



SIERRA CLUB

LOMA PRIETA CHAPTER

SAN MATEO, SANTA CLARA & SAN BENITO COUNTIES

March 1, 2024

City of San Mateo
330 W 20th Ave
San Mateo, CA 94403

Subject: Comments on San Mateo General Plan 2040

Dear Mayor Diaz Nash and Members of the San Mateo City Council,

The Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter's Sustainable Land Use Committee (SLU) advocates on land use issues in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties. Thank you for providing the opportunity for SLU to provide input on the January 2024 San Mateo General Plan 2040 (GP), which is being considered for adoption in March 2024.

The GP has many very good features and, if fully implemented, would be a significant step forward to meeting the needs of San Mateo through 2040. Never the less, some final considerations and adjustments would further strengthen this important GP and fully meet the challenges through 2040.

SLU has two concerns that the GP could address further. They have been described in detail in the prior SLU letters (November 16, 2023, September 7, 2023, et al) but they are summarized once more, as you are now considering the final adoption of this GP.

The lack of housing, particularly affordable housing, is a continuing crisis and should be more strongly addressed , as well as the need for more urban greening and open space in the City for climate change and livability.

One important key to addressing the housing shortage is increasing housing density and supporting affordable housing, particularly near transit.

Greening of the City improves the quality of life for residents and has major environmental benefits as well. The greening of a City includes more open space, more park space, wider sidewalks to encourage safe pedestrian travel and more street trees, a safe slow network of Green Corridor/Green Streets¹ for pedestrians and wider and safer bike lanes to encourage bike travel, among other benefits.

The Land Use Designations such as "High II" were developed to provide for higher density for more housing, including affordable housing, near transit, but it is no longer in the GP.

Allowing "High II", along with limiting lot coverage, has the real potential to create more open space, parks, bike paths, pedestrian walkways and green streets in conjunction with more housing. We believe

¹ [Master Planning for a Green Street Network](#), City of San Mateo, Sierra Club Loma Prieta Sustainable Land Use Committee

that, linked with zoning mechanisms limiting lot coverage, it would be advantageous to include the “High II” designation in order to free land for urban greening and open space in the heart of the City.⁴

We ask that you consider this issue as you finalize the General Plan.

Respectfully submitted,

Gita Dev

Chair, Sustainable Land Use Committee

Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter

Cc James Eggers, Chapter Director, Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter

⁴ A good example of this was demonstrated in the scenarios put forward as part of the “Re-imagine Hillsdale” presentation of March 8, 2023. The scenario that stayed with the current 5-story limit produced a design with very little open space and with the area facing the neighborhood on Edison Street being high and dense. However, the scenario that allowed heights as much as 10 to 12 stories for buildings near the railroad and along El Camino Real (ECR) produced a design with a large amount of open space, parks, and a much more compatible neighborhood design along Edison Street. The higher height allowed, adjacent to the railroad and ECR, made it possible to lower heights near the existing neighborhood on Edison Street and to provide much more park and open space for the entire community to enjoy in a central location.