

From: Michelle Maccarra [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, November 13, 2023 3:57 PM
To: Patrice Olds <polds@cityofsanmateo.org>
Subject: Fwd: Limit Height and Density in San Mateo

My name is Michelle Maccarra, I am a working mother and have lived in San Mateo for almost 14 years, and I grew up in the Bay Area. My Husband was born and raised in San Mateo.

I have seen a lot of change – some good, some bad. The plan in place to add housing in the city of San Mateo needs to be reevaluated. There is a better and more thoughtful way to go about this.

I believe the requirement is 15,000 new units by 2040.

San Mateo doesn't have the infrastructure to support all of these people. Hetch Hetchy doesn't have the water to satiate all of these people. California has been in a drought since I can remember, as a child I was taught the importance of water conservation – a lesson I teach my son today. I've heard people say that water usage is lower in denser cities, but this is inaccurate especially with so many residents taking out their grass and putting in native plants or turf.

Keep in mind Just one 8 minute shower uses 17 gallons of water, a 20 minute shower uses 50 gallons. An average American family uses 300 gallons of water daily – 70% of it from indoor use. The largest use of household water is from flushing toilets at 5-7 gallons per flush w/the average person flushing at least 5 times per day. That adds up extremely quickly.

The streets are already congested with traffic. I'm not talking about traffic on the freeways – I realize that a large % of people that work in the Bay Area commute here. I am talking about traffic in neighborhoods, on El Camino, in downtown etc....This is NOT caused by a lack of housing and people commuting into the city for work. It is caused by too many people living in a town that can't accommodate them. And more housing will only make this worse. How could it not?

Just last week a man was hit while walking his dog – the dog died, and the man is in the hospital because of a reckless driver. This was a hit and run and the man was left lying in the street. This is the 4th pedestrian hit in recent weeks – the other 3 were children.

Crime is only getting worse as the population increases. Bike gangs roam the streets at night, just last week a Walgreens worker was punched by robbery suspect – in downtown San Mateo! Recently I walked into CVS on Bovet and was told a shoplifter had just threatened an employee with a gun. People are stealing cars, motorcycles and tools out of trucks parked in people's yards. There have been multiple stabbing incidents, rape, public masturbation and the list goes on. This is the city I am raising my son in, and the crime rate will only increase as the population rises.

In this environment, homeowners are being criminalized. We are being blamed for the housing crisis and the exorbitant housing costs. That is completely inaccurate and unjust. We as homeowners have worked hard, saved and sacrificed to be where we are. We pay property taxes in San Mateo. We should have a say in what happens in our city. We want our quality of life to stay intact and for this city to be a safe place to raise our families. The cost of living here is high because according to the SM Daily journal "we have a higher supply of large homes than San Francisco, and a more central location to technology and life sciences firms". We also have a wonderful climate.

San Mateo has such an amazing history and I think it is extremely important to preserve what little is left. Historic buildings are constantly being leveled to make way for new construction or parking lots/garages. Recently I discovered a wonderful book on the centennial history of San Mateo. It made me so sad to see that only a fraction of the historic buildings are left. In fact, of all of the beautiful historic estates, only one is left to admire (that of A.P. Giannini, founder of Bank of America). The majority of the buildings shown in that book have been demolished. San Mateo has such a rich history, and so much of it has already been lost. Central Park has been preserved, but its beautiful aura will be forever changed if it is surrounded by high rises.

One of the things that makes San Mateo beautiful are the many magnificent trees. The new buildings near downtown don't even leave room for trees to be planted on the sidewalk. We need more trees to provide shade, filter the air and create a sense of nature within the city. Heritage trees are being hacked down to make way for new buildings and all builders need to do is pay a fee. Heritage trees are just that – heritage. They should not be removed -PERIOD. Even Dr. Suess so many years ago understood the importance of preserving nature and our beautiful trees when he wrote the children's book, *The Lorax*.

To be clear, I am not against allowing more people to live here - but I think we are rushing into this, and we need to find a better way to fit them thoughtfully into our community without ruining what we already have. The addition of too many people too quickly will ruin this city. So many people are leaving the Bay Area, working remotely etc.... why then do we need to build so much new housing? People aren't leaving the Bay Area because they can't afford housing, or there isn't enough. They are leaving because the taxes in California are ridiculously expensive and they can save so much by moving to different states, such as Nevada.

Please DO NOT move forward with the 2040 general plan. Please reevaluate what the population will look like in the future (15,000 new units is ridiculously too much) and take time to put together a thoughtful plan that involves working with current residents/homeowners that support the city with their tax dollars.

Please respect the San Mateo citizens who voted to limit building heights in San Mateo and reject: Medium II (4-6 stories allowed; 8-12 with density bonuses), High I (5-8 stories; 10-16 with bonuses), and High II (6-10 stories allowed; 12-20 with bonuses) for both residential and mixed use designations in the General Plan land use section.

The General Plan and EIR should not be approved until the new density bonus law is addressed in the Land Use Element and Housing Element of the General Plan and the EIR. The new law will likely substantially increase the number of units in the City because of the increased density; therefore, it is not necessary to include 6-10 story buildings in the General Plan.

The citizens voted three times to limit height and density, and the recent survey showed little support for 10+ story buildings.

Please limit the allowable stories to Measure Y levels given the housing density bonus laws could double the allowable heights.

Thank you,

Michelle Maccarra