

Laurie and Randy Hietter



September 27, 2022

Planning Commission
City of San Mateo
330 West 20th Street
San Mateo, CA 94403

SUBJECT: Comments on General Plan Update – Draft Goals, Policies and Actions for the Land Use, Community Design and Historic Preservation, Safety, and Public Services Elements

Dear Commissioners:

Please accept the following specific comments on the General Plan Update – Draft Goals, Policies and Actions for the Land Use, Community Design and Historic Preservation, and Safety Elements

LAND USE

I object to the selection of Alternative C. The City took the maximum growth scenario, and made it even bigger to create Alternative C. Many citizens have stated they do not want maximum growth in the City, yet the Commission and Council have gone way beyond RHNA requirements without adequate planning for water, traffic, transit, safety, and public services and facilities.

Please respect the height limits voted in through Measure Y. The citizens have a long history of wanting to maintain the look and feel (and historic nature) of San Mateo. The 8+ glass boxes proposed and/or approved for downtown are radically changing our city.

The YIMBY organizations seem to have an outsized voice in the comments regarding our community. Reinstate the practice of stating one's address or at least neighborhood. Zoom meetings allow piling on when paid activists can round up additional commenters.

San Mateo used to have an elegant downtown with a wide variety of retail and small businesses. We now have a monoculture of shabby, dirty streets, trash, banks, and fast food. Stop demolishing the blocks at a time, eliminating small and heritage businesses such as Endo Automotive, Trag's, Draeger's, Wing Fat, etc.

HISTORIC RESOURCES

My first comment is that the policies as written are general and leave too much room for interpretation. The revised version of the Historic Goals, Plans, and Policies submitted by Keith Weber and the San Mateo Heritage Alliance should be used instead.

There are many historic homes and businesses located downtown. We know where the historic districts are located. Please either conduct the necessary historic surveys or at least establish Historic Preservation Overlay Zones (HPOZ) or Conservation Districts to protect our historic resources.

There are some particularly problematic statements in the City's draft policies as described below.

Policy CD-P3.1

Policy CD-P3.1 says to preserve historic buildings where feasible. Historic resources include buildings, districts, and landscapes. "Where feasible" is not defined and is inconsistent with Goal CD-3.

Replace "historic buildings" with "historic resources." "Where feasible" should be replaced with "unless preservation would cause health or safety impacts that cannot be mitigated."

Preserve historic ~~buildings~~ resources where ~~feasible~~ unless preservation would cause health or safety impacts that cannot be mitigated.

Policy CD-P3.7

The requirement to analyze alternatives should be applied to all buildings older than 45 years. Demolition is:

- Not sustainable
- Wasteful
- Creates additional burdens on landfills, and
- Causes excessive dust, traffic and noise.

Action CD-A3.1

Establish and maintain an inventory of architecturally, culturally, and historically significant structures, districts, and sites.

Action CD-A3.4

Create objective design standards for development within historic districts or adjacent to historic structures, districts, and/or culturally important sites to maintain the historic character of these resources.

SAFETY

Grade Separations

Prioritize grade separations at First, Second, Third, Fourth, Fifth, and Ninth Avenues. The grade crossings are dangerous, will cause substantial traffic delays (and related emissions), and cause

a substantial noise impact, which will be experienced by the new occupants of the 8+ new downtown high-rise buildings.

Emergency Preparedness

Establish or expand an emergency preparedness plan, including community education to ensure community safety in the event of an earthquake, fire, or extended power outages.

PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES ELEMENT

Cleaning

Prioritize cleaning and sanitation in our downtown and commercial areas. I visit many cities in California and other states and San Mateo has by far the dirtiest downtown I have ever seen. New York is cleaner. Recent cleaning helped but did not remove the gum and many other stains. This needs to be done weekly. City businesses should have some responsibility for the filth outside their restaurants (especially on Ellsworth Street).

Water

The City has not shown that there has been adequate planning to support the growth that is proposed in the General Plan. Water conservation through efficiency has been ongoing for the last 20+ years. We simply do not have enough water to support this growth. The City must be held accountable to demonstrate the availability of water before issuing more permits.

The quality of life of existing citizens continues to be massively degraded due to growth without the requisite planning for water, circulation, public services and facilities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Laurie Hietter". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Laurie Hietter

cc: Zach Dahl