

From: Linda Ly <lly@cityofsanmateo.org>
Sent: Monday, July 19, 2021 10:29 AM
To: General Plan <generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org>
Subject: FW: Input on General Plan Update

From: Kim Diamond <kdiamond@harvestproperties.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 15, 2021 5:13 PM
To: Christina Horrisberger <chorrisberger@cityofsanmateo.org>
Cc: Drew Corbett <dcorbett@cityofsanmateo.org>; Preston O'Connell <poconnell@harvestproperties.com>; Tyler Issadore <tissadore@harvestproperties.com>; Claire Wang <cwang@harvestproperties.com>; Stone, Jonathan <JStone@prometheusreg.com>; Calihan, Pat <PCalihan@prometheusreg.com>; Peterson, Don <DPeterson@prometheusreg.com>; Zachary Dahl <zdahl@cityofsanmateo.org>
Subject: RE: Input on General Plan Update

Hello Christina,

I wanted to thank you and Zach for taking the time to speak with us last week.

Attached please find a letter regarding the General Plan Update process, which is structured around the two questions that the City has posed to the community.

We look forward to continuing to work with you both!

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you,
Kim

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July 15, 2021

Ms. Christina Horrisberger
Community Development Director
City of San Mateo
330 West 20th Avenue
San Mateo, CA 94403

RE: City of San Mateo: General Plan Update, Proposed Alternatives

Dear Ms. Horrisberger:

On behalf of Harvest Properties Inc. and Prometheus, we are writing today to provide additional comments on the City of San Mateo's General Plan Update. As mentioned in our letter dated July 2, 2021, (please see attached), our team applauds the City of San Mateo for its comprehensive community engagement process, and pro-actively seeking out and including community feedback into the planning process.

As a property owner of eight (8) properties in Downtown San Mateo, we truly appreciate this opportunity to provide our input and feedback on the alternatives presented by the City. We understand that the purpose of the General Plan Update is to create a road map for the future development in the selected Study Areas for the next twenty years. With a long-term vested interest in the future of the City, our team shares the City's goal of selecting a plan that can accommodate future growth in a thoughtful and comprehensive way. As the City has stated, it must responsibly plan for its future growth in order to meet its State obligations, while at the same time adhere to the City's vision of being a place that is "vibrant, livable, diverse, and healthy."

We understand that the City has posed two primary questions to the community as it relates to the General Plan Update process. We wanted to share with you our thoughts related to these two important questions.

1. Are the three alternatives the right range of alternatives?
2. What specific changes would you make to any of these alternatives?

In response to the first question, we do believe it is appropriate to present to the community a range of alternatives for consideration. We understand and respect that members of the community have a diverse range of perspectives, opinions, and viewpoints regarding the future growth of the City. Presenting this range of options for growth - with the associated expansion in housing units and population - is important and appropriate as a starting point for community engagement and dialogue.

With respect to the second question, our development team supports an alternative that concentrates development and future growth in the Downtown Core, and more specifically around the Caltrain San Mateo Station. Our team favors a plan that includes Mixed-Use High Density zoning directly around and in close proximity to the transit station, without compromising on high-quality design and architecture as well as ensuring that the Downtown maintains its current vibrant, small-town charm.

Both Alternatives B and C include proposed zoning that is Mixed-Use Medium Density and Mixed-Use High Density. However, ***our suggested change to Alternative B is, for those properties within 1,000 feet of the transit station, to revise the proposed designation from Mixed-Use Medium Density to Mixed-Use High Density to provide the City and community the flexibility to concentrate growth around transit and the established B Street corridor.*** (Please see attached Exhibit for this 1,000 ft. radius). It is important to note that this proposed radius around the Caltrain Station already includes several existing buildings that are at a building height above 55 feet. Therefore, a zoning change to Mixed-Use High Density to allow for taller buildings would fit well into the existing character of this part of the Downtown Core, and is preferable than locating buildings of this size and scale in other areas of the Downtown that are lower density and height. Additionally, making this revision to the Downtown Core zoning would still allow for a meaningful difference in total number of jobs created and population produced between Alternatives B and C.

We would like to highlight some of the benefits of incorporating Mixed-Use High Density zoning in this part of the Downtown Core:

- ***Increased Supply of Affordable Housing.*** Providing for an increase of density in the Downtown area will enable more housing to be built in close proximity to public transportation. Due to the high cost of housing across the City of San Mateo, many community members are being priced out of the housing market, due to a lack of supply of affordable housing choices. Allowing for an increase in density will have the effect of increasing supply, which will help to lower housing prices in the City, ensuring that future generations of San Mateo residents can remain in their hometown.
- ***Preservation of Lower Density neighborhoods.*** Planning for additional growth in the Downtown Core can help to relieve the pressure of meeting the City's housing needs in lower-density residential neighborhoods. Maintaining and preserving the beloved small-town charm that exists in San Mateo's residential neighborhoods is of the utmost of importance to our team. The City's Downtown Core already possesses a rich array of open space, neighborhood resources, an ample supply of public parking, a diverse range of local retailers, and a street grid pattern to support the existing uses as well as future density. By focusing density in the Downtown, where the taller buildings of the City are already located, the City has the unique opportunity to build

upon this strong foundation, and continue to preserve and support the existing neighborhoods of the City.

- **Meeting TOD and Sustainability Goals.** Through the General Plan Update process, the City has a unique opportunity to continue to support Transit Oriented Development (TOD) development. In the City's General Plan, TOD is encouraged, specifically "well-planned compact development with a range of land uses, including housing, commercial, recreation and open space, in proximity to train stations and other transit nodes." Concentrating growth near transit is a proven strategy in reducing automobile use, and their associated greenhouse gas emissions. Transit Oriented Development has a host of benefits: increased transportation choices; increased affordable housing opportunities; increased public safety; reduced vehicle miles travelled; reduced air pollution and energy consumption; and, protection of natural resources.


Our team believes that a modification of Alternative B to encourage Mixed-Use High Density development will enable the City of San Mateo to create the vibrant Downtown Core that it seeks to achieve, one that is energized, active, and beneficial to the residents, businesses, and all community stakeholders of San Mateo.

Again, we want to thank the City for this opportunity to provide our feedback on the alternatives presented as part of the General Plan Update process.

Yours Sincerely,



Preston O'Connell
Partner
Harvest Properties, Inc.



Pat Calihan
Senior Vice President
Prometheus

cc: Zach Dahl, City of San Mateo
Drew Corbett, City of San Mateo

Attachments

Attachment A

Distance from Major Transit Stop (San Mateo Train Station)



Attachment B



July 2, 2021

Ms. Christina Horrisberger
Community Development Director
City of San Mateo
330 West 20th Avenue
San Mateo, CA 94403

RE: City of San Mateo: General Plan Update, Proposed Alternatives

Dear Ms. Horrisberger:

On behalf of Harvest Properties Inc. and Prometheus, we are writing today to provide comments on the City of San Mateo's General Plan Update. We commend the City of San Mateo for its comprehensive community engagement process and acting with transparency and inclusivity in its approach to soliciting and including community feedback into the planning process.

Our team has attended the community meetings and public hearings that the City has conducted for the City's General Plan Update. We understand that as part of this process, the City has prepared three proposed alternatives that represent a range of different approaches for future growth, land use changes and transportation and circulation improvements, with the ultimate goal of selecting a preferred alternative that will serve as the foundation for the General Plan land use map, among other important policy decisions in the City.

As a property owner of eight (8) properties in Downtown San Mateo (or Study Area 4), we appreciate this opportunity to provide our input and feedback on these alternatives. As the purpose of this General Plan Update is to create a road map for the future development in the selected Study Areas for the next twenty years, our team shares the City's goal of selecting a plan that can accommodate future growth in a comprehensive and thoughtful way. As the City has acknowledged, the City must responsibly plan for its future growth in order to meet its State obligations, while at the same time adhere to the City's vision of being a place that is "vibrant, livable, diverse, and healthy."

Our team has a vested and long-term interest in the vision and implementation of the General Plan. Prometheus's headquarters alone will employ approximately 150 employees who will support local businesses and services of the Downtown, by frequenting and investing in Downtown shops, restaurants, and other businesses. Additionally, the existing and future commercial tenants and residents of our properties already are and will continue to be a part of the Downtown fabric, supporting local services, merchants and neighborhood businesses. Therefore, the City's visioning, planning and eventual implementation of the General Plan Update is essential and exceedingly important to our team.

To that end, after analyzing all alternatives presented as part of the General Plan Update, it is clear that San Mateo's Downtown Core is a logical area of the City to accommodate the majority of the City's future growth. Both Alternatives B and C include proposed zoning that is Mixed-Use Medium Density and Mixed-Use High Density.

State policy strongly encourages new development within one-half mile of major transit stops, such as the Caltrain San Mateo Station. The State encourages Transit Oriented Development due to its host of benefits including: increased transportation choices; increased affordable housing opportunities; increased public safety; reduced vehicle miles travelled; reduced air pollution and energy consumption; and, protection of natural resources.

The State Legislature has implemented this policy throughout the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). By way of examples:

- CEQA Section 21155 provides streamlining opportunities for transit priority projects that help implement sustainable community strategies.
- CEQA Section 21159.24 provides streamlining opportunities for qualified infill projects within one-half mile of a major transit stop.
- CEQA Guideline 15064.3 includes a presumption that a project within one-half mile of a major transit stop will have less than significant transportation impacts associated with vehicle miles travelled.

The City of San Mateo's General Plan also encourages Transit Oriented Development, specifically "well-planned compact development with a range of land uses, including housing, commercial, recreation and open space, in proximity to train stations and other transit nodes." The City's General Plan includes several references to the Downtown Core and the importance of supporting policies and development that include a range of uses in the Downtown, in close proximity to the transit center. Please see Exhibit A for excerpts of some of these General Plan sections.

Our team supports this smart growth approach, as defined by the State and the General Plan, specifically adjacent to the Caltrain San Mateo Station – a major transit stop for the area and part of a high-quality transportation corridor. Transit Oriented Development will purposely concentrate growth in this area of the Downtown, and thereby will encourage the use of public transportation, as well as walking and bicycling. When residences, offices, retail uses, and civic uses are centered near transit stations and close to each other, walking, bicycling and public transit use increase. This expanded

nature of the transportation choices enhances physical health and well-being, reduces transportation costs and impacts, provides increased freedom and mobility to all citizens of San Mateo, and reduces greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, locating mixed-use buildings in these locations allows for a full range of uses – residential, office, and retail -- which collectively further add to the energy and vitality of the area.

In addition to the close proximity of transit, the City's Downtown Core already possesses a rich array of open space and existing neighborhood resources, including Central Park, an ample supply of public parking, a diverse range of local retailers, and a street grid pattern to support the existing uses as well as future density. Through its General Plan Update process, the City has the unique opportunity to build upon this strong foundation by focusing density in the Downtown, which will embed additional activity, investment, energy and vibrancy into the Downtown Core.

Due to all the community benefits created as a result of transit oriented, higher density, mixed-use developments, ***we encourage the City to include Mixed-Use High Density zoning in Alternative B and C in close proximity to the San Mateo Caltrain Station – at least within 500 feet but possibly extending up to ½ mile of the station -- to provide the City and community the flexibility to concentrate growth around transit and the established B Street corridor.*** A map of such radius is included for reference in Exhibit B. Our team believes that modification of Alternative B will enable the City of San Mateo to create the vibrant Downtown Core that it seeks to achieve, one that is energized, active, and beneficial to the residents, businesses, and all community stakeholders of San Mateo.

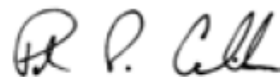
Separately, to encourage public-private partnerships and future flexibility of redevelopment, we suggest the City provide the City owned parking lot at 4th and B Street (and all other City-owned Downtown properties) with designations that allow for Mixed-Use High Density zoning.

On behalf of the development team, we thank the City of San Mateo for this opportunity to provide our thoughts and input into the General Plan Update.

Yours Sincerely,



Preston O'Connell
Partner
Harvest Properties, Inc.



Pat Calihan
Senior Vice President
Prometheus

cc: Julia Klein, City of San Mateo
Drew Corbett, City of San Mateo

Attachments

Exhibit A: General Plan Excerpts

- General Plan Land Use Goal 1.15:
 - Mixed Use - Encourage developments which mix commercial retail and office uses with residential uses at locations and intensities/densities as delineated on the Land Use Plan and Building Intensity Plan.
- Goal C.2:
 - The General Plan supports new commercial and residential growth in the Downtown, as well as maintaining retail shopping on the ground floors along Third and Fourth avenues and B Street.
- Goal C.3:
 - Concentrate major new development near transportation and transit corridors.
 - Concentrating these higher intensity projects in areas having good access to freeways and the rail stations will reduce congestion on City streets and create higher value developments surrounded by supporting amenities.
- Land Use
 - LU 2.4: Downtown Plan:
 - The plan envisions a downtown core that includes a strong retail and office center, high-density housing, and utilizes the transit center as a major transportation hub.
 - LU 3.2: Significant Historic Structures:
 - However, there is the need to balance historic preservation with the need for new development. Encourage development which creates a diverse urban form but at the same time ensure that new buildings are in scale and compatible with the existing downtown buildings.
- Housing
 - H 2.13:
 - Transportation Oriented Development (TOD). Encourage well-planned compact development with a range of land uses, including housing, commercial, recreation and open space, in proximity to train stations and other transit nodes. Encourage the maximization of housing density where possible.
- Urban Design
 - Downtown:
 - Significant places in the City should be emphasized. Treating them as focal points and making them more prominent by allowing concentrations of high buildings in designated areas, emphasizing a particular use, or a special landscape treatment accomplishes this.
 - UD 1.3: Gateways: Develop gateways by creating strong architectural or landscape features exhibiting the character of San Mateo at the following locations: entrances to the Downtown,
 - UD 2.9: Pedestrian Oriented Design: On retail commercial projects, designate pedestrian activity as a priority through the design and provision of adequate sidewalk widths, locating windows along ground floor street facades, trees and awnings, and human scale construction materials and features.

Exhibit B: Distance from Major Transit Stop (San Mateo Caltrain Station)

