

From: Michael [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, October 30, 2023 1:13 PM
To: City Council (San Mateo) <CityCouncil@cityofsanmateo.org>; General Plan <generalplan@cityofsanmateo.org>
Cc: Patrice Olds <polds@cityofsanmateo.org>
Subject: Council Meeting 10/30/23 - Comments on GP 2040 Land Use Element

Dear Mayor and Members of the City Council - The 2040 General Plan as written is nothing short of a slap in the face to more than half the electorate who gave you the most statistically significant survey you could ask for - the passage of Measure Y in 2020. I realize several of you find yourself in a very difficult position as a result of inheriting the results of prior council, commission, and staff decisions, not to mention the bind the state continues to put all cities in with an unelected, unaccountable HCD and RHNA cycles detached from reality. That makes the direction you go in tonight that much more difficult, but also that much more important.

Specifically, land use scenario C as adopted by the previous council is completely unacceptable as it represents the maximum growth scenario. I laud efforts to eliminate the High II option, and appreciate councilmembers Newsom, Hedges, and Diaz-Nash's genuine efforts to find compromises before the cement dries, but this plan remains way off the mark, and is not viable in its current state. Most importantly, this plan, if adopted, would succeed in urbanizing San Mateo, but will do almost nothing to make it more affordable. Developers will be enriched, quality of life for San Mateans will suffer. This plan is based on so many specious assumptions of growth and extreme, unrealistic changes in human behavior (eg walking vs driving, gas vs electric, etc.) as to be a work of fantasy versus a serious blueprint for the development of a community. I'm also not supportive of several ideas that pass this plan, either assuming developers won't actually build to the heights allowed, or that would have us revisit the plan and revise based on then-current numbers. Unfortunately given the history of our council (eg lifelong carpenter's union advocates) and current tolerance of activist planning commissioners etc, we can't trust that they'll be willing to revise downward even when growth data doesn't fit their narratives.

The city must realize that they are literally gambling years of effort and millions of dollars on an electorate that will stand by and let this be implemented. I promise you, that couldn't be further from the truth. Furthermore, there is no need to pass this plan in 2024, especially given economic uncertainties and the delayed/uncertain state of many projects currently in flight in San Mateo. We have a plan valid until 2030 and have submitted a solid housing element to the state, which should protect us from the Builders Remedy. I've heard rumblings of the big bad HCD coming after us should we delay. To that, I say we need to band with other cities and fight these unfunded, overreaching mandates from the state. We're spending millions on our housing elements and having to ask taxpayers for more money to protect against flooding. What a wasteful and misguided use of scarce municipal funds. To date, only 2 of 21 Housing Elements in San Mateo county have been accepted by the state. That to me indicates a problem with them, not us, and it's time to fight back along with the 19 other cities in the same predicament, who are also wasting precious time and money chasing these absurd mandates.

Should the city fail to pass this GP by rushing it and not going back and compromising, it will be an extremely embarrassing black eye on our city. One that will unfortunately, and at least in some cases undeservedly, become part of your legacies. It's time for some hard, but necessary choices - go back to the drawing board, scale this project back, slow it down, and create something we can all get behind.

Thanks for listening - Michael Weinbauer