

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [Linda Ly](#)  
**Subject:** 477 9th Avenue- comment  
**Date:** Tuesday, June 28, 2022 11:17:59 PM

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Hello,

I am writing to you as the planner working on the application for 477 9th Avenue, with a comment on the current design and the potential impact on the heritage tree adjacent to the property on South Claremont Street.

Though the current design proposal for 477 9th Avenue does not include the removal of the beautiful Live Oak, I do not feel that it sufficiently respects it or makes enough allowances to ensure that the tree survives the construction intact. While a large portion of the tree's canopy was removed to accommodate adjacent power lines, the root system is likely to still extend beneath the existing building, and there is a concern that soil compaction during construction could damage those roots and put the health of the tree at real risk. The canopy itself does still extend over the sidewalk and to the edge of the existing building- trimming any portion of the tree would have both a visual and potential health impacts in the short and long term. Despite these concerns and the stated desire by the developers in the Daily Journal to respect the heritage tree, the current design does little to incorporate or take advantage of this unique site feature, with the massing of the building extending straight along South Claremont, effectively touching the tree in question.

Creating a real setback adjacent to the tree such as a recessed entrance or mini public plaza would serve the dual functions of creating an additional interesting street-level feature and providing extra buffer zone where no deep excavation would be needed. It is ironic to me that the currently-proposed plaza was placed facing Ninth Avenue and not on South Claremont next to such a fantastic existing landscape feature. For a real world example I would point to the ALMR Apartments at 685 NW 21st Avenue in Portland, Oregon. This preservation award-winning design was partially set back from the street to provide a buffer zone around a landmarked heritage tree.

I have no objections to this project as a whole, but I have seen local projects in the past where the stated desire on the part of stakeholders to preserve our living heritage was not respected by the architects or eventually by the construction crews, resulting in the removal of a dead tree. And while that is not guaranteed to happen in this case, based on the current design, and in the absence of vigilant oversight, I fear the outcome will be the same.

Sincerely,

**-Adam Klafter**

**From:** Kristie Eglsaer  
**To:** [Rick Bonilla](#); [Diane Papan](#); [Eric Rodriguez](#); [Amourence Lee](#); [Joe Goethals](#); [City Council \(San Mateo\)](#); [Clerk](#); [Planning Commission](#); [Planning](#)  
**Subject:** Comments re mixed use projects - reuse demolition debris, make family-friendly and fund multimodal policies  
**Date:** Tuesday, July 12, 2022 3:22:28 PM

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Dear City Council, Planning Commission, and Planning Department,

For proposed mixed use projects at [477 Ninth Ave](#) and [Block 21](#) please consider how to:

- reduce, reuse and recycle demolition debris
- make family-friendly developments
- fund and create multimodal policies

### **Reduce, Reuse and Recycle Demolition Debris**

At both these proposed mixed use projects, it is proposed that demolition will occur at the current sites before proceeding with development. According to the EPA, [Construction and Demolition debris is the largest source of waste in America, more than twice the amount of waste generated by municipal solid waste](#). San Mateo is a leader in waste reduction, as with finding reasonable solutions to support businesses transitioning to compostable take out containers. Construction and demolition debris must be addressed.

[US EPA Best Practices for Reducing, Reusing, and Recycling Construction and Demolition Materials](#)

[CalRecycle C&D Recycling Tools for Contractors, Local Governments, and Processors](#)

### **Make Family Friendly Developments**

In the two SMDJ articles for each project linked above, neither says how many 2 or 3 bedroom apartments will be available, but based on the number of studios and 1 bedrooms listed, it seems less than a third of the available apartments will be family-sized units. With only 10 percent being “affordable” units, I can imagine maybe only a few family-sized units will be “affordable” units. Not only am I concerned with the number of and affordability of family-sized units, but also the design elements that make a multi-unit dwelling family-friendly.

[Mid-rise developments could do more to be designed with children in mind](#). One family-friendly best practice is to create onsite outdoor recreational space like an interior courtyard to have a [space where children can play](#).

Here are links to more design best practices for transit-oriented development that is also family-friendly:

[PLANNING FOR CHILDREN IN NEW VERTICAL COMMUNITIES \(PDF\)](#)

[HIGH-DENSITY HOUSING FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN GUIDELINES \(PDF\)](#)

### **Fund and Create Multimodal Policies**

And speaking of transit oriented development, we should rethink how we consider housing and transit. The pandemic has only magnified the need for transit beyond the typical 9-5 commute in and out of San Francisco or Silicon Valley via Caltrain.

[“SamTrans is recovering well, relative to other Bay Area transit agencies, with nearly two](#)

[thirds of its pre-pandemic numbers.”](#)

“Despite the stronger numbers, Caltrain has only seen around 25% return of its pre-pandemic baseline, falling behind other Bay Area transit agencies. Other agencies like SamTrans have more essential workers who have returned in person. Caltrain has previously said recovery would highly depend on workers returning to the office. Ridership consists of office commute trips to downtown San Francisco and Silicon Valley. SamTrans ridership data for April 2022 shows 63.9% of riders compared to the same period in 2019, better than other local agencies.”

When thinking about creating transit-oriented development, we should look beyond the Caltrain line.

Also, the city should create and implement policies that are structured in a way to incentivize enhanced transportation demand management (TDM) strategies and create funding mechanisms for bicycle, pedestrian, and public transit infrastructure with transit-oriented development. Policy and funding strategies can be found in the [2015 Sustainable Streets Plan \(PDF\)](#) — Sustainable Streets Fee on p. 54/515 and reimaged TDM plan on p.485/515 including a goal of 25% trip reduction target in the downtown and rail corridors.

I appreciate all the Council, Commission and city staff do to be at the forefront of implementing best practices to create a sustainable community.

Thanks very much for your consideration of my comments.

Best, Kristie

[https://www.smdailyjournal.com/news/local/san-mateo-s-ninth-avenue-to-see-mixed-use-proposal/article\\_8c463e7c-c46f-11ec-ba5c-231d42723ae7.html](https://www.smdailyjournal.com/news/local/san-mateo-s-ninth-avenue-to-see-mixed-use-proposal/article_8c463e7c-c46f-11ec-ba5c-231d42723ae7.html)

[https://www.smdailyjournal.com/news/local/whole-block-demo-approved-in-downtown-san-mateo/article\\_ab8b2426-f5ef-11ec-bc87-ebccc3cd221b.html](https://www.smdailyjournal.com/news/local/whole-block-demo-approved-in-downtown-san-mateo/article_ab8b2426-f5ef-11ec-bc87-ebccc3cd221b.html)

<https://www.epa.gov/facts-and-figures-about-materials-waste-and-recycling/construction-and-demolition-debris-material>

<https://www.epa.gov/smm/best-practices-reducing-reusing-and-recycling-construction-and-demolition-materials>

<https://calrecycle.ca.gov/ConDemo/Tools/>

<https://theconversation.com/more-children-are-living-in-high-rise-apartments-so-designers-should-keep-them-in-mind-100756?msclkid=78610a7fb62611ec98e43ec987034816>

<https://wallsofthecity.blogspot.com/2015/08/family-friendly-mid-rise.html?msclkid=e840f328b62111eca5e0bea9a62b3095>

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2017/pg/bgrd/backgroundfile-103920.pdf>

<https://guidelines.vancouver.ca/guidelines-high-density-housing-for-families-with-children.pdf>

[https://www.smdailyjournal.com/news/local/caltrain-sees-higher-ridership-in-april/article\\_e308ab1a-00f0-11ed-bdca-cfd4e49b211c.html](https://www.smdailyjournal.com/news/local/caltrain-sees-higher-ridership-in-april/article_e308ab1a-00f0-11ed-bdca-cfd4e49b211c.html)

<https://www.cityofsanmateo.org/DocumentCenter/View/44849/1--SanMateoSustainableStreetsFullFINAL---Copy>

## Linda Ly

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**From:** Rendell Bustos  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 23, 2023 3:50 PM  
**To:** Julia Klein; Somer Smith; Linda Ly  
**Cc:** Manira Sandhir  
**Subject:** FW: Construction in Downtown San Mateo

Julia, Somer, and Linda,

Please see the public comment below addressed to Downtown projects. Please include a copy of this letter in your respective Downtown project files.

-Rendell



### Rendell Bustos

Senior Planner | Community Development Department  
330 W. 20th Ave., San Mateo, CA 94403  
650-522-7211 | [rbustos@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:rbustos@cityofsanmateo.org)



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**From:** Erin White [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, May 22, 2023 6:54 PM  
**To:** City Council (San Mateo) <CityCouncil@cityofsanmateo.org>; Rendell Bustos <rbustos@cityofsanmateo.org>; Patrice Olds <polds@cityofsanmateo.org>  
**Subject:** Construction in Downtown San Mateo

Dear City Council, Mr. Bustos, and Ms. Olds,

San Mateo used to be a wonderful, family-friendly place to live with amenities nearby. We had all the elements: a quaint downtown, amazing views of the hills and bay, a smaller more connected community, beautiful old architecture, etc. This should be the perfect time and opportunity to keep and enhance what makes San Mateo a truly special and unique place to live. However, I am exceedingly frustrated and saddened by what has been happening over the past several years. The City of San Mateo is being destroyed faster than I ever imagined was possible.

Against the residents wishes and concerns, the City Council keeps approving and shoving more huge developments down the pipeline. Our precious city is being overrun by greedy developers building the most ugly, generic, blocky, cheap looking, monstrosities which go right up to the sidewalk with no greenery. The downtown area is getting crowded, claustrophobic, looks unattractive, and gets worse with each new development. The once beautiful views are starting to get blocked off by tall buildings. Don't make it worse by repealing Measure Y. Residents need to be able to stay connected to the nature around them. It's an important part of why people live here. It is beneficial and necessary for our health and well-being.

It is clear that the city does not need any more office space, as there are lots of vacancies. I don't understand why the city is tearing down block after block, and jamming in more and more people, when our infrastructure is failing and can't even support the current community. The roads and sidewalks are in complete disrepair; it's honestly an

embarrassment. Traffic has gotten so bad that it's near impossible to get across town, especially during commute hours. That will only continue to get worse with all the new construction going on and potential future projects.

The city needs to stop construction projects like Block 20 and 21 so these issues can be addressed and fixed. Demolition permits should be tied directly to building permits, so we don't end up with an eyesore of empty lots with dirt mounds and tree stumps for years to come. The city should be focusing on quality of life issues and environmental stewardship. Buildings should be built farther back from the sidewalk to allow for landscaping and mature trees to provide shade for pedestrians. We should incorporate new green methods, taking advantage of vertical space to have living walls, have underground parking garages with a park on top, etc.

The City Council needs to push back against the developers, construction companies, and the state to take our city back. Don't let them cheat us out of the future of our home. They need to be respectful and responsive to residents and contribute to our community. If there are delays, they should make that up to the residents by investing in our downtown. Listen to the residents who voted you in and follow their lead. We need to support small businesses, have a wide variety of services, and more green space. We are calling for action. Please restore the heart and soul of San Mateo.

Sincerely,

Erin White  
San Mateo Resident

**Linda Ly**

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**From:** Manira Sandhir  
**Sent:** Friday, May 26, 2023 9:27 AM  
**To:** Marsha Heimbecker  
**Subject:** RE: Stop building highrises in San Mateo

Dear Ms. Heimbecker -

Thank you for your comments and my apologies on missing your email last week. Since you covered a broad range of topics in your comments, I have forwarded your email to the City Clerk to distribute to City Councilmembers and to project teams reviewing projects in the Downtown and Hillsdale Mall, including the General Plan and Housing Element teams, so it can be considered as part of the project reviews.

If you have comments or would like to provide input on a specific project, I included a link below to the City's what's happening page that has detailed information about the status of each project.

<https://www.cityofsanmateo.org/1176/Whats-Happening-in-Development>

Best regards,

Manira

Manira Sandhir, AICP  
Planning Manager and Zoning Administrator  
650-522-7203 (o) | 650-242-6126 (c)  
[msandhir@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:msandhir@cityofsanmateo.org)

-----Original Message-----

From: Marsha Heimbecker [REDACTED]  
Sent: Thursday, May 18, 2023 11:23 AM  
To: Manira Sandhir <[msandhir@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:msandhir@cityofsanmateo.org)>  
Subject: Stop building highrises in San Mateo

Dear Councilman,

You are ruining San Mateo.

These high rises are terrible! Downtown San Mateo and the Hillsdale mall will be awful. It is already gridlock. Have you tried to go to Foster City or 101 anytime between 3-7pm?

It took me 45 minutes to get to Edgewater!

You are destroying the mental health of San Mateo citizens. Overcrowding leads to more crime, violence, and drugs. Go research JAMA.

You are adding 1200 units to Hillsdale. How are 1200 cars going to fit on our roads. It is more likely 2400 cars, because only households with two workers will be able to afford this area.

Please stop building. Please stop making high rises in the middle of residential areas.

Your responsibility is not to money grubbing greedy developers, you gave an oath to the city of San Mateo and its citizens.

Responsibility and honor begins at home.

Marsha Heimbecker  
Sent from my iPhone

Sent from my iPhone

Sent from my iPhone





# SAN MATEO HERITAGE ALLIANCE

June 6, 2023

**TO:** Manira Sandhir, Planning Manager and Zoning Administrator

**CC:** Christina Horrisberger, Community Development Director  
Zachary Dahl, Deputy Community Development Director  
Drew Corbett, City Manager  
Kathy Kleinbaum, Assistant City Manager  
Prasanna Rasiah, City Attorney

**FROM:** San Mateo Heritage Alliance

**SUBJECT:** New development projects in and around Downtown

Dear Ms. Sandhir,

San Mateo Heritage Alliance would like to schedule a meeting with Planning and Community Development to discuss the following concerns regarding development projects in Downtown:

1. We have noticed that most projects proposed in and around Downtown appear to share similar design characteristics that diverge from established building patterns.
2. We have noticed that developers appear confused and conflicted by the design guidance and their muddled design proposals reflect that confusion and conflict.
3. We are concerned that the truly important issues of contextual responsibility and urban continuity are not being addressed.
4. We are concerned that absent traditional characteristics and consistent patterns that define urban commercial architecture, the intended compatibility with the historic Downtown core will not be achieved.
5. We ask that development projects proposed for the greater Downtown area be reviewed by qualified historic preservation architects for design compatibility and contextual continuity.
6. We ask that qualified historic preservation architects experienced in writing design guidelines for Downtowns and historic districts, be engaged to prepare new design guidelines for Downtown San Mateo.
7. We ask that planning staff consult Redwood City's 2011 Downtown Plan which provides a good model for appropriate architectural character types and styles.
8. We are concerned that if the current process continues without intervention, the result will be - as the city's Alternative Analysis warned - "development incompatible with the existing historic fabric surrounding the Downtown Historic District." It is an outcome no one wants.



## SAN MATEO HERITAGE ALLIANCE

June 6, 2023

Downtown possesses a diversity of building types and architectural styles spanning over a hundred years. Yet the myriad of buildings proposed for Downtown lack the necessary style references to the rich architectural context of the Downtown environment. All share a disconcertingly similar appearance that challenges the very meaning of compatibility with the established Downtown character, predominant building typology, and architectural pattern of development.

San Mateo Heritage Alliance remains committed to working with the City of San Mateo to ensure and encourage new development that is compatible and complimentary to the Downtown Historic District.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet soon, perhaps in the next couple of weeks, to discuss our concerns and offer our input and assistance in helping to craft regulations that meet contemporary needs while strengthening Downtown's historic sense of place.

We will call you in a few days to set a meeting date. Thank you.

Sincerely,

**San Mateo Heritage Alliance**

Keith Weber, Aragon  
Dianne Whitaker, North Central  
Laurie Watanuki, Central  
Mike Nash, Baywood

Attachments:

Appendix A: Issues of Concern

Appendix B: Proposed New Construction in a Historic Context

**Designing in context means providing enough visual linkages between existing buildings and a proposed project so as to create a cohesive overall effect. The new building should strengthen and enhance the characteristics of its setting.**

**- Richard Hedman,  
*Fundamentals of Urban  
Design***



## **Appendix A Issues of Concern**

### **Compatibility and Typology**

Downtown San Mateo has a wide variety of architectural styles and building typologies that provide the setting and establish the context for new development. The Downtown Specific Plan and Downtown Design Guidelines direct new development to be “compatible” with the existing building fabric.

Main Streets and commercial Downtowns nationwide are all recognizable and familiar to us because they share a set of common typological characteristics and compositional vocabulary. They are formally consistent, stylistically diverse, and able to accommodate functional change. In his seminal book, *The Buildings of Main Street: A Guide to American Commercial Architecture*, noted architectural historian Richard Longstreth traces the evolution of the compositional vocabulary used in every American Main Street over the past two centuries and presents a method of identifying building characteristics commonly found in central commercial districts up to the mid-20th century. In so doing, Longstreth helps us understand how to make planning decisions shaped by historical perspective rather than current aesthetic preference.

### **Architectural Style and Unified Design**

Successful and enduring buildings generally have one unified architectural style that integrates the entire building in one harmonious composition. The proposed projects, however, disregard this practice, giving the upper floors a completely different design appearance than the lower floors. The effect is one of confused discord rather than unity and harmony.

Redwood City has addressed the issue of creating architectural character in new projects compatible with the established architectural patterns in their Downtown by creating architectural “Character Zones.” Within these zones, different “Character Types” - Neoclassical, Victorian, Craftsman, Mediterranean, Art Deco, and Contemporary are permitted.

These Architectural Character Types are intended to reinforce both the predominant eclectic nature of building fabric in the Downtown area, and the strong preferences for an appropriate aesthetic for all new buildings and development. SMHeritage believes this type of approach is appropriate and would like to encourage its use in Downtown San Mateo to help ensure that new development is compatible and complementary to the historic resources.

### **Massing**

Massing, more than any architectural detail, has the most impact on the eye. Consequently it is one of the most important design considerations. The multiple masses and volumes of most of the proposed projects, however, read like an assortment of different size shipping boxes rather than unified architectural compositions.



# SAN MATEO HERITAGE ALLIANCE

June 6, 2023

## Building Corners

Generally, buildings in an urban context should maintain a consistent street wall along their street frontages. Corner towers and recessed corner entries are widely used to emphasize the corner of a building at specific intersections and to capture pedestrian traffic. But to eliminate the corner altogether, or replace it with a multi-story glass box as some of the projects do, does more to diminish the streetscape and urban experience than to enhance it.

## Daylight Plane

Building heights in Downtown San Mateo vary from one story to twelve, and in the Historic District from one to nine stories. Street wall frontages for virtually all existing buildings rise up to full height without setbacks. Yet, the daylight plane requirement for the entire retail core limits the height of the street frontage to one half the street width - generally two to three stories - regardless of the prevailing street wall pattern and varied building height allowance of 55 to 75 feet. This seems to be a one-size-fits-all requirement that could be adjustable and tailored to differing established building patterns in different parts of Downtown.

One successful infill project within the Historic District is 101 Ellsworth, rising six stories without an upper level setback, suggesting that upper floor setbacks may not be the only solution for new construction in and around the Historic District.



101 Ellsworth

## Examples of Compatible Downtown Infill Projects

Four examples of compatible new infill construction are recognizable in Downtown: Century Movie Theater, the Transit Center, the Main Street Parking Garage and 101 Ellsworth. They achieve their compatibility primarily because they conform to established commercial building typologies and draw on recognizable architectural styles. Inspiration for the new work came from Mediterranean Revival and Art Deco styles popular during the 1890-1950 Historic District period of significance, yet the design of each building was interpreted in a contemporary way and meets contemporary needs.



Transit Center/Train Station



Century Movie Theater



Main Street Parking Garage





## Appendix B Proposed New Construction in a Historic Context

What is the inspiration behind some of the new infill projects proposed for Downtown? Do they conform to familiar commercial building typologies? Do they reflect historical precedents and patterns of development? Do they draw on known architectural styles familiar to and popular with the public? Are they respectful to the surrounding community? Are they worthy of being landmarks themselves in 50-100 years? Although there are at least a dozen or more projects that cause us concern, we think the eight examples discussed below are sufficient to convey our point.

\* \* \*

### Paste-on Parody

Located just east of the railroad in the Downtown support area, Block 21 and 3rd & Claremont seem to find inspiration in a controversial preservation technique known as facadism. Facadism is sometimes used to construct a new building behind a historic facade. In successful examples, the new building is completely hidden behind the old facade. That is not the case here.

Neither design acknowledges the established pattern of providing changes to the street fronting facade every 25 to 50 feet as advised in the Downtown Design Guidelines. Neither reflects the essential typological or stylistic patterns prevalent in the greater Downtown. The question is where did the developer get the idea these designs would be acceptable or welcomed by the surrounding community.



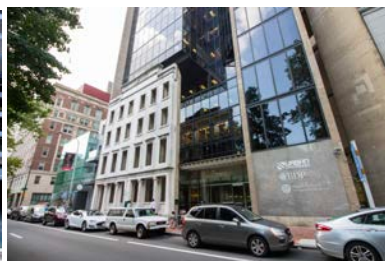
3rd & Claremont



Block 21



Facadism



Facadism



# SAN MATEO HERITAGE ALLIANCE

June 6, 2023

## Cornerless Brick Warehouses

Three projects - 31-57 S. B St. (abutting the Historic District), 405 E. 4th Ave., and 222 E 4th Ave - seem to draw their inspiration from brick warehouses and factories that proliferated during the mid-19th century at the height of the industrial revolution. Popular in the mid to late 1800s, they were generally constructed in the industrial areas of cities, not the Downtown commercial core of urban centers which featured retail shops, mercantile and business offices.

Although sometimes brick cladding may be the appropriate material, and a few of the oldest Downtown buildings are brick, the use of brick does not necessarily equate to compatibility with the Historic District where concrete, stucco, wood and terra cotta were often used. There are some pleasing aspects to all three projects, but because most of the buildings in the Historic District were built after 1900, and the majority of those in the 1920s-30s, the appropriateness of this mid-nineteenth century industrial building type for Downtown is subject to debate. Notably, all three projects have discarded their building corners, something any respectable warehouse would never do.



31-57 S. B Street

405 E. 4th Ave.



222 E. 4th Ave.



Brooklyn Navy Yard,

Brick Warehouses c 1860 - 1890s





# SAN MATEO HERITAGE ALLIANCE

June 6, 2023

## Muddledment

Bespoke in the Downtown retail core, and Block 20 in the Downtown support/Gateway area, are both head scratchers. Block 20 has an intriguing upper level, but it has no design connection to the lower floors. Why the upper level design doesn't continue all the way to the street is vexing. The 3-story glass corner interrupts the continuity of the street wall, eliminating what would normally be a prominent visual anchor for the building. Firehouse Square in Belmont is a good example of what this project should be.

Located one block from the Historic District, Bespoke appears to be a bundled collage of shapes, forms, wild ideas and conflicted energy. One section resembles an open parking garage, another looks like an elongated version of Philip Johnson's glass house perched atop two brick warehouses separated by a 3-story glass divider. Both proposals are so muddled it is impossible to guess what they are trying to do.



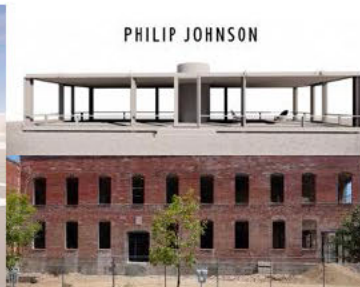
Block 20



Firehouse Square, Belmont



Bespoke





# SAN MATEO HERITAGE ALLIANCE

June 6, 2023

## Missed Opportunity

The only project within the Historic District, 180 E. Third Ave. makes a good faith effort to find compatibility. It appears to be inspired by, and tries with insufficient guidance or direction, to follow the lead of the National Bank of San Mateo, a 1925 Greek Revival design by W. H. Weeks. The new building, currently under construction, has pilasters, a classical entablature and some nice brick detailing. But this is where the compatibility appears to end. The familiar symmetrical tripartite facade composition and prominent central entry that define this building type and style has been lost, and much of the compatibility along with it.



180 E. Third Ave.



National Bank of San

Like all the other buildings proposed for Downtown, it is not one building but two - one anchored to the ground and the other, a different design and composition, setting awkwardly on top. One wonders why this project did not draw its inspiration from the 5-story National Register eligible 1929 E.L. Norberg Medical Arts building diagonally across the street. A missed opportunity, this project could have and should have been better.



Once the unity of an area is damaged by an ill-considered project, decades may pass before the error can be redressed. Once compromised, the area's ability to fend off subsequent attacks upon its design integrity is weakened.

- Richard Hedman,  
*Fundamentals of Urban Design*



**Linda Ly**

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**From:** Mary Way  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 28, 2023 9:44 AM  
**To:** Linda Ly  
**Cc:** Manira Sandhir  
**Subject:** Fwd: Public Comment, Agenda Item 2 at Tonight's Meeting  
**Attachments:** San Mateo PC - 477 9th Street - HAA & DBL Letter.pdf

Public comment for your item Linda.  
Thanks, Mary

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Nick Eckenwiler [REDACTED]  
**Date:** November 28, 2023 at 9:41:43 AM PST  
**To:** Planning Commission <PlanningCommission@cityofsanmateo.org>  
**Cc:** City Attorney's Office <CityAttorneysOffice@cityofsanmateo.org>, Clerk <clerk@cityofsanmateo.org>  
**Subject:** **Public Comment, Agenda Item 2 at Tonight's Meeting**

Good morning,

Please see attached for the California Housing Defense Fund's public comment on agenda item 2 at tonight's Planning Commission meeting, concerning a mixed-use project at 477 9th street. Thank you!

--

**Nicholas Eckenwiler**  
Staff Attorney





**Nov 28, 2023**

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

**By Email:** [PlanningCommission@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:PlanningCommission@cityofsanmateo.org)

**CC:** [CityAttorneysOffice@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:CityAttorneysOffice@cityofsanmateo.org), [clerk@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:clerk@cityofsanmateo.org)

**Re:** Resolution to approve a new five-story mixed-use building at 477 9th Avenue

Dear Planning Commission,

The California Housing Defense Fund (“CalHDF”) submits this letter as a public comment on agenda item 2 at tonight’s Planning Commission meeting, a Resolution to approve the project on 477 9th Street, a 5-story, mixed-use project with 120 units, including 12 below market rate units. The Housing Accountability Act (GOV 65589.5) requires approval of zoning and general plan compliant projects unless findings can be made regarding specific, objective, written health and safety hazards.

The Housing Accountability Act (the “HAA”) (Gov. Code § 65589.5) requires approval of zoning and general plan compliant housing development projects unless findings can be made regarding specific, objective, written health and safety hazards. These findings must be “supported by a preponderance of the evidence on the record.” (*Id.* at subd. (j)(1).) Increased density, concessions, and waivers that a project is entitled to under the Density Bonus Law (the “DBL”) (Gov. Code § 65915) do not render the project noncompliant with the zoning code or general plan, for purposes of the HAA. As staff notes, as a mixed-use development project with at least two-thirds of its area devoted to residential uses, the project falls within the HAA’s ambit, and, except for concessions under the DBL, it complies with local zoning code and the City’s general plan. Thus, the Commission must approve the project and pass the resolution unless it makes written health and safety findings, as described above – which it cannot do, since the preponderance of the evidence in the record does not support such a finding. The Commission must pass the resolution to approve the proposed concessions with respect to maximum density bonus units, reduced floor area ratio, reduced at-grade open space, and a lower number of compact stalls.

As you are well aware, California remains in the throes of a statewide crisis-level housing shortage. New housing such as this is a public benefit; it will bring increased tax revenue, new customers to local businesses, decarbonization in the face of climate crisis – and most importantly, it will reduce displacement of existing residents into homelessness or carbon-heavy car commutes. Projects like this one are especially important in helping our state meet its climate goals. While no single housing development can solve all these problems, the project here is a step in the right direction. CalHDF urges the Commission to approve the Resolution and the project, consistent with both its legal obligations and the City’s economic and environmental interests.

CalHDF (formerly the California Renters Legal Advocacy and Education Fund, or “CaRLA”) is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation whose mission includes advocating for increased access to housing for Californians at all income levels, including low-income households. You may learn more about CalHDF at [www.calhdf.org](http://www.calhdf.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Dylan Casey', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Dylan Casey  
CalHDF Executive Director

**Linda Ly**

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**From:** Linda Ly  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 30, 2023 5:55 PM  
**To:** Ken A red  
**Subject:** RE: Planning commission meeting 11/28/23 agenda item 2 , 477 9th Ave

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Completed

Hi Ken,

Thank you for your comments on the 477 9th Ave. project. The Planning Commission meeting was unfortunately cancelled this past Tuesday but has been rescheduled for 12/12/23.

For my understanding, can you clarify what was the November 16th meeting with the developer? The BMR distribution referenced in the staff report is based on their proposed plans and is consistent with the City's BMR Program requirements. I will also follow-up with them to verify.

Thanks,  
Linda

Linda Ly 李嘉歡  
Associate Planner | Community Development Department  
330 W. 20th Ave., San Mateo, CA 94403  
650-522-7217 | lly@cityofsanmateo.org

-----Original Message-----

From: Ken A red [REDACTED]  
Sent: Tuesday, November 28, 2023 12:05 PM  
To: Planning <planning@cityofsanmateo.org>  
Subject: Planning commission meeting 11/28/23 agenda item 2 , 477 9th Ave

Dear planning commission,

At a prior presentation on this project on November 16, the developer indicated that the 12 BMR units would be five two-bedroom units, five one-bedroom units and two studio. But the staff report on today's meeting indicates (in the Project Description) only three two-bedroom units (but increases to seven the one-bedroom units).

The project should return to the five units for two-bedroom.

Two-bedroom units are much more valuable to our city, as they provide a place for families with children to live. We need to strongly support families with children in BMR units.

Please insist that they revise their numbers back to the numbers presented on November 16 with five two-bedroom units.

Thank you for your consideration,  
Ken Abreu

Sent from my iPad

**From:** Michael [REDACTED]  
**Date:** November 28, 2023 at 12:25:09 PM PST  
**To:** Planning Commission <[PlanningCommission@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:PlanningCommission@cityofsanmateo.org)>  
**Cc:** Rob Newsom <[newsom@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:newsom@cityofsanmateo.org)>, [REDACTED] "Killough, Maurine"  
[REDACTED], David Light [REDACTED], Francie Souza  
**Subject:** 11/28/23 PA-2022-047 477 9th Avenue Comments

Planning Commissioners - I'm writing in reference to PA-2022-047 477 9th Avenue. The following are my comments:

1. Architectural Style - Really love the Spanish design with the terra cotta and arches - a refreshing change from the myriad brick blocks we see everywhere else. More of this, please.
2. Good to see a decent number of two-bedroom units, and of course 12 BMR's. The mini dog park, fitness center, club area, and open-air roof deck amenities are nice. Will there be an on-site manager for the residential portion? Might the club area or something similar be accessible for our organization's meetings (and/or other community usage)?
3. Parking - 150 on-site parking spaces - 112 for residents, and 38 spaces for office. The parking for 29,207 sf of office may be low if you calculate 150 sf for each worker, which would equate to about 195 workers - 1 space for every 4 workers. Is there a developer-supported TDM that will encourage mass transit by providing commuter passes, provide Uber /Lyft passes for workers who stay late? How will parking overflows into the neighborhood be handled if there is not enough on-site parking for the office workers or residents?
4. Tree removal - the project proposes to remove 32 trees - a high number, 7 of which are heritage trees. We need trees now more than ever, so older trees should be saved if at all possible. All trees should at a minimum be replaced - and not with tiny saplings, but with more established trees, and I encourage the commission to reject in-lieu fees for trees. Any trees that are removed should be preserved until construction permits are issued and financing secured ie the project is imminently going to be built.
5. Traffic - 9th Avenue and S Claremont is estimated to increase to LOS E during am peak hours. This needs to be mitigated, as it will create unsafe conditions for bikes and pedestrians, at a time when we're trying earnestly to improve bike/ped safety and reduce injuries and deaths from automobile collisions.

There were 4 projects mentioned in the analysis: 406 E 3rd, 222 E 4th Avenue, 480 E 4th Avenue, and Block 21. Has the analysis included all the proposed projects? There are 13 (!!!) other projects which may impact the am and pm readings in the future: 405 E 4th Avenue, Kiku Crossing Garage, Bespoke Housing and Talbot's office, First & B Office /retail, 435 E 3rd Office, Post & Bean Mixed use, 180 E 3rd- Mixed use - Office/Housing, Block 20, Fremont Terrace, Gateway Terrace housing projects, 303 Baldwin (Trag's) and 1 Hayward Avenue.

Intersections at S Claremont / 3rd and S Claremont / 4th Avenue were not analyzed but S Claremont / 5th Avenue was analyzed. Therefore the traffic may be coming down S Claremont / 5th Avenue, and S Claremont / 9th Avenue. We need to get the traffic circles installed at 5th and 9th Avenue from Delaware to S Amphlett before the Kiku Crossing Garage opens.

6. I would also like to take the opportunity to question community benefits granted to developers, and the consequences (or lack thereof) for not providing said community benefit. I mentioned this because Verkada/Windy Hill promised after-hours parking in their garages as a condition of approval and yet it has not been made available, despite bringing it to their attention over a month ago. If we're going to allow even more development and make all these concessions, what assurances do we have that developers will make good on them, that the city will police them, and that there are consequences for not providing agreed-upon benefits?

Thanks - Michael Weinbauer

**Linda Ly**

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**From:** Manira Sandhir  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 28, 2023 5:29 PM  
**To:** Eldridge, Karyl  
**Cc:** Eloiza Murillo-Garcia; Linda Ly; Zachary Dahl  
**Subject:** RE: Question regarding 477 9th Avenue

Hi Karyl,

Thanks for your comments. Believe your question is tied to Housing sites inventory so I wanted to provide a quick clarification regarding the housing percentages – for this project, we use the 15% inclusionary percentage in the Housing Element Sites Inventory. The 40% is an aggregate number which accounts for projects with higher percentages of affordable housing, including 100% affordable housing projects, such as Kiku, Bespoke, etc. and follows the methodology that has been accepted by HCD. I am looping in our Housing Manager Eloiza Murillo-Garcia so you can connect with her directly if you have other questions about the Housing Element.

Separately, in case you were planning to join us, please note that we had a last-minute cancellation for Planning Commission tonight based on the applicant's request, and the 477 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue project has been pushed out to a date uncertain. We'll add you to the interested parties list, so you are notified when this comes back before the Planning Commission.

Best regards,

Manira

PS. Moved the Planning Commission to bcc.



Manira Sandhir, AICP  
Interim Deputy Director, Community Development  
650-522-7203 (o) | 650-242-6126 (c)  
[msandhir@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:msandhir@cityofsanmateo.org)

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**From:** Eldridge, Karyl [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 28, 2023 4:53 PM  
**To:** Planning Commission <PlanningCommission@cityofsanmateo.org>  
**Subject:** Question regarding 477 9th Avenue

Dear Honorable Planning Commissioners:

There is a question that is nagging me about the project at 477 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue. It is this:

*The housing element asserts that 40 percent of the new housing over the next cycle will be affordable. This project includes only 15 percent. Is this an outlier? If not, how do we expect to get to the 40 percent?*

I am not able to be at the meeting this evening but would appreciate some insight into this. It is important that our individual steps align with our overall goal, and the current project does not create confidence that we can or will achieve the target we have set for ourselves.

Sincerely,

Karyl Eldridge  
Vice Chair of One San Mateo

**\*Wire Fraud is Real\*. Before wiring any money, call the intended recipient at a number you know is valid to confirm the instructions.** Additionally, please note that the sender does not have authority to bind a party to a real estate contract via written or verbal communication.

**Linda Ly**

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**From:** Paul Krupka [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 28, 2023 12:25 PM  
**To:** Planning  
**Subject:** Planning Commission Meeting of November 28, 2023 > Item 2 477 9th Avenue

Dear Chair Ebnetter and Commission Members,

I support this project and staff recommendation. The project design complements the neighborhood. It provides much-needed housing, including 12 below-market-rate homes in the very low-income category. It is situated Downtown and benefits from very good walking, biking, and other non-automobile connections. It contains a suitable number of on-site parking spaces to augment access.

Thank you,

Paul Krupka (he/him/his)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



**From:** [AnnaMarie Hoos](#)  
**To:** [Planning](#)  
**Subject:** Agenda item 2  
**Date:** Tuesday, November 28, 2023 4:05:39 PM

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Hello,

I am writing to express my whole-hearted support for the Martin Group's proposal to build homes, including affordable homes, in San Mateo, the city I call home.

As a renter, and someone who has struggled to find an affordable place to live in the past, I hope you will approve this project. We as a city and county and region are desperately short on housing supply, and this project is a positive step towards remedying that shortfall.

Furthermore, we know that building housing - at all income and affordability levels - is the primary solution to this challenge. As we have seen with the levelling off of rents in Berkeley, building housing does eventually pay off and settle rent costs!

As a public transit user, I also endorse these homes because of their location, with their proximity to the CalTrain station and short walk to the buses on El Camino Real.

As a minister who has worked with those precariously housed, I affirm the dedication of 12 of the units to house vulnerable community members.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter. I hope this project will be approved.

Sincerely,

The Rev. AnnaMarie Hoos

Member, Peninsula Solidarity Cohort and Faith in Action Bay Area

Associate Rector, Church of the Epiphany

*she/her/hers*

*I generally take Fridays as my Sabbath day, which includes stepping away from email.*

[epiphanysan-carlos.org](http://epiphanysan-carlos.org)

## Linda Ly

---

**From:** Linda Ly  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 29, 2023 5:34 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** Manira Sandhir  
**Subject:** RE: City Council's performance

Hi Mr. Cendak,

Thank you for your comment on 477 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue, a proposed five-story mixed-use development project. The Planning Commission meeting scheduled last night for the item was cancelled and a new public hearing date is currently pending. Staff would like to clarify that the maximum building height allowed on the project site is 55 feet and not three-stories. The project's proposed building height of 53'-6" (plate line) is compliant with Measure Y. More information, including project plans, are available on the project website here: <https://www.cityofsanmateo.org/4620/477-9th-Avenue-Mixed-Use-Development>.

The City's Building Height Plan is also available online: <https://www.cityofsanmateo.org/DocumentCenter/View/66333/CDD-Planning---Height-Aug-2018>. This map shows the building height ranges set by Measure Y.

Please let me know if you have further questions on the project or Measure Y. As a courtesy, I've moved City Council to BCC.

Thanks,  
Linda



**Linda Ly** 李嘉歡

Associate Planner | Community Development Department  
330 W. 20th Ave., San Mateo, CA 94403  
650-522-7217 | [lly@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:lly@cityofsanmateo.org)



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**From:** William Cendak [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 28, 2023 2:06 PM  
**To:** City Council (San Mateo) <[CityCouncil@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:CityCouncil@cityofsanmateo.org)>  
**Subject:** City Council's performance

Dear Council Members,

I sit here looking at your agenda to authorize a 5 story building on 9th Ave. and the resent flier we received concerning installation of neighborhood cell towers.

I can't understand how out of touch you all are with the community at large, we voted for measure "Y" that limits building heights to 3 stories, there has been pushback on the installation of the cell towers, yet you merrily go against the will of the residents of our city.

You all need to be recalled!

As Gordon Ramsey, "Get out of here."



-----Original Message-----

From: Francie Souza [REDACTED]

Sent: Tuesday, November 28, 2023 2:34 PM

To: Planning Commission <[PlanningCommission@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:PlanningCommission@cityofsanmateo.org)>

Cc: Bethany Lopez <[blopez@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:blopez@cityofsanmateo.org)>

Subject: Comments re: PA-2022-047, 477 9th Avenue

Dear Planning Commissioners:

We are residents of Central San Mateo and walk by this property several times a day. Thank you for the overall design, architectural details, colors and layout of the building. It will be a nice addition to the neighborhood, complementing our existing older homes and downtown.

A few comments:

- Please don't remove trees and level the property until construction permits are issued and financing is secured
- Consider how to preserve the larger heritage trees, and perhaps move the smaller Japanese Maples to Central Park or donate to neighbors
- Street parking will increase in surrounding neighborhoods (we see it already with Verkada & construction crews for Kiku). Please plan in advance and add 2 hour parking on S. Delaware and S Claremont from 5th to 9th Avenues during weekdays
- Expect and plan for increased traffic on neighborhood streets, especially with Kiku crossing and other projects in the pipeline. We need traffic circles and other traffic calming measures which have been brought up at many other meetings - plan now for what will happen soon...more traffic!
- Community Benefits provided by Developers need to be monitored - what's the point if they don't happen and what are the consequences, except for negative consequences to the community?

Thank you for considering our comments.

Tom & Frances Souza

## Linda Ly

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**From:** Linda Ly  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 30, 2023 6:14 PM  
**To:** Wendy Lane  
**Subject:** RE: 477 9th Avenue Mixed Use Project

Hi Ms. Lane,

Thank you for your comments on the 477 9<sup>th</sup> Ave. project. This will be added to the record for the project and forwarded to the Planning Commission for consideration as well. Please note that the project has been rescheduled for the December 12, 2023, Planning Commission meeting.

Staff would like to point out that the project is subject to various State laws, including the Housing Accountability Act, which limits the City from reducing the proposed density or denying the project, if all objective standards are met. The project currently meets all applicable objective standards, including the maximum building height (55 ft). The applicant has also requested two concessions to increase the floor area ratio and reduce at-grade open space under the State Density Bonus Law. Lastly, the State recently passed AB 2097, which removes minimum parking requirements for projects located within a half-mile of a major transit stop.

I am available tomorrow, Friday to return your call if you'd like to discuss further. Otherwise, you are encouraged to join us for the December 12<sup>th</sup> public hearing.

Thanks,  
Linda



**Linda Ly** 李嘉歡

Associate Planner | Community Development Department  
330 W. 20th Ave., San Mateo, CA 94403  
650-522-7217 | [lly@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:lly@cityofsanmateo.org)



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**From:** Wendy Lane [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 29, 2023 12:28 PM  
**To:** Linda Ly <[lly@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:lly@cityofsanmateo.org)>  
**Subject:** 477 9th Avenue Mixed Use Project

Hi, Ms. Ly. I am the owner of a duplex at 9th and Delaware, very close to where the proposed mixed use project is. I was greatly disappointed that last night's meeting was cancelled.

I attended a neighborhood meeting (via Zoom) in April and many of us raised concerns about the scale of the project:

- The proposed building height (5 stories) is in no way keeping with the character of the immediate neighborhood (made up of generally one and two story homes and buildings). It is **much** too tall. Even three stories would be an outlier on that block. This will have negative impacts on our neighborhood character, esthetics, sunlight, trees, open space, and, of course, property values. Most of us chose to live/buy here because we love living in a quiet neighborhood **without** tall buildings.


- Removal of many more trees (32 -- including 7 of which are protected) than will be replanted (19) is a negative from many standpoints --esthetics, public health, property values, etc. An "in-lieu fee payment" is frankly a shameful way to get around this. Why are the seven trees called "protected" when they are not being protected? Pulling out trees will seriously impact the character and value of the neighborhood.

- It also appears that the developer wants an exception made to the maximum floor area ratio and open space requirements. Again, why have those standards if developers can just buy their way out of them?

- 120 units will bring a flood of new residents, which will have an enormous negative impact on parking. While I note that some onsite parking would be provided, I expect it won't be nearly enough for all residents and all employees of the businesses located in the building, plus residents' guests, business visitors/customers, service people, etc. Many of us who live on that street will be pushed out of our parking spaces near/in front of our properties -- including elderly and disabled people, as well as young families with small children who should have safe and easy access to their homes from the curb.

I am extremely disappointed to see that NONE of our input from that April meeting seems to have been considered. The project looks like it's moving ahead with no changes whatsoever from what we were presented in April. Is that correct? How can I get answers to my concerns and share my input with someone who may actually take this input into consideration?

Thank you very much.

Wendy Lane  


**Linda Ly**

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**From:** Adam Klafter [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, December 4, 2023 2:26 PM  
**To:** Linda Ly  
**Subject:** Re: November 28, 2023 - Planning Commission Cancellation

Ms. Ly,

Thank you for your response. I will try to attend the upcoming meeting. The preliminary arborist report does appear to echo some of my own concerns, and the design as currently drawn does not appear to respond to all of the recommendations from the report (L-5.5, page 6). This would include providing for an adequate tree protection zone during construction that takes into account the full root system (L-5.8 page 8), the possible need to further trim back the canopy to erect scaffolding which would have both visual and health impacts, and the limited amount of permeable surface at the base of the tree.

On that last point, I observe that there is a section of motorcycle parking beneath the tree right now. Perhaps the city could look into removing or shifting that parking to the side and creating a larger bulb-out underneath the tree to provide more exposed soil and assist with tree health, especially if the project applicant is unwilling to do so on the sidewalk side. Something for the City Arborist to consider.

I would like to reiterate that I support this project as a whole, and simply believe that the continued presence and good health of this substantial Heritage Tree adds value to the project, and hope that it is successfully safeguarded through this process, to be appreciated for many years to come.

Regards,

-Adam Klafter

On Fri, Dec 1, 2023 at 11:41 AM Linda Ly <[llly@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:llly@cityofsanmateo.org)> wrote:

Hi Adam,

Thank you for your past and recent comments on the 477 9<sup>th</sup> Ave. project. Your comments have been added to the record for the project and will be considered by the Planning Commission as well.

Staff would like to point out that a preliminary tree protection plan proposed by the applicant shows fencing around the S. Claremont Street tree. This is the Tree Protection Zone and no construction activity (i.e. trenching, utility lines, pipe, excavation, etc.) is allowed in that zone per City regulations. Our City Arborist will require an updated Arborist Report showing more protection details during the building permit stage to ensure that the Oak tree can remain throughout construction. You are encouraged to review the Preliminary Arborist Report and Tree Protection Plan in the latest plan set— please go Sheet L-5.2 or page 52 of the [PDF document \(link\)](#).

Lastly, this project has been rescheduled for the December 12, 2023 Planning Commission meeting. We hope you can join us at that meeting.

Have a nice day.

Thanks,

Linda



**Linda Ly** 李嘉歡

Associate Planner | Community Development Department

330 W. 20th Ave., San Mateo, CA 94403

650-522-7217 | [lly@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:lly@cityofsanmateo.org)



---

**From:** Adam Klafter [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 29, 2023 2:51 PM  
**To:** Linda Ly <[lly@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:lly@cityofsanmateo.org)>  
**Subject:** Re: November 28, 2023 - Planning Commission Cancellation

Hello,

I just got this notice and was reminded of my previous letter regarding the heritage tree on South Claremont at the edge of the subject property. Looking at the latest plans which have not changed substantially, I maintain my opinion that construction activity within the drip line and root zone of the tree is likely to cause it irreparable harm. You may also refer to my previous email.

Respectfully,



-Adam Klafter

On Tue, Nov 28, 2023 at 5:25 PM Linda Ly <lly@cityofsanmateo.org> wrote:

Good evening,

You are receiving this email because you have expressed interest or submitted a public comment for **477 9th Avenue, New Five-Story Mixed-Use Project**. Please be advised that the Planning Commission meeting scheduled tonight 11/28/2023 has been cancelled. City staff will notify you and prepare a new public notice once a new date is confirmed. We apologize for the inconvenience. Please feel free to contact me directly with any questions. Thanks again for your continued interest in the project.

R JJYNS L H F S H J Q Q F Y N T S 2 X Z J X I F ^ 1 S T [ 3 7 = 1 7 5 7 8

The Planning Commission meeting scheduled for Tuesday, Nov. 28, 2023 at 7 p.m. has been cancelled.

The item regarding **477 9th Avenue, New Five-Story Mixed-Use Project (PA-2022-047)** is continued to a date uncertain.

Best regards,

Linda



Linda Ly 李嘉歡

Associate Planner | Community Development Department

330 W. 20th Ave., San Mateo, CA 94403

650-522-7217 | [lly@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:lly@cityofsanmateo.org)



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## Linda Ly

---

**From:** Kenneth E Abreu [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 5, 2023 8:02 PM  
**To:** Linda Ly  
**Subject:** Re: Planning commission meeting 11/28/23 agenda item 2 , 477 9th Ave  
**Attachments:** HLC Development Endorsement Application - UPDATED 2023.pdf

Hi Linda,

Just wanted to get back to you on the questions you asked.

The meeting with the developer on November 16th was with the Housing Leadership Council (HLC) Endorsement Committee. The Application for Endorsement that was provided for the meeting is attached. It indicated the 5 two-bedroom units, not 3.

After I raised this concern, HLC staff got back to the developer and the developer explained that he "unknowingly presented outdated information" to HLC at the 11/16 meeting.

So, my original email (11/28) to the Planning Commission (PC) is still **my** recommendation on what the Planning Commission should do.

HLC can provide you their own current thinking on the project.

I'd also request that you share this email exchange between you and me with the PC so they know the latest information.

If you have any more questions, let me know.

Thanks you,

Ken Abreu

On Thursday, November 30, 2023 at 05:55:13 PM PST, Linda Ly <lly@cityofsanmateo.org> wrote:

Hi Ken,

Thank you for your comments on the 477 9th Ave. project. The Planning Commission meeting was unfortunately cancelled this past Tuesday but has been rescheduled for 12/12/23.

For my understanding, can you clarify what was the November 16th meeting with the developer? The BMR distribution referenced in the staff report is based on their proposed plans and is consistent with the City's BMR Program requirements. I will also follow-up with them to verify.

Thanks,

Linda

Linda Ly 李嘉歡

Associate Planner | Community Development Department

330 W. 20th Ave., San Mateo, CA 94403

650-522-7217 | [lly@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:lly@cityofsanmateo.org)

-----Original Message-----

From: Ken A red [REDACTED]

Sent: Tuesday, November 28, 2023 12:05 PM

To: Planning <[planning@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:planning@cityofsanmateo.org)>

Subject: Planning commission meeting 11/28/23 agenda item 2 , 477 9th Ave

Dear planning commission,

At a prior presentation on this project on November 16, the developer indicated that the 12 BMR units would be five two-bedroom units, five one-bedroom units and two studio. But the staff report on today's meeting indicates (in the Project Description) only three two-bedroom units (but increases to seven the one-bedroom units).

The project should return to the five units for two-bedroom.

Two-bedroom units are much more valuable to our city, as they provide a place for families with children to live. We need to strongly support families with children in BMR units.

Please insist that they revise their numbers back to the numbers presented on November 16 with five two-bedroom units.

Thank you for your consideration,

Ken Abreu

Sent from my iPad

\* PRIVILEGE AND CONFIDENTIALITY NOTICE: This message, together with any attachments, is intended only for the use of the individual or entity to which it is addressed. It may contain information that is confidential and prohibited from disclosure. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any dissemination or copying of this message or any attachment is strictly prohibited. If you have received this message in error, please notify the original sender immediately by telephone or by return e-mail and delete this message along with any attachments from your computer. Thank you.



## Application for Endorsement#

The Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo County (HLC) fully supports new construction of affordable housing, and is dedicated to recognizing excellent proposals by providing formal endorsements. This document includes requirements and benefits of the HLC endorsement process.

HLC only endorses high-quality projects that demonstrate a dedication to affordability. **HLC will not consider any project for endorsement if it does not include any deed-restricted, below-market-rate units.**

An endorsement by HLC will include the following elements of support.

- A written letter of support addressed to local decision makers.
- Oral testimony by a staff member (usually the HLC Executive Director) in support of the project at entitlement hearings.
- Community outreach to the extent practicable, intended to organize community members (e.g. residents, employees, seniors, veterans) to speak in support during entitlement hearings, and send emails to decision makers.

To request an endorsement by HLC, please complete, sign and return the form on the next page along with relevant project information. If your project meets the requirements for endorsement, HLC's Endorsement Committee will convene to review the project.



## Application for Endorsement

### Applicant Information

Developer name: The Martin Group dba SM Martin Developer, LLC

Developer address: 1970 Broadway, Suite 745 | Oakland, CA 94612

Contact name: Stephen Siri

Phone: 415-429-6044

Email: Stephen@themartingroup.com

### Project Information

Working title: Arbello

Address: 477 9th St, San Mateo, CA

APN#: APN: 033-281-130

Please attach a current application package that includes detailed entitlement status, project information, and architectural plans.

### Affordability

Total number of units: 120 #

The developer is hereby committed to including 12 (#) deed-restricted, below market rate units in the project.

Please provide the breakdown of units. Please note specific percentages:

Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo County  
2905 S. El Camino Real, San Mateo, CA 94403 • (650) 242-1764 • hlcsmc.org



	<30% AMI _____	30-50% AMI Very Low _____	50-80% AMI _____	80-120% AMI _____	Market Rate:
Studio		2			
1 BR		5			
2 BR		5			
3 BR					
Total		12			

What is your city/jurisdictions inclusionary housing rate:

## Labor

Please tell us what you can do for labor. (Examples: 80% union construction; 100% prevailing wage, etc.)

Our project is privately funded with no union or prevailing wage specific requirements.

We intend to openly bid the job and select contractors (union or non union) based on their

bid quality and price which align with the project's vision and financial feasibility.

## Community Issues and Challenges

Are there any homes located on the site? If yes, how will your organization factor them into its proposal?

No. The site is currently an old one story office building with surface parking.

What do you see as the key challenges faced by this project?

Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo County  
2905 S. El Camino Real, San Mateo, CA 94403 • (650) 242-1764 • hlcsmc.org



San Mateo like many cities has several advocacy groups which do not support new development.

Our project is utilizing state density bonus law to increase our density and on-site affordability.

Arbello will provide 120 mixed-income apartments and 27K of office with on-site parking, fitness center, club house

roof top deck and courtyards. We are transit oriented located 0.5 miles from Caltrain. Arbello

is located adjacent to downtown San Mateo with a plethora of retailers, employers who will benefit from this project. The project is sustainably designed to CalGreen standards and will be all electric.

**Signed**

Signature:

Date:

11/9/2023

Please submit this application and attachment to [kchan@hlcsmc.org](mailto:kchan@hlcsmc.org). Thank you for your time and contributions to affordable homes!

Attachment:

Current Project Application Package



## Rendell Bustos

---

**From:** Rendell Bustos  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 12, 2023 4:03 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** Linda Ly; Manira Sandhir; Ashley Snodgrass  
**Subject:** RE: Agenda item 2 comment

Hello Stephen,

Thank you for your email. Your comment has been received and will be distributed to the Planning Commission for their consideration this evening.

Regards,

Rendell Bustos  
Senior Planner | Community Development Department  
330 W. 20th Ave., San Mateo, CA 94403  
650-522-7211 | rbustos@cityofsanmateo.org

-----Original Message-----

From: Stephen Floor [REDACTED]  
Sent: Tuesday, December 12, 2023 8:55 AM  
To: Planning <planning@cityofsanmateo.org>  
Subject: Agenda item 2 comment

Hello,

I am a San Mateo resident and am writing in favor of the proposed project at 477 9th Avenue. This is an outstanding location for new housing in San Mateo by converting an office space into a mixed-use building. I am excited that this conversion preserves office space but also adds housing, especially in this area that is very walkable to downtown and to public transit. I am especially supportive of the 12 affordable units. I strongly support the proposed development.

Thank you,  
Stephen Floor

## Rendell Bustos

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**From:** Rendell Bustos  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 12, 2023 12:02 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** Linda Ly; Manira Sandhir; Ashley Snodgrass  
**Subject:** RE: Support Letter - Agenda Item #2 - Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo County  
**Attachments:** Support 477 9th Avenue - Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo County.pdf

Hi Ken,

Thank you for your email. Your comment letter has been received and will be distributed to the Planning Commission prior to tonight's Public Hearing.

-Rendell



### Rendell Bustos

Senior Planner | Community Development Department  
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**From:** Ken Chan [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, December 11, 2023 6:36 PM  
**To:** Planning <[planning@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:planning@cityofsanmateo.org)>  
**Subject:** Support Letter - Agenda Item #2 - Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo County

Dear San Mateo Planning Commission Members,

Please see the attached letter regarding Agenda Item #2 (477 9th Avenue), which will be discussed at tomorrow's (12/12/2023) Planning Commission Meeting.

Kind Regards,  
Ken Chan

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Ken Chan (he/him)  
Senior Organizer  
Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo County



[Schedule a meeting with me](#)  
[www.hlcsmc.org](http://www.hlcsmc.org)



December 11, 2023

San Mateo Planning Commission  
San Mateo City Hall  
330 West 20th Avenue  
San Mateo, CA 94403

**Re: Support 477 9th Avenue - Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo County**

Dear Members of the San Mateo Planning Commission,

The Housing Leadership Council of San Mateo County (HLC) works with our communities and their leaders to produce and preserve quality affordable homes.

On behalf of HLC, I'm writing to express our support for the downtown adjacent, 477 9th Street proposal by The Martin Group - which is set to include 120 new homes, 12 of which will be affordable for your community members who are making between 30 - 50% of area median income. Given their location, these homes can play a crucial role in enhancing downtown vibrancy. They offer your residents the option to use Caltrain for their daily commute, and, most importantly, provide a secure and stable home for at least 12 of your most vulnerable community members.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and we urge you to support the 477 9th Street proposal and to move it forward to your leaders on the City Council for a decision.

Sincerely,

Ken Chan  
Senior Organizer

## Rendell Bustos

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**From:** Rendell Bustos  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 12, 2023 4:37 PM  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Cc:** Linda Ly; Manira Sandhir; Ashley Snodgrass  
**Subject:** RE: Agenda Item 2

Hello Sophia,

Thanks for your email. Your comment has been received and will be distributed to the Planning Commission for their consideration this evening.

-Rendell



### Rendell Bustos

Senior Planner | Community Development Department  
330 W. 20th Ave., San Mateo, CA 94403  
650-522-7211 | [rbustos@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:rbustos@cityofsanmateo.org)



**From:** Sophia Heath [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 12, 2023 1:47 PM  
**To:** Planning <[planning@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:planning@cityofsanmateo.org)>  
**Subject:** Agenda Item 2

Hello,

My name is Sophia Heath and I am a resident of the city of San Mateo.

I want to let you know that I strongly and wholeheartedly approve of the proposal by The Martin Group. These homes have the potential to allow 12 of our most vulnerable community members to live within walking distance to their places of employment, or public transit. Moreover, these homes can potentially help the city push back against the jobs-housing imbalance we're all currently facing. Please vote in favor of affordable housing.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sophia

**Linda Ly**

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**From:** Michelle Gotera  
**Sent:** Monday, December 18, 2023 11:12 AM  
**To:** Rendell Bustos  
**Subject:** FW: I support the proposal by the Martin Group - of 120 new homes in San Mateo

Hi Rendell,

Not sure if this one was captured last week. See email below.

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**From:** Susan Ketcham [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 12, 2023 7:09 PM  
**To:** Planning <planning@cityofsanmateo.org>  
**Cc:** Adam Loraine <aloraine@cityofsanmateo.org>  
**Subject:** I support the proposal by the Martin Group - of 120 new homes in San Mateo

Hello Planning Commission, and City Council member Loraine –

I would like to voice support for the proposal by the Martin Group, to build 120 new homes in San Mateo. I am a resident and home owner in San Mateo city, and I strongly support more housing to be built , and more density, in all parts of San Mateo city. Thank you for bringing this proposal forward!

The creation of the 120 new homes will help with the imbalance we have between jobs and housing. The location , near public transportation is great. And to have 12 of these homes be affordable , will be terrific way to support those working and struggling in our community. I am really pleased that the proposal is being considered.

Count me as a supporter, of this project. And future projects to increase housing and increase density in our wonderful city.

Thank you for the work you do, in planning - both in housing specifically and in the General Plan. I appreciate it!

Best regards, Susan K.

Susan Ketcham  
[REDACTED]

From: [Michelle Maccarra](#)  
To: [Planning](#); [Lisa Diaz Nash](#); [Rob Newsom](#); [Adam Loraine](#); [Richard Hedges](#); [Amourence Lee](#)  
Subject: Please Save the Heritage Trees of San Mateo  
Date: Wednesday, December 13, 2023 10:59:48 AM

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Good morning,

My 8 year old son and I both spoke during the planning commission meeting last night to save the heritage trees at 477 9th Avenue. Taking out 32 trees and 7 heritage trees clearly goes against the laws that the city has put in place around tree preservation as seen below. As I stated during the meeting, the majority of the heritage trees at 477 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue are on the perimeter of the building site, and the builder should be required to make special accommodations to save these heritage trees, and pay to relocate other smaller trees that are located throughout the property.

A few points I did not have time to mention during the meeting are below:

As stated in the City of San Mateo Law Library:

**Chapter 27.71 LANDSCAPE FOR PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

27.71.150 Preservation of Existing Trees:

**(e) Preservation of Heritage Trees.** The site design shall make every reasonable effort to preserve Heritage Trees, consistent with [Chapter 13.40](#). Conditions shall also be imposed to protect Heritage Trees during construction. Heritage Trees shall be removed only when the City Arborist determines that their preservation would result in a threat to health, safety, and welfare due to a hazardous tree condition, impacts on soil erosion and stability, or an unreasonable effect upon the economic enjoyment of the property, consistent with [Chapter 13.40](#).

**(f) Protection of Existing Trees.** The site design shall make reasonable effort to protect existing trees. The design shall be evaluated as to how it protects existing trees or the reasons for removal of existing trees. Tree protection measures shall be provided for trees to remain on-site, which shall be consistent with [Chapter 13.40](#) and imposed as a condition of approvals.

**(g) Alternates to On-Site Replacement.** If the required LU value for replacement of existing trees to be removed is not made up with replacement trees on-site, the City shall require that trees be planted in another location on-site or off-site or a contribution of funds be made to the City to be used for plantings on public land or a combination of the above options. If a contribution of funds is required, it shall be the fee as established by resolution of the City Council in the annual Comprehensive Fee Schedule.

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The English poet William Blake observed, "The tree which moves some to tears of joy is in the eye of others only a green thing which stands in the way." The truth of this statement is especially tragic when it comes to heritage trees.

The disappearance of special trees right in our own communities is alarming. When heritage trees succumb to storms or old age, that is one thing. When they are destroyed by neglect or development or other human causes, it is quite another. Saving our heritage trees is a job for tree boards everywhere, but it is also a job for every individual who reveres the past and cares about the future.

Saving heritage trees extends a link across generations. It helps develop values for things beyond material, values almost of a spiritual nature. It also reminds us, as expressed by Arbor Day Founder J. Sterling Morton, "Each generation takes the earth as trustees." "Passing along a community's special trees is part of that responsibility as temporary stewards."

By removing these trees, the builder is seeing a short term gain in their pocketbook, but San Mateans are experiencing a long term loss. Please make every effort to save these trees. As new development moves into San Mateo, more and more of these trees are being threatened, and soon they will all be gone - the landscape will be forever changed. Not only are trees good for public health, but they also solve so many of the urban issues our city is currently dealing with: rising temperatures, air pollution, flooding, and the list goes on. Please do the right thing and preserve these trees for current residents and future generations to come.

**PLEASE SAVE OUR HERITAGE TREES!**

Thank you,

Michelle Maccarra



**Linda Ly**

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**From:** Laurie Watanuki [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, December 20, 2023 4:55 PM  
**To:** City Council (San Mateo)  
**Cc:** Planning Commission; Alex Khojikian  
**Subject:** PA - 2022-047 - 477 - 9th Avenue

December 20, 2023

Dear Mayor Diaz-Nash and City Council Members,

We were very pleased that the San Mateo Planning Commission unanimously approved the new project 477 9th Avenue Mixed-Use Development at the corner of 9th Avenue and Claremont on Tuesday, December 12. There was much discussion by the public and the commissioners of the need to remove 32 trees, including 7 heritage trees during the meeting. The majority of the heritage trees at 477 9th Avenue are on the perimeter of the building site. We hope that The Martin Group attempts to save all these heritage trees and relocate smaller trees to Central Park or another public site. Oak trees take 100 years to fully develop and can live to 1000 years! It is good that there is agreement to save two trees, but we especially encourage the City of San Mateo and the developer to work together to save another heritage tree, Coast Live Oak #19. In the arborist's report, tree #19 is described as a protected Coast Live Oak with a 37 inch trunk in less than average condition with low suitability for preservation due to, "Enlarged abnormal buttress roots on the north side; heavy lateral limbs over road on south; sparse canopy; dieback; river rocks over roots and against trunk." We feel that the rational response from an arborist would be to first recommend removing those river rocks as soon as possible! In addition, there is awful plastic synthetic grass covering the ground all around close to this tree. We feel that removing the rocks and plastic covering, surrounding the tree with bark mulch as in Central Park and allowing the roots to breathe will allow this tree to recover and live a long life.

Many commissioners expressed a desire to save more heritage trees and some even mentioned Tree #19. Seema Patel was the only commissioner who did not support preserving Tree #19 and her two reasons were the tree's condition and the fact that it will be in the middle of the wide sidewalk and may represent an accessibility issue. As to her first point, as discussed above, the City of San Mateo should act now with the developer and current owner of the property to improve the quality of life of the Coast Live Oak by removing the rocks and plastic. As to her second concern, the planned sidewalk is wide enough to allow wheel chairs to go around the tree and if not, minor changes to the design can easily accommodate both the tree and wheel chairs. Separately, Commissioner Patel expressed concern about young people on bicycles and scooters traveling downhill on 9th Avenue from the train tracks need to be protected from cars exiting the project. Creatively designing a walkway around this majestic tree in the middle will also help to control such traffic on the sidewalk and help alleviate this concern.

Finally, we would like the Planning Commission to consider making the following as standard procedures for this project and future projects. Any trees that must be removed from a project site should be replaced by more mature trees and not small saplings. No trees should ever be removed without a permit and never prematurely before construction permits are issued and construction is imminent, to avoid what has happened with the Block 21 project.

There are many benefits for the City of San Mateo to put in the effort to preserve Coast Live Oak #19. Please, ask some of the creative planners in the City Hall staff to take a second look at possibilities to also save tree #18 (Oak tree), and tree #3 in the parking area.

Thank you!

Michael Weinhauer  
Maurine Killough  
David Light  
Francie Souza  
Laurie Watanuki  
Evan Powell  
Lisa Vande Voorde  
Joe Daly  
Diane Daly  
Linda Simonsen  
Wilfredo Aguilar



Rowan Paul  
Tom Souza  
George Derby  
Olya Derby  
Ivana Sebastian

**Linda Ly**

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**From:** Linda Ly  
**Sent:** Thursday, January 4, 2024 11:36 AM  
**To:** I watanuki  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** RE: Question  
**Attachments:** Illustrative Landscape Plan Att 3 - Project Plans-3.pdf

Importantly, here is their proposed landscape plan showing the proposed landscape and tree replanting.

Thanks,  
Linda

Linda Ly 李嘉歡  
Associate Planner | Community Development Department  
330 W. 20th Ave., San Mateo, CA 94403  
650-522-7217 | lly@cityofsanmateo.org

-----Original Message-----

From: Linda Ly  
Sent: Thursday, January 4, 2024 11:34 AM  
To: I watanuki [REDACTED]  
Cc: [REDACTED]  
Subject: RE: Question

Hi Laurie,

I hope you enjoyed your holidays and start to the new year. I was away when you had emailed, so apologies for the response delay.

Trees proposed for preservation at 477 9th Ave. are all trees along the northern and western property line, as well as the two Oak trees on Claremont and 9th Ave, which are trees #10 and #17.

Oak Tree #19 conflicts with the building footprint so has been proposed for removal. The Planning Commission acknowledged this during the meeting as well.

I've attached the tree disposition plan that was presented if that helps.

Thanks,  
Linda

Linda Ly 李嘉歡  
Associate Planner | Community Development Department  
330 W. 20th Ave., San Mateo, CA 94403  
650-522-7217 | lly@cityofsanmateo.org

-----Original Message-----

From: I watanuki [REDACTED]  
Sent: Wednesday, December 20, 2023 8:16 AM  
To: Linda Ly <lly@cityofsanmateo.org>  
Cc: [REDACTED]  
Subject: Re: Question

Hi Linda,

Were you able to find more information on the two Heritage Trees and the status of tree #19? Did they decide at the end of the meeting if #19 could be saved?

Thanks.

Laurie Watanuki

> On Dec 17, 2023, at 5:28 PM, I watanuki <lwatanuki6@gmail.com> wrote:

>

> Hi Linda,

> I have a question regarding the Heritage Trees at 477 - 9th Avenue. I thought I heard two Heritage Trees would remain. Do you have those 2 tree numbers from the map that will be saved? What was the status of tree #19?

> Thanks.

> Laurie Watanuki

>

>

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**From:** Bahrig Mikaelian [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, February 10, 2024 12:35 PM  
**To:** Planning Commission <PlanningCommission@cityofsanmateo.org>  
**Subject:** Saving large heritage tree, Coast Live Oak #19

Hello,

I'm a resident of San Mateo County and appreciate the beauty of our communities. Trees are such a key part of what makes this area desirable: They have been here longer than most of us and will hopefully continue to be long after we're gone.

Please consider saving another large heritage tree, Coast Live Oak #19, seen below.



It is good that there is agreement to save two trees along 9th Ave, but we especially encourage the City of San Mateo and the developer to work together to Please keep this tree alive and part of our community landscape.

We residents will be eternally grateful!

Best,

Bahrig Mikaelian-Deirmendjian

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Linda Ly](#)  
**To:** [Martin McTaggart](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Save the Heritage Trees  
**Date:** Thursday, February 15, 2024 10:35:30 AM

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-----Original Message-----

From: Patrice Olds <polds@cityofsanmateo.org>  
Sent: Monday, February 12, 2024 10:05 AM  
To: Linda Ly <lly@cityofsanmateo.org>  
Subject: FW: Save the Heritage Trees

-----Original Message-----

From: Susan Jung [REDACTED]  
Sent: Sunday, February 11, 2024 12:24 PM  
To: City Council (San Mateo) <CityCouncil@cityofsanmateo.org>  
Subject: Save the Heritage Trees

477 Ninth Ave  
Susan Jung  
Sent from my iPhone