurate building of housing has had on the community. (2010-2016 San Mateo County added 54,000 jobs and only 2148 new homes). This disconnect has led to the displacement of large numbers of former residents, especially the 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:

- Social Equity: One of the greatest assets of San Mateo is the diversity of cultures, ethnicities, and income groups. Low income and Latino communities are at the greatest risk of displacement, and have been for the past several years. Many other community members have already been priced out or displaced by current exclusionary policies in place.

- Environmental Stewardship: The cost of living in San Mateo is astronomical, mostly due to the high cost of housing. This means that service workers have to commute into San Mateo, from as far away as the Central Valley, which strains our infrastructure and pollutes our air. A 2016 report by the Bay Area Council Economic Institute *Another inconvenient Truth* concludes that our region cannot hope to meet our GhG reduction targets unless we get serious about the existing land use practices that create these long commutes. A November 2018 report by the California Air Resources Board reached the same conclusion. The sort of densification required will also leave more room for open space and recreation.

-Economic Diversity: the single biggest threat to our booming economy is its lack of diversity. If we refuse to plan to accommodate our teachers, childcare workers, restaurant servers, and government employees, we will no longer be able to provide the basic services that a functioning society relies upon and the consequences will be dire for everyone.

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.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Jim Wunderman'.

Jim Wunderman
President & CEO
Bay Area Council

cc: General Plan Visioning Sub Committee Members