

From: Lindy Hewitt <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, July 12, 2023 2:42 PM
To: City Council (San Mateo) <CityCouncil@cityofsanmateo.org>
Subject: development in SM

San Mateo City Council,

I moved to San Mateo 25 years ago and found it to be a lovely place to live. And at the time that I've lived here, change has happened but never as rapidly as it is changing now. City blocks are being leveled at an incredible rate and replaced with "glass boxes" with a little bit of window dressing to try to disguise how ugly they are.

Even though we voted to prevent developers from overbuilding our skyline, that vote is being nullified. The city council seems to be representing the developers and expecting the residents to go along with them instead of representing the residents. More people are now coming to the meetings because so many of us are shocked by what's going on in San Mateo.

Those of us who do not live in an affluent part of San Mateo reasonably wonder why so much of our part of the City is being targeted. Less than a block away from my house on Fremont Street, there is a huge crater where a development was supposed to be. Two years later absolutely nothing has happened except this ugly canyon which we have to walk around every day. The neighborhood I live in is about 50% Central American. I believe San Mateo has felt like home to them partly because of the restaurants and stores that remind them of the homes they left behind. Many of those restaurants and stores have been victim to the recent razings. The block where 7/11 is has many affordable places to eat and will be destroyed.

Regarding the 21 developments that are planned or completed, these buildings are designed for maximum capacity without much regard for aesthetic appeal. After tuning into the last meeting with one of the developers, it became clear that this is just the beginning of a profound transformation of the city. I can't help but wonder whether structuring it something like a blitz is not part of the plan to do all this destruction and construction before people realize what's going on. From my understanding, the city is allowing these developers to basically disregard Measure Y taking modest concessions in return. So even though we did go to the polls and express our opinions and preferences and pass measure Y, the City is agreeing to allow the developers to take maximum advantage of any and all loopholes available. No wonder the preferred place for companies like Windy Hill to develop is San Mateo. It honestly feels like an attack on the people who live here.

Beyond the ugly politics of the campaign, there seems to be a pattern to the places chosen for development. The blocks being demolished include housing, small businesses like restaurants, and even historical buildings. And even though the project that demolishes the Japanese Center can't go around it or the other historical building on that site, the project for the 7/11 site is **going around the gas station!**

These developers don't need these concessions. They would make money without them. But they are seeking the best possible deal they can get. And the government of San Mateo seems to be eager to give them a great deal. It looks to lots of people like the government represents the corporations, not the people of San Mateo. Well it may well galvanize the residents to fight back. Let me know my voice actually matters or admit that it doesn't. Don't continue this unchecked development.

Sincerely,
Lindy Hewitt
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