

From: Aahana Mehta-Vasisht [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, August 15, 2021 4:50:27 PM
To: City Council (San Mateo) <CityCouncil@cityofsanmateo.org>
Cc: Siya Verma <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Youth Input on General Plan (Agenda Item #28)

Dear City Council,

We are high school students working with Councilwoman Amourance Lee with the task of raising youth engagement in the General Plan 2040 Update. We meet every Thursday to promote the General Plan workshops, collect testimonials, and host distinguished speakers. As of recently, we asked youth in San Mateo to tell us their vision of their community in 2040. We have different visions, but similar goals: We want to see more recreational spaces for young people from all walks of life, promote our city's diversity and inclusive policies, and increase representation of young people to have our voices heard.

One important idea for a policy change surfaced in this effort: We would love to see designated youth leadership positions better integrated at the commission level. We are asking the City Council to amend the Municipal Code to add two designated seats for young people to serve on the Parks & Recreation Commission. The Parks & Recreation services have the most direct impact on young people and therefore it's the most relevant place for youth voices to be represented.

We are grateful for the City's efforts to engage young people and we look forward to staying involved with the General Plan. We hope you will weigh our input in your decision making.

Sincerely,
Aahana (16) & Siya (15)
Youth Lead Volunteers for General Plan Outreach

Testimonials

Sara - "In 20 years I hope to be working in healthcare. I hope to help make insurance more affordable and make sure that everyone has it. And I hope that San Mateo will have that in 20 years. I hope that San Mateo will make housing more affordable and give more opportunities to everyone in the community."

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CQ9m83EDTo/> (Sara, Age 16)

Noah: "Hi, my name is Noah and I'm from the San Mateo area and I'm 15. I want to see more modern art displays in the area and more local places where youth can hang out as a community."

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CRE2eTCD6Oq/> (Noah, Age 15)

Siya: "Hi, my name is Siya and I'm 15. In 2040, I hope that San Mateo has a just, inclusive environment where all members of the community have their voice heard and that they're properly educated. I also envision a community that values equity and gives all citizens equal access to resources and necessities, such as housing and education. And lastly, I think that there should be a focus on helping our environment and pushing action towards climate change and global warming. In five to ten years, global warming is going to be irreversible and by 2040, we should definitely have a good grasp on climate change. Thank you!"

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CQxNZeWjqsX/> (Siya, Age 15)

Stephanus/Evan: “Hi, my name is Stephanus and in 20 years, I hope to see myself as an individual who still largely cares for the issues around our society, including those regarding race, sexuality, acceptance, and everything surrounding those topics. I hope to be someone actively taking action to make positive change for the community that I am living in!”

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CRRo8MgjEcp/> (Stephanus/Evan, Age 17)

Caitlin: “Hi, my name is Caitlin and in 2040, I hope that San Mateo is a place where families, individuals, students, businesses, employees, and communities can all strive and thrive together. I also hope that San Mateo is a place free of hatred and danger and that it is a place where everyone can feel included and promotes diversity and open-mindedness. Thank you!”

[Caitlin's Video](#) (Caitlin, Age 17)

Renee:

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- Councilwoman: “Can you tell me all the parts?”
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- Renee: “To have less cars, so there’s less waste, so you bike, rollerskates, rolling blades, skateboard, scooters.”
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- Councilwoman: “I like the inclusion of rollerskates.”
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- Renee: “And less waste makes Earth happy.”
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- Councilwoman: “That is so true.”
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- Renee: “And I made a little calming area right here and I decided to make it *sensor* instead of regular glue.”
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- Councilwoman: “What are these things here?”
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- Renee: “Lights.”

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- Councilwoman: "Strung up between the trees. And who's that?"
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- Renee: "That's a person reading a book."
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- Councilwoman: "I love that, that's a beautiful vision of 2040."
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- Renee: "And it says 2040 down here."
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- Councilwoman: "Thank you!"
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<https://www.instagram.com/p/CRFHSj6jKV0/> (Renee, Age 8)

Michelle: "Hi, my name's Michelle and I live in San Mateo and what I want to see in the next 20 years for this county is better education in terms of teaching Black history. I believe Black history, Black American History, should be taught all throughout the school year and not just in the month of February."

https://www.instagram.com/p/CRO_MlhDSJc/ (Michelle, Age 23)

Arissa: "In 20 years, I hope San Mateo will be more inclusive. I know that right now it seems like San Mateo is lacking in that area. In schools, I sometimes hear slurs and I definitely see bullying a lot. I think that San Mateo as a whole, especially high schools, need to work on that together. Additionally, I hope that there is a better transportation system. I know that right now we have a couple trains that come by - and also buses - but I think something more frequent and just updated would be nice for those who can't afford cars or just want to be sustainable in general."

[Arissa's Video](#) (Arissa, Age 17)

Daniel: "Hi, I'm Daniel and I'm 20 years old and I've lived in the Bay Area all my life. Some things I'd like to see in the near future, like in the next 20 years, are more recreational centers where communities can come together of all ages like the elders and the youth. I'd like to see city council listening and being more open to the ideas from the youth as well. I'd like to see small businesses flourishing and historic buildings being well protected and artistic architecture would be nice. Like I said, lots of small businesses flourishing, that's something that is very important. Thank you!"

[Daniel](#), (Daniel, Age 20)

Dylan: “Hello, my name is Dylan and I’m 15 and I live in San Mateo and in the next 20 years I want to see more trust built between the police and the people living in the city through community and trust-building activities that are organized by the city.”

[Dylan](#) (Dylan, Age 15)

Aahana: “Hi, my name is Aahana, I’m 16, and I live in San Mateo. As a high schooler looking to get involved in the future, in 20 years, I would love to see more youth engagement in municipal government. I would also love to see more safe spaces where you can gather and share experiences. Lastly, if there’s anything that COVID has taught me, it’s the importance of affordable healthcare and housing and I hope that in 20 years, there’s more of it.”

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CRpncNujm4Y/> (Aahana, Age 16)

Austin: “Hello, I am Austin and I’m a resident of San Mateo and I’m 17. In 20 years, I would like to see more community events, maybe more food trucks, more recreation places. I like Laurelwood Park and I would like to see more places like that. I would like more block closures and food areas like we have up in CSM. Maybe we should have our city council listen to more ideas from the public.

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CRktf6QjC67/> (Austin, Age 17)

Alex: “Hi, my name is Alex and I’m 16 years old. In 20 years, I envision San Mateo to have a more inclusive and engaged population, whether that’s political literacy or actually being active in municipal government. In addition to that, I would like to see a lot more diversity which I think can be accomplished through investing in affordable housing. Lastly, I think public art would be amazing to uplifting local artists. I would love to see a lot more art in our community.”

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CRUqyYbDSE6/> (Alex, Age 16)

Michelle: “Hi, my name is Michelle Flores and I’m 19 years old. What I personally hope to see in the future is more activities for kids after school and a place for them to go because I truly think that’s the root of the problem. If we don’t want to see kids going out and getting into trouble, we need to make sure we’re providing schools, activities, and programs and that’s something I really hope we can see in the future.

<https://www.instagram.com/p/CRzfuYHDEaa/> (Michelle, Age 19)

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