

From: Susan Shankle [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, March 13, 2024 7:58 AM
To: City Mgr <citymgr@cityofsanmateo.org>
Cc: Zachary Dahl <zdahl@cityofsanmateo.org>; City Attorney's Office <CityAttorneysOffice@cityofsanmateo.org>; Economic Development <economicdevelopment@cityofsanmateo.org>; housing@smchousing.org; smonowitz@smcgov.org; Lisa Diaz Nash <ldiaznash@cityofsanmateo.org>
Subject: Building out San Mateo

Dear Mr. Khojikian,

I enjoyed your *San Mateo News*, thank you. I hope people are reading it! This kind of communication is so important for citizens and voters.

I wonder if you saw the article about the "Bay Area real estate landscape" in the *San Jose Mercury News*, Sunday March 10 (front page of *Today's Economy* section). An interview with a developer named Michael Van Every.

Everyone knows that there is a glut of office space in the Bay Area, mostly due to the transition to work-from-home (30-40% of the time, as noted in the interview) plus other factors. Yet Mr. Every wants to keep building, even though he acknowledges that "we have built too much office space" and "we have an oversupply of office space." He is building a half-billion dollar mixed-use project at Millbrae BART which includes 157,000 sq. ft. of office space that will be occupied by SamTrans. (Why wasn't SamTrans encouraged, or required, to occupy some of the existing available office space?)

Also, Mr. Van Every blames the state government for making it difficult for him to build more housing, because CEQA "busts his budget" with laws that protect us and the environment. He adds that blending market-rate with affordable housing units "makes it impossible to pencil out financially." And he admits that he compensates for this by paying the penalty fees, and then adding those costs to the units. I don't mean to single him out, as there are many developers looking to cash in on the housing issue.

I have been very concerned that the frenzy of construction in San Mateo County is a result of our local politicians bowing to industry pressure. Powerful people stand to make fortunes building new neighborhoods that may or may not solve the need for affordable housing. As noted in the *San Mateo News*, our annual City Services approved only 27 affordable homes and sold only 19.

Many of the huge, empty office buildings in our county already have plumbing, electricity, and in many cases gyms and cafeterias. Surely these could be converted to housing for low-income families, the homeless, or be part of the triage process as we find ways to direct people in need to the necessary services.

I hope San Mateo will put the brakes on new construction until this picture looks more sensible.

Thank you,

Susan Shankle

Resident of San Mateo for 32 years

Lifelong Bay Area resident

Citizen, Taxpayer and Voter