

From: Barbara Du Mond [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, March 9, 2020 4:37 PM
To: General Plan <generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org>
Subject: the strategic plan -

Dear committee members,

I recently attended the strategic planning session at College Park School and was glad to be able to express my observations, concerns, and ideas with the staff present. Several topics are of particular concern to me: 1. climate change and how the city will adapt to sea level rise, 2. mitigating the effects of the climate crisis and taking pro-active steps to reduce the environmental footprint of San Mateo, 3. food security, 4. concentration of poverty, and 5. traffic issues.

1. When I asked about how the city will deal with sea level rise, there appeared to be no plan. Perhaps it is being dealt with at the county or regional level. If so, San Mateo needs to be in those conversations in order to plan well for our future. According to some maps, parts our city will be under water by mid-century. This article has a prediction of 2'-7', possibly more, sea level rise by the end of the century. It is prudent to plan for these changes now. The interactive maps will give you an idea of how San Mateo will be affected.

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jimdobson/2019/10/30/shocking-new-maps-show-how-sea-level-rise-will-destroy-coastal-cities-by-2050/#2fa1d364456c>

<https://coast.noaa.gov/slr/#/layer/slr/6/-13617957.366058419/4515323.259914983/13/satellite/none/0.8/2050/interHigh/midAccretion>

<https://explorer.adaptingtorisingtides.org/explorer>

If we fail to consider sea level change in our strategic plan we may be putting money and energy into developing parts of our city that will no longer exist and may be under planning for the additional infrastructure needed to mitigate the problems of sea level rise (sewage treatment, flood control and stormwater runoff, underground utilities, salt water incursion and its impact on underground utilities, roadways, and landscaping).

2. The city is already working on ways to mitigate our impact on the climate crisis. One way that hasn't yet been considered for San Mateo but which is happening is at least 20 major cities in the US and many countries around the world is the addition of green roofs and wall. Some of the US cities implementing green roof initiatives include San Francisco, Chicago, Portland and Denver. In 2009 Toronto became the first North American city to adopt a green roof ordinance.

<https://www.thomasnet.com/insights/how-cities-are-driving-growth-in-the-green-roofing-market/>

The benefits of green roofs are many. This website will give you an idea of those benefits:

<https://greenroofs.org/about-green-roofs>

Here are a couple organizations that are helping to educate, network, and build green roof ordinances. Green Roofs for Healthy Cities <https://greenroofs.org/> and Cities Alive <https://citiesalive.org/>. They also hold conferences with trainings in green roof installation.

3. Food Security. One of the best ways to use green roofs is for urban agriculture. Local food chains greatly reduce a city's carbon foot print. Imagine rooftop farm to table restaurants or community gardens on rooftops. Apartment dwellers have no opportunity to grow their own food except in our small community gardens that often have long waiting lists to get in. What if they could grow food on the roof of the apartment building or local business?

<https://greencitygrowers.com/urban-farming-products/rooftop-farms/>

<https://www.agritecture.com/blog/2018/3/14/why-rooftop-farming-is-the-best-solution-for-smart-urban-agriculture>

Top Leaf Farms have created several rooftop farms in our area including Garden Village in Berkeley. <https://topleaffarms.com/portfolio.html>

Here are other examples: <https://www.pacifichorticulture.org/articles/a-farm-on-the-roof-in-the-city/>, <https://www.thedailybeast.com/rooftop-farming-is-more-than-a-green-thumbs-urban-fantasy>

We are in a period of decline and extinction of many plant and animal populations. Green roofs mitigate this by creating habitat for wildlife and an opportunity to grow endangered plant species.

This will no doubt create a backlash from the traditional roofing installers and manufacturers, but other cities have been through this and can serve as mentors for working through these and other problems.

In addition to using rooftops for growing food, urban farming is a great way to feed our residents. Cities allow farmers to use unused lots and vacant warehouses, and to rent people's yard spaces to grow food.

<https://foodtank.com/news/2013/12/farming-in-the-bay-10-urban-agriculture-projects-san-francisco/>,

<https://escondidograpevine.com/2019/02/17/urban-farming-comes-to-the-bay-area/>,

<https://www.calacademy.org/explore-science/bay-area-urban-farms>

In the planning process it will be important to not create food deserts and urban farming, whether on the ground or on roofs, can help reduce the probability of this happening. You also need to not switch from affordable grocery stores to high end one.

4. **Concentrated Poverty.** In our planning it is crucial that we consider the needs of our low income residents so as to not perpetuate or intensify the problems they face. The greater concentration of low income residents is creating problems in many cities and is a much worse problem than gentrification. While we can't solve the problem on our own, we can hopefully not make it worse. Here is an scientific report on the movement and concentration of low income people throughout the US. <https://www.citylab.com/equity/2019/04/gentrified-cities-neighborhood-change-displacement-poverty-data/586840/>. This map will hope you understand how San Mateo has been affected by the migration or low income people. <https://myottetm.github.io/USMapBoxIMO/USLwDispConc.html>

This article focuses on what is happening in the bay area and makes a case for increasing density in pockets throughout a city instead of concentrating housing just around transportation hubs. <https://www.buildzoom.com/blog/pockets-of-dense-construction-in-a-dormant-suburban-interior>

In the planning process it will be important not to concentrate poverty, create food deserts, or displace organizations that serve the needs of low income residents (Samaritan House).

5. Traffic Issues. A lot of population/housing growth in the new plan is concentrated around the train stations. The problem with this is that the railroad tracks become a barrier to good traffic flow, concentrating traffic in areas where there is access across the tracks. The railroad underpass at 42nd St is a good example of this. Currently traffic backs up on Old County Road during rush hour between 42nd and Ralston. Traffic also backs up on Ralston. Increasing housing density on Old County Road near 42nd will worsen this problem. Traffic along El Camino is also likely to increase since increased housing will be close to it. While it is our hope that the new residents in those areas will take public transportation we know this will be far from reality. Many will still use their cars on a regular basis. Increasing density in

other parts of the city would help to alleviate the inevitable traffic problems caused by concentrating housing along the main traffic corridors in San Mateo.

Thank you for the work that you are doing in planning for our future. I appreciate the community meetings and am hoping that you are making extra effort to talk with people who are often left out of these conversations. They may not attend your events, know about your online comment opportunities, or speak sufficient English or Spanish to participate. Talking with leaders from the disaffected groups can help you to accomplish this. It's all about relationship building and inclusion.

Building a strong future together,

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Barb Du Mond

she/her/hers



"All gardens are a form of autobiography." Robert Dash from "Notes from Madoo"

"Go ahead, push your luck/Find out how much love the world can hold."

by Dar Williams, "After All"

"Life should not be a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside in a cloud of smoke, thoroughly used up, totally worn out, and loudly proclaiming "Wow! What a Ride!"

— Hunter S. Thompson