

From: Eldridge, Karyl [REDACTED]

Sent: Sunday, April 2, 2023 7:35:38 PM

To: Amourance Lee <alee@cityofsanmateo.org>; Lisa Diaz Nash <ldiaznash@cityofsanmateo.org>; Adam Loraine <aloraine@cityofsanmateo.org>; Richard Hedges <rhedges@cityofsanmateo.org>; Rob Newsom <rnewsom@cityofsanmateo.org>

Cc: Patrice Olds <polds@cityofsanmateo.org>

Subject: General Plan update/The question of height and density

Dear Mayor Lee and Members of the San Mateo City Council,

Thank you very much for the opportunity to submit comments on the matter of heights and densities for the General Plan update. This is obviously a matter of great importance to the future of San Mateo and all of those living here.

Prior to March 6, 2023, the General Plan update proposed significant rezoning in the city's commercial areas and provided for building heights of up to 12 stories in some locations. At the March 6 meeting, however, the city council lowered the maximum building height, decreased associated densities, and reduced the areas to be rezoned. The council even pushed beyond the staff recommendation to reduce the maximum height to ten stories, adopting eight stories instead, especially surprising in light of the finding by the True North Survey that 63% of those polled in San Mateo were open to as many as 12 stories.

These reductions do not properly reflect the magnitude of the housing crisis in the City of San Mateo. They place unfortunate and unnecessary limits on our ability to add to the supply of both market-rate and affordable homes. In so doing, they strangle our ability to push back against an affordability problem that is impoverishing renters and precluding the possibility of home ownership for so many people.

The San Mateo housing element provides ample data pointing to our need to make better use of the land. A few of the data points that appear are these:

- Rents in San Mateo increased 74% from 2009 to 2019.
- Home prices in San Mateo increased 115% from 2010 to 2020.
- The number of homes in San Mateo increased 3.6% from 2010 to 2020, which is *below* the growth rate for San Mateo County and *below* the growth rate of the region's housing stock.
- Between 2002 and 2018, the jobs-household ratio in San Mateo increased from 1.17 to 1.45.

Every piece of land in San Mateo is precious and needs to be used to strong advantage in the effort to house people at all income levels, create economic opportunities, and protect our environment. In the interest of realizing these goals, the reductions made on March 6 should be reversed, including the reduction of the maximum building height to 8 stories. At a time when meaningful change is called for, eight stories is not enough.

Sincerely,

Karyl Eldridge
Vice Chair of One San Mateo

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