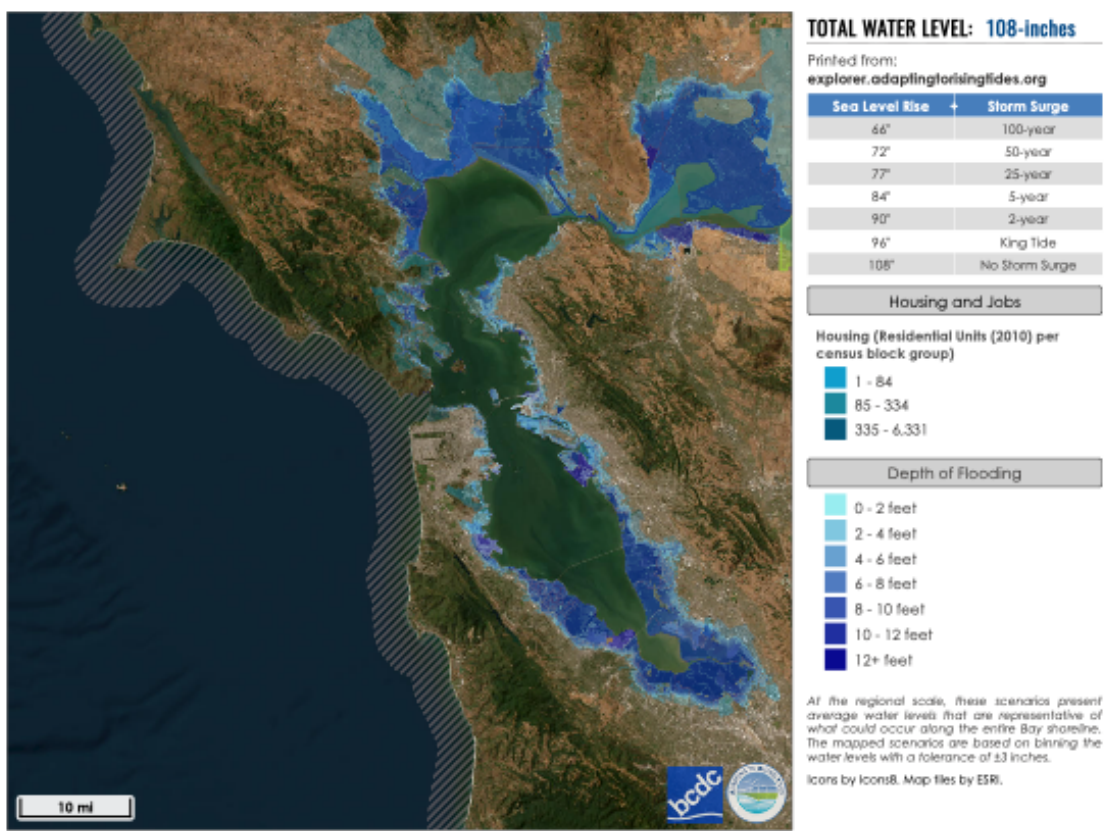


# Dealing with Two Crises at One Time: A Case Study of Sea Level Rise Adaptation and Housing in the San Francisco Bay Area



Rebecca Wysong  
MSc Society, Sustainability and Planning  
S5329485  
Thesis Supervisor: Ina Horlings  
August 28, 2023

<b>ABSTRACT</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1 INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>5</b>
1.1 SEA LEVEL RISE	5
1.2 HOUSING CRISIS	6
1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION	6
1.4 SOCIETAL AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE	7
1.5 READER'S GUIDE	7
<b>2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</b>	<b>8</b>
2.1 SPATIAL PLANNING	8
2.2 CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION	9
2.2.1 FLOOD RISKS FROM SEA LEVEL RISE	10
2.3 HOUSING NEEDS AND AFFORDABILITY	10
2.4 TENSION BETWEEN FLOOD RISKS AND HOUSING NEEDS	12
2.4.1 POLICY/POLITICAL PRIORITIES	12
2.4.2 LAND USE	13
2.4.3 EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE	13
2.5 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	14
<b>3 METHODS</b>	<b>16</b>
3.1 CASE STUDY AS A RESEARCH METHOD	16
3.2 DATA COLLECTION METHODS	16
3.3 DATA ANALYSIS	19
3.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	19
<b>4 RESULTS</b>	<b>20</b>
4.1 DOCUMENT DESCRIPTIONS	20
4.2 INTERVIEW DESCRIPTIONS	21
4.3 POLICY/POLITICAL PRIORITIES	21
4.4 LAND USE	32
4.5 EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE	34
<b>5 DISCUSSION</b>	<b>38</b>
5.1 POLICY/POLITICAL PRIORITIES	38
5.2 LAND USE	39
5.3 EQUITY/SOCIAL JUSTICE	41
<b>6 CONCLUSION</b>	<b>43</b>

<b>7 CITATIONS</b>	<b>44</b>
--------------------	-----------

---

<b>APPENDIX: INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS</b>	<b>47</b>
--	-----------

---

INTERVIEW 1	47
INTERVIEW 2	52
INTERVIEW 3	57
INTERVIEW 4	68
INTERVIEW 5	79
INTERVIEW 6	92
INTERVIEW 7	100
INTERVIEW 8	110
INTERVIEW 9	120
INTERVIEW 10	136

## Abstract

Many cities and regions will face multiple crises in the coming decades, including sea level rise adaptation, housing needs, and affordability. These issues are often treated separately, but cities must consider them together in policy planning, land use decisions, and social justice. The San Francisco Bay Area, specifically San Mateo County, offers a case study for adaptation. San Mateo County is considered one of the most susceptible to sea level rise in the coming century, with much of its land along the Bay. In addition, the area faces a major housing crisis in terms of both affordability and availability. Combining these two crises that have inter-lapping effects allows me, as the researcher, to understand said effects and the tensions between solving for the two crises at once. The tensions defined in the theoretical framework are policy and political priorities, land use and equity, and social justice. These tensions are explored through interviews with practitioners and policymakers and reviewing policy documents to conclude that cities can plan for both if there are mechanisms in place for them to be able to.

Keywords: Climate Change Adaption; Social Inclusion and Justice; Housing Crisis; Governmental Intervention; Sea Level Rise

# 1 Introduction

By 2100, the San Francisco Bay Area is expected to rise between three and seven feet of sea level on the current climate trajectory. Many major infrastructures, such as airports, water treatment plants, power plants, and highways, are located within the expected areas of sea level rise. Much of the discussion in the San Francisco Bay Area is about the major infrastructure that will be affected. Still, whole cities, like Alameda, East Palo Alto (San Mateo County), and Foster City (San Mateo County), will be inundated entirely, as they are located directly along the bay and built on landfills. Much of the housing stock already built and currently being proposed is also located in the area that will be affected by sea level rise. In addition, the San Francisco Bay Area is also facing a housing crisis, with a median housing price of about a million dollars and a two hundred thousand affordable housing shortage. The two crises, sea level rise and housing will affect the San Francisco Bay Area in the coming decades, and the reaction to one will impact the other.

The two crises, sea level rise and housing put planners in a place where they must weigh the two crises. Do planners address the more pressing in terms of time crisis of housing by building housing without considering whether it is in the potential flood zone for sea level rise and will be flooded in the coming decades, or do planners consider sea level rise in current housing decisions or documents, such as the Housing Element of a General Plan?

## 1.1 Sea Level Rise

Sea Level Rise will affect many coastal communities in the coming years. According to the United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, sea levels have risen eight to nine inches, or twenty-one to twenty-four centimeters globally, since 1880. The rate of sea level rise has continued to accelerate in the past few years, more than doubling the rate from 1.4 millimeters during the twentieth century to 3.6 millimeters per year during the twenty-first century's first decade. The expected sea level rise by 2100, depending on whether measures are taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, is between two feet or .6 meters at the lower scale to 7.2 feet or 2.2 meters at the higher scale or the current business-as-usual model. (Lindsey, 2022) According to a report by U.S. Sea Level Rise and Coastal Flood Hazard Scenarios and Tools Interagency Task Force, the expected rate of sea level rise along the United States coastline is expected to be an average of ten to twelve inches or 0.25 or 0.35 meters in the next thirty years, which is the same as the sea level rises over the last 100 years between 1920 to 2020. (Emory, 2022) The expected sea level rise in the San Francisco Bay Area in California, where the case study will be located, is between one foot or 0.30 meters at the low end and seven feet or 2.1 meters at the high end by 2100. (NASA)

## 1.2 Housing Crisis

Housing prices have increased disproportionately to inflation for the past few decades, while housing production has not matched the demand since at least the 1970s. According to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, the price of housing in the San Francisco Bay Area has increased in inflation-adjusted terms from a median house price of \$437,100 in 1997 to \$995,800 in 2018, a 128% increase after adjustment for inflation. (MTC) Some counties, like San Francisco and San Mateo, have an even more significant increase of over 1.5 times more expensive in the past 20 years. In addition to the housing price inflation, housing production is significantly less than at the peak of the pre-2008 recession. The peak in 2004 was 27,564 housing units built in the six counties (San Francisco, San Mateo, Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, and Santa Clara), with 18,000 of those units being single-family residences. At the time of the data in 2018, the total number of housing units being built was 15,431, half single-family residences and half multi-family residences. (MTC) Even at the peak of the housing production, the amount was still way less than the demand from the past half-century, with high job creation and population growth in the area. Similarly, this issue can be seen in many communities worldwide, where demand for housing does not match production, and the housing price increases do not match the inflation rate.

## 1.3 Research Question

This study aims to understand the connection between rising sea levels and how housing is produced. I will consider whether cities and counties take sea-level rise when considering the current housing production. The knowledge gained from the study will be valuable to city planners in vulnerable regions to understand better how to plan for the future of sea level rise, specifically the location of housing and how to justly adapt the current housing stock for the future sea level rise.

The main research question is:

*How can planners in the San Francisco Bay Area, a region with a high risk of sea level rise, plan for climate change adaptation while addressing current housing needs?*

The sub-questions are:

*How do planners in the San Francisco Bay Area address sea level rise and current housing needs while dealing with the tensions between policy and political priorities?*

*How do planners in the San Francisco Bay Area consider land use when addressing sea level rise and current housing needs?*

*How do planners in the San Francisco Bay Area consider equitability and social justice when dealing with sea level rise and current housing needs?*

*What are the best practices for dealing with sea-level rise?*

#### 1.4 Societal and Scientific Relevance

This research elaborates on existing studies of sea-level rise and its impact on housing while focusing on an area of the United States considered one of the most susceptible to sea-level rise, the San Francisco Bay Area. There needs to be more research in the study of housing development in the context of zoning, housing elements, and other planning tools, and how the planners think about potential sea level rise in the documents. The research will also consider if the placement of housing within potential sea level rise locations is just and equitable as much of the proposed housing is affordable or whether it is more just and equitable to produce housing now to reduce the present crisis of a housing shortage, especially an affordable housing crisis, and consider the sea level rise at a later stage when it is more acute.

This study contributes to planning practice by providing a link between sea-level rise and housing production that has yet to be studied. In the coming decades, sea-level rise will become a more significant issue in the San Francisco Bay Area. Still, the area also deals with housing shortages, so this study will provide an understanding of how to deal with both crises simultaneously. In addition, this study can be helpful to other coastal areas, both in the United States and internationally, to understand the future impacts of sea level rise on existing urbanized regions with extensive existing housing stock and the need to create additional housing stock.

#### 1.5 Reader's Guide

This chapter has given readers an introduction to the sea level rise and the housing crisis in the San Francisco Bay Area context, as well as the scientific and societal relevance of this issue and the research question that will be answered in this thesis. The next chapter (Chapter 2) will discuss the theoretical framework the thesis is based on, including the concepts of climate change adaptation, spatial planning, housing, social justice, and equality. The third chapter will include the methodology used to create the thesis. The methodology will be a case study of the San Francisco Bay Area and the units of analysis, data collection methods, and data analysis. The methodology will include interviews and policy document analysis. The fourth chapter will consist of the results of the case study. The fifth chapter will discuss the case study's findings. The sixth chapter will be the conclusion of the thesis.

## 2 Theoretical Framework

This theoretical framework will provide a lens to study the connection between spatial planning, climate change adaptation, housing needs, and the tension between them. The framework will start with spatial planning as a procedure used to solve policy issues. It then proceeds to two elements of policy issues: climate change adaptation, specifically flood risks from sea level rise, and housing needs. These two issues have a tension between solving them in conjunction. These tensions can be operationalized through policy and political priorities, land use and equity, and social justice.

### 2.1 Spatial Planning

Spatial planning differs throughout the world. Even with the differences, spatial planning is an essential tool for adaptation and resilience towards the hazards caused by climate change. It is one of the significant influences on whether or not climate change-related and other climate disasters lead to disaster or harm development (McMillan et al., 2021). In Europe, the policies are more nationally determined, and in the United States of America, the policies are determined by the states and are not determined through federal policies. As the case study is in the San Francisco Bay Area, the spatial planning policies focused on in the theoretical framework are the ones of California. The focus of spatial planning in California has been the development of raw, undeveloped land over the past fifty years. Still, in recent years, the focus has shifted to recycling existing land (Fulton, 2022). The reasons for this shift are less available land in urban areas, rising demand for housing near employment locations, and demographic changes. Although the needs within spatial planning have changed, the structures of the planning system have remained the same since the 1960s and 1970s, when it was put in place, and still assumes that California remains suburban and that consumption of raw land is the priority. (Fulton, 2022) Due to the location of population growth, there is not enough land for traditional suburban development. Planners have shifted towards “infill” development, which consists of mixed-use or high-density housing and commercial projects in locations that were previously low-density developments, like a drive-thru movie theater, a mall, an office building, or a warehouse (Fulton, 2022).

The two aspects of spatial planning in California are plan-making and plan implementation. Plan-making is the process of devising plans for the communities, such as general plans, specific plans, district plans, and other policy documents (Fulton, 2022). Many different influence groups usually influence this process and anticipate the city's future land use. Plan implementation is the process of carrying out the plans made on a project-by-project basis through zoning, permit approvals or denials, infrastructure investments, and other actions by the local government (Fulton, 2022). This process is a classic regulatory system and a



government mechanism to restrain private businesses from achieving a public good through reactive policies based on past private developments.

## 2.2 Climate Change Adaptation

Regarding climate change adaptation, specific barriers prohibit policy implementation, even when there is awareness and acceptance of the issue. Some barriers include institutional or government issues, including legal and jurisdictional issues, lack of interest or self-interest that favor the alternative, problems of resource and funding, and lack of political will (Elkstrom & Moser, 2014). Currently, in the state of California, it is recommended that land use, housing, and transportation proposals consider the effects of climate change on their project and, if feasible, consider project alternatives that avoid areas that are prone to sea level rise and flooding, among other climate change considerations (Fulton, 2022). For CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act), the EIR (Environmental Impact Report, the equivalent to an EIS in the Netherlands) tends to include the threat of inundation but is also starting to include the effects of changing snowpack and rainfall patterns, stormwater runoff, river hydrology, rising sea level and increased stress on dikes and flood control levees on the proposed development. The requirement for CEQA is only climate mitigation, for example, greenhouse gas emission reduction, but not climate adaptation, but some practitioners have created procedures to do it anyway. In addition, the state of California requires that every city by 2022 include the threat of climate change, climate adaptation, and resilience in its Safety Element. The information needed is a vulnerability assessment of the threats climate change faces toward the individual city, a set of adaptation and resilience goals, policies, and objectives based on said vulnerability assessment, and a set of feasible implementation measures based on the goals and objectives (Fulton, 2022).

California recently started requiring that climate risks be considered in the Safety Element of the General Plan (the blueprint for development for a city within California), focusing on longer-term preparation of a community for changing climate (OPR, 2017). The policies within the Safety Element “should identify hazards and emergency response priorities, as well as mitigation through avoidance of hazards by new projects and reduction of risk in developed areas” (OPR, 2017). The requirements include a climate change vulnerability assessment, measures to address said vulnerabilities, and emergency response strategies. Within the vulnerability assessment, the document must identify the risks that climate change poses to the community with the type of assets, resources, and populations that are sensitive to climate change risks, historical data on natural events and hazards, and existing and planned developments within the at-risk areas, especially roads, structures, and utilities. Once the vulnerability assessment, adaptation and resilience goals, policies, and objectives are prepared based on the vulnerability assessment, implementation measures should be prepared to carry

out said goals, policies, and objectives. The implementation measures should include feasible methods to mitigate climate change impacts for new land uses, locating essential services and critical infrastructure outside of at-risk areas, and using natural infrastructure, like wetlands, to prevent climate risks (OPR, 2017).

### 2.2.1 Flood Risks from Sea Level Rise

The expected sea level rise in California is one-third to one-half an inch per year, cumulating at around 16 inches by 2050 and 55 inches in 2100 (Fulton, 2022). An essential element of this sea level rise is that the Bay Area experiences two low tides and two high tides per day, causing the height to vary throughout the day and king tides three to four times a year. King tides are unusually high but predictable astronomical tides that have already begun to cause annual flooding of low-lying areas (BCDC, 2017). According to a study conducted by the State of California and the Pacific Institute in 2012, the predicted impact of only one meter of sea level rise in the San Francisco Bay Area (which is less than the current estimate for the next 100 years) is that an estimated 220,000 people would be septuple to a 100-year flood event and 49 billion dollars worth of damage. This damage includes much of the major infrastructure in the region, including roads, hospitals, wastewater treatment facilities, and the existing wetland habitats and ecosystems. Communities of color and low-income people are also at greater risk and are more vulnerable due to their locations (Pacific Institute, 2012). A significant portion of the coastline, especially along the bay, is filled-in wetlands or open bay, such as the city of Foster City, which entirely consists of fill. These areas are at a greater risk of the current flooding from tides and future sea level rise due to subsidence and sinking due to these areas lying on top of soft and compressible bay mud (BCDC, 2017). Currently, the bay shoreline has a variety of shorelines, from natural tidal marshes and mudflats that have not been developed, non-engineering berms, engineered flood protection structures, such as levees and floodwalls, and engineered shoreline protection features, such as bulkheads and revetments (BCDC, 2017).

### 2.3 Housing Needs and Affordability

Housing is considered one of the greatest issues facing the state of California, like many other areas in the world. In California, in particular, the housing prices are 250% higher than the national average, with the median price in the San Francisco Bay Area being one million dollars. (Fulton, 2022) In terms of rental properties, the number of rental properties that have a rent of less than \$1,000 has decreased from 40% to 20% during the 2009 to 2019 period, which is around 900,000 units decrease. As of 2019, about 40% of Californians are considered cost-burdened (meaning the household is spending at least 30% of their income on either mortgage or rent), which accounts for 5 million households (Phillips et al., 2022). The cost burden is more significant for renters, with 53% being considered. California ranks 49<sup>th</sup> out of 50 in the nation regarding housing per capita, at a rate of 358 units per 1,000 people. Due to this housing crisis

of both needs and affordability, the state government has preempted local governments' ability to approve housing. Two significant ways the state has increased housing production are new Accessory Dwelling Units laws and increased density bonus numbers (Fulton, 2022). Regarding the density bonus law updates, the state allows developers to have concessions, such as parking reductions and increased height limits, for including specific numbers of affordable units. In recent years, the state law has allowed for more significant concessions with less local oversight. In recent years, the Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU) law has also reduced local oversight by requiring local jurisdictions to allow them in most residential zones, including multi-family properties.

California has a system of requirements to allocate housing needs where each city is allocated a certain number of units they need to provide for each income level based on demographic and economic trends. Currently, the allocation leans towards higher numbers in larger cities and inner-ring suburbs, which define much of the Bay Area, to minimize the sprawl and need for automobile use (Fulton, 2022). This is done every eight years and is called the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) (HCD, 2021). During the current cycle that will begin in 2023, the state has determined that there is a need for 2.5 million homes, of which over half are considered affordable from moderate-income to very low-income. This amount is more than double the amount required in the previous cycle, which was 1.2 million units needed (HCD, 2021). As of 2020, when the report was released, the 2015-2023 housing cycle has only built 588,344 units (64% less than the goal), with another 158,747 housing units permitted yet to be built. In terms of low and very low-income units, the production is 86% less than the goal three years ahead. The area's median income defines affordability, with very low income being defined as 50% of the area's median income, low income defined as 50% to 80%, and moderate-income defined as 80% to 120% (Fulton, 2022). This is to start with the McKinsey Global Institute in 2016; the number of units needed to reach the housing needs of the state is 3.5 million units by 2025 (Fulton, 2022). According to that standard, 400,000 housing units would need to be built a year versus the 100,000 housing units currently being built in 2016. According to the Department of Housing and Community Development, most counties and cities have high housing needs, with the city and county of San Francisco rates higher and cities such as Oakland, Palo Alto, San Mateo, Redwood City, and San Jose rated very high. The RHNA numbers are implemented through the Housing Element, with the planners showing how they can accommodate the number of units, which is a required element of the General Plan. According to the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, a general plan is a "local government's blueprint for meeting the community's long-term vision for the future." With the current round of general plan updates this past year, the governor's office recommends that city planners work towards promoting infill development, with reuse and redevelopment of areas, especially underserved areas, while preserving existing cultural and historic resources.

According to Government Code 65580, the law states that “the availability of housing is a matter of vital statewide importance and the attainment of decent housing and a suitable living environment for all Californians is a priority of the highest order.” Using this state law, the Housing Element implements this as a priority to provide adequate housing for all residents. The element requires the city to plan, but there are no requirements for building the units. The aspects of the element include reviewing the previous element, housing needs assessment, inventory and analysis of adequate sites, potential government and non-governmental constraints (such as sea level rise), housing policies and programs, and qualified objectives (OPR, 2017). In terms of the housing needs assessment, the planners are required to look at the existing housing needs, including the number of extremely low households in the city, defined as 30% of Median Area Income, as well as the characteristics of current housing in the city and the analyzing the future housing needs as defined by RHNA. Regarding the site inventory, planners look at the vacant sites within the city that are both zoned for residential and non-residential, underutilized sites and sites that can be rezoned (OPR, 2017). The sites must be analyzed for their housing capabilities, climate change mitigation issues, and previous usage. Other than the housing element, another element included in the General Plan related to housing is the Land Use Element, updated every eight years on average.

## 2.4 Tension between Flood Risks and Housing Needs

The tension between the two sets of policies can be seen with the information and understanding from Climate Change Adaptation, Flood Risks from Sea Level Rise, and Housing Needs and Affordability. There is an urgency to both planning issues that need to be solved and helped to better the lives of the residents they serve. The tensions can be divided into policy/political priorities, land use, and equity and social justice. The first tension, policy/political priorities, is defined by what the elected officials and planning practitioners deem is their priority, as well as what laws and regulations allow them to do for both issues. The second tension, land use, concerns where new and existing housing developments are located and the other zoning regulations that govern housing development. The third and last tension, equity and social justice is about how vulnerable communities are affected by both issues and whether or not the adaptation is equitable to historical segregation and current communities disproportionately affected by both issues.

### 2.4.1 Policy/Political Priorities

Much of the policy focus on climate change is mitigation, especially reducing greenhouse gas emissions. California enacted its first climate legislation in 2006, aiming to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, with further reductions in succeeding legislation (Fulton, 2022). It required considering greenhouse gas emissions in their environmental documents, and many cities have Climate Action Plans (CAP) that are blueprints

for reducing emissions within their communities. Despite its name, a Climate Action Plan is an air quality management plan focused on greenhouse gas emissions, especially carbon dioxide emissions, not a land use document. Only recently has land use come to the forefront regarding climate change, but it is not the priority. In addition, most planning practitioners in the San Francisco Bay Area only have sea level rise as a portion of their work, with very few practitioners having sea level rise as their focus. Most of the sea level rise work is local, with little regional collaboration due to the lack of a Bay Area-wide Sea level rise adaptation plan, insufficient political leadership, and funding gaps (Lubell et Al., 2019). Similarly to other policy concerns, in the Bay Area, there is a high level of accord in terms of the risk of sea level rise, what the problem is, and the list of available solutions, but there is a struggle to agree on what specific actions to implement.

#### 2.4.2 Land Use

Although a different climate impact, increased wildfire rates have a similar land use impact to sea level rise, but due to the more immediate impact has been studied. According to CalFire, 4.5 million homes are located within the Wildland Urban interface, with a greater risk of wildfire danger. In addition, approximately 15% of homes in California (more than 2 million homes) are in areas of high or extreme wildfire risk (Phillips et al., 2022). This relates to sea level rise as it goes with a similar theory for planning for natural disasters, even if they are exasperated by climate change, which is the best solution. One is the avoidance theory, where planners keep human development out of risky areas, for example, areas that are expected to be flooded with future sea level rise or areas with severe fire damage. The other is the mitigation theory, where it is okay to develop in risky areas but only if risk mitigation measures are used (Fulton, 2022).

#### 2.4.3 Equity and Social Justice

There are several justice and equity issues regarding addressing the housing crisis while considering the tension of sea level rise adaptation. One issue is that the region, San Francisco Bay Area, already has a jobs-housing imbalance due to housing price disparity with the Central Valley, where many low-wage workers have been forced to move after being priced out and are forced to have super commutes. It also increases the sprawl and reduces the service class and the ability to provide services. According to ABAG (Association of Bay Area Governments), from 2010 to 2015, the region had already provided 46% of the 30-year projected job increase but only 8% of housing needs for 30 years (Elmendorf et al., 2020).

Another equity concern is who gets the resources and who is protected. The likely scenario is that the government needs more resources to save everything, especially given the high financial cost of sea level rise adaptation. Governments throughout the Bay Area have

already started working on the adaptation of major infrastructure projects and commercial districts, like San Francisco International Airport, which is in the process of proposing sea walls to protect the runways or the wastewater treatment plant in San Mateo that was raised by a few feet to reduce its susceptibility. The issue that governments and policymakers need to ensure that tension is that the environmental justice element of sea level rise is considered (Pacific Institute, 2012). Low-income people and communities of color are more vulnerable but are usually forgotten in policy planning. Over half of the people in the San Francisco Bay Area flood risk zone are people of color, and 20% are classified as having an income less than 200% of the federal poverty threshold (Pacific Institute, 2012).

### 2.5 Conceptual Framework

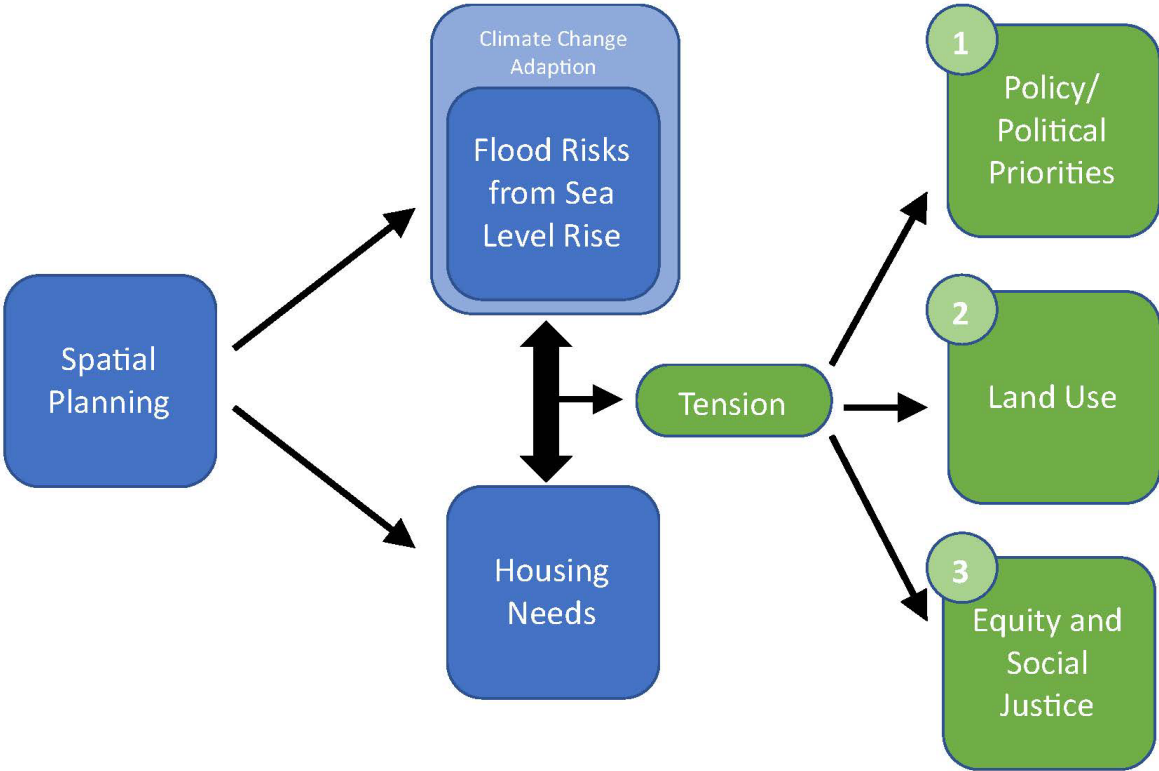


Figure 1 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework begins with spatial planning as a general concept that allows for spatial development and is formalized through government policy and planning frameworks. There are two aspects that planners need to be concerned about when dealing with the spatial planning of a city or region: climate change adaptation and housing needs. Climate Change

Adaptation can be observed in many aspects that can contribute to spatial planning, such as reducing Carbon dioxide. Regarding this specific conceptual framework, the focus of climate change adaptation is flood risks from sea level rise. Spatial planners need to consider flood risks when completing land use plans and policy suggestions to ensure that housing is not being produced in areas that will be affected or that they will be mitigated. The other aspect that needs to be considered is housing needs in a city or region, both in terms of affordability and production of units. In the same way as the previous aspect, the spatial planners must consider housing needs in land use plans and policy suggestions and implementation.

Between the two aspects, there is tension regarding spatial planning regarding which crisis is the priority and how to accommodate both crises simultaneously. Three tensions can be seen: policy and political priorities, land use, and equity and social justice. The first tension, policy, and political priorities, is seen through the decisions made by spatial planners and government officials when considering housing and climate policies and the conjunction between the two. The second tension, land use, can be seen through the maps created within zoning ordinances and other plan implementation documents and where the proposed housing can be placed. The last tension, equity and social justice, is seen through which people are affected by the decision regarding climate change adaptation and housing policy and whether or not it is equitable.

## 3 Methods

The methods section will be divided into an explanation of the case study as a research method, the units of analysis, the data collection methods, and how said data will be analyzed. The methods were determined based on the theoretical framework and how to answer the research questions empirically. The methods were limited due to time and location, as the research was conducted in the Netherlands, and the case is in the San Francisco Bay Area.

### 3.1 Case Study as a Research Method

The main element of the research is a case study. A case study method was chosen because the data needed to be collected was qualitative. There have already been studies of the quantitative issues related to sea level rise. To get a more quantitative view on the housing aspect of the relationship that requires government involvement, a case study is required where I, as the researcher, have analyzed the how and why of the issue of sea level rise and its impact on housing and the planning of it. As Yin, 2009 states, a case study is good when the researcher has little control over the events that are happening at the present. As an outsider to planning and developing the area, I have a more objective view of the situation without being ingrained in the situation. The case study will focus on the San Francisco Bay Area, and more specifically, San Mateo County, which is the county right south of San Francisco. San Mateo County is located on the San Francisco Peninsula and borders the Pacific Ocean and the San Francisco Bay. This means that it will be severely affected by the effects of sea level rise, with flooding on the bay side and erosion on the ocean side. San Mateo County is considered the county that will be most affected in California by sea level rise, with FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) predicting 6.4 feet with additional feet during the hundred flood period. The benefits of doing a case study are that it provides an in-depth understanding of a specific phenomenon, in this case, the relationship between housing policy and planning and future sea-level rise. Due to the difference in regulation between different states within the United States of America and countries worldwide, it is impossible to have a generalized approach to research as the results and possibilities vary to provide an accurate response to the relationship. Also, the amount of sea level rise and flooding differs region by region, and the current land use of areas also varies, making generalization difficult for another reason. So, using the case study will allow me as the researcher to provide an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon using the historical and spatial context and perspectives and guarantee a greater chance of validity of the findings to the context (Gagnon, 2010).

### 3.2 Data Collection Methods

There were two methods of data collection: interviews and document analysis. The interviews were conducted with ten different people from various aspects of the housing policy field within



San Mateo County. All interviewees gave verbal consent for their answers to be used in the thesis for analysis. The interviews lasted between 20 and 30 minutes on Zoom and did not have a defined set of questions and limited parameters. There was a short interview guide with the initial questions and topics that were important to be covered. However, due to the varying relationships of the interviewees with the housing process and the positions in their organization, the questions needed to be unique to the individual being interviewed. The interviews all started with a definition of their positions and duties that they do in that position in terms of housing policy and climate policy to give a thorough background of each interviewee. The interviews continued more fluidly, with the questions varying between the interviewees based on their experiences and expertise. This allowed the interviewees to express their feelings more genuinely and allowed me, as the interviewer, to follow up more thoroughly. Due to time constraints in the planning field, a limited number of people were available to interview. During the period that the interviews were proposed and conducted, many cities were dealing with the housing element and general plan process, which is a time constraint on much of the staff and staff shortages in many planning agencies. The interviews were conducted over two months. Below are the participants' roles at their agency, company, or non-profit organization and how the interview will be categorized within the theoretical framework. The interviewees' names are non-listed or included to anonymize them and protect their privacy.

<b>Interview Number</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Category within Theoretical Framework</b>
1	Sustainability Analyst at City of San Mateo	Policy/Political Priorities
2	Executive Director at HLC (Housing Leadership Council)	Policy/Political Priorities; Land Use; Equity and Social Justice
3	Policy Director at HLC (Housing Leadership Council)	Policy/Political Priorities; Land Use; Equity and Social Justice
4	Planning Commissioner at City of San Mateo	Policy/Political Priorities; Land Use; Equity and Social Justice
5	Policy Director at MidPen (affordable housing provider in 11 counties)	Policy/Political Priorities; Equity and Social Justice
6	Executive Director at YUCA (Youth United for Community Action), East Palo Alto	Policy/Political Priorities; Land Use; Equity and Social Justice
7	City Council Member at City of San Mateo	Policy/Political Priorities; Land Use

8	Planning Commissioner at City of Millbrae	Policy/Political Priorities; Land Use; Equity and Social Justice
9	Planning Commissioner at City of San Bruno	Policy/Political Priorities; Land Use; Equity and Social Justice
10	Project Manager at OneShoreline	Policy/Political Priorities; Land Use

The second method used to conduct the research is policy document analysis. The documents were selected from the jurisdictions that had interviewees working there. The documents included the general plan, housing elements, climate action plans, and zoning guidelines. Many of the documents are in draft status due to the current implementation of the RHNA numbers in both the Housing Element and General Plan. The documents are from a mix of cities within San Mateo County, with the majority adopted or published in the past five years, with one exception. In addition to the local planning documents, one county-wide document and one region-wide document were also analyzed to provide the information needed.

<b>Document Number</b>	<b>Document Name</b>
1	Housing Element of the General Plan 2023-2031, City of San Mateo (adopted January 2023)
2	Draft General Plan Goals, Policies, and Actions, City of San Mateo (published July 2022)
3	2020 Climate Action Plan, City of San Mateo (adopted April 2020)
4	Planning Policy Guidance to Protect and Enhance Bay Shoreline Areas of San Mateo County, OneShoreline (published June 2023)
5	Burlingame Zoning Ordinance: 25.12.050 – Public Access, Flood and Sea Level Rise Performance Guidelines (adopted December 2021)
6	City of Burlingame 2023 – 2031 Housing Element (adopted February 2023)
7	City of Burlingame 2030 Climate Action Plan (adopted August 2019)
8	South San Francisco Zoning Ordinance (adopted October 2021)
9	South San Francisco Housing Element 2023-2031 (published September 2022)
10	City of South San Francisco Draft Climate Action Plan (published February 2022)
11	City of Millbrae 2040 General Plan Draft (published June 2022)
12	City of Millbrae Final Climate Action Plan (adapted October 2022)
13	City of San Bruno Housing Element 2023-2031 (adopted January 2023)

14	2023-2031 Housing Element, City of East Palo Alto (adopted February 2023)
15	General Plan - 2035 East Palo Alto (adopted October 2016)
16	Draft 2030 Climate Action Plan and Adaptation Strategies, City of East Palo Alto (published April 2022)
17	City of Redwood City 2023-2031 Housing Element (adopted February 2023)
18	City of Redwood City Climate Action Plan (adopted November 2020)
19	City of Foster City 2023 - 2031 Housing Element Update (adopted May 2023)
20	Plan Bay Area 2050 (adopted October 2021)

### 3.3 Data Analysis

The interviews were recorded using the Voice Memos app and were transcribed using an online AI transcription service, Rev, with corrections made by me, the interviewer. The interview transcripts were edited to remove the mentions of other people to protect the interviewee and the people discussed. I analyzed the information in the interview without additional software. The documents were analyzed by searching for sea-level rise and climate adaptation references and reviewing the land use maps and data within them. I first searched the table of contents of each document to see if there was a whole section dedicated to sea level rise; if there were, I would review that specific section. I would also search for key terms of “sea level,” “flooding,” and “sea level rise” to see if they appear in the other sections of the document. The two analysis sets will be combined into a complete set of findings.

### 3.4 Ethical Considerations

While conducting the research, ethical considerations were considered. Firstly, before conducting each interview, I gained verbal consent to record the interview and use it as part of my thesis and inform each interviewee by email that the information would be used as part of my research for my thesis. I also acknowledge that during the interview stage, there may have been some personal bias and bias of the interviewees regarding their opinions on housing. Due to the people I requested interviews from and the people that recommended them being mainly involved in the pro-housing movement, there was a bias toward more development being needed, and the NIMBY (Not in My Backyard Perspective) on the issue was not acknowledged or explored. I do not think that impaired the quality of the research. Still, it is important to acknowledge my personal bias and my interviewees' bias towards being pro-housing and wanting further housing development in the area to better understand the research's perspective.

## 4 Results

This section will discuss the results based on the tensions described in the theoretical framework, policy/political priorities, land use, and equity and social justice. Ten interviews and twenty policy documents will be discussed. The interviews and documents will be discussed separately.

### 4.1 Document Descriptions

I reviewed 20 documents from various cities within San Mateo County and one Bay Area-wide. The choice to use documents exclusively from San Mateo County was due to the location of the interviewees, who were also all located in San Mateo County, and the known fact that San Mateo County is considered the county most at risk for sea-level rise. San Mateo County is located south of San Francisco and consists of many large to medium-sized suburbs, ranging from 1,500 to 105,000 people, and is located on both the ocean and bay side. The cities where the documents are from are located on the Bay side of the county and have a population ranging from 23,000 to 105,000. The choice to focus on cities on the bay side was due to the more significant effect of sea-level rise and the more drastic housing crisis. The bay side is at sea level, whereas cliffs mainly cover the ocean side, which will be affected by erosions but not flooding. The second most northern city in the county that had documents I reviewed was South San Francisco, which is south of San Francisco and has a significant coastline along the bay. I reviewed their draft Housing Element, General Plan, Climate Action Plan, and Zoning Ordinance. The following city document I reviewed was San Bruno, which is directly south of South San Francisco, the previous city, and continues the bay shoreline from that city. I reviewed their Housing Element since the other documents were over ten years old. The next city south is Millbrae, with most of its bay shoreline covered by the major international airport. I reviewed the General Plan, which included the Housing Element and the Climate Action Plan. Burlingame is located south of Millbrae, and I reviewed its Housing Element, Climate Action Plan, and Sea Level Rise Ordinance. The next city's documents I reviewed was San Mateo, which is located south of Burlingame and continues the bay shoreline of it. I reviewed its Housing Element, General Plan, and Climate Action Plan. Foster City is located east of San Mateo and on fill in the Bay, and I reviewed its Housing Element. Redwood City is located further south within the county and contains a natural coastline and fill. I reviewed their Housing Element and Climate Action Plan. The last city I reviewed documents from was East Palo Alto, the southernmost city in the county, and I reviewed their Housing Element, General Plan, and Climate Action Plan. In addition, I reviewed one countywide document, a guidance document for further documents and proposals by the cities within the county. The last document I reviewed, a Bay Area-wide document, is a multi-agency plan for development by 2040 designed to guide the various counties and cities within the region.

To reiterate from the theoretical framework, a General Plan is the “local government’s blueprint for communities’ long-term vision for the future.” It includes different required elements related to a city's development. The two most relevant elements to this study are the Land Use and Safety Element. The Land Use Element determines where development is going and the density and other development requirements that will be used to create or modify the zoning code. The Safety Element is designed to mitigate or identify natural and man-made hazards that may result in personal, property, or environmental damage. Climate change is now required to be mentioned in this element. The following document type is Housing Element, which is a part of the General Plan but is generally completed separately from it, as there is a stricter timeline for completion. It includes meeting state requirements for the proposed number of units by identifying locations, density, and other housing policies and constraints the city might have. The last major document type reviewed was the Climate Action Plan, which was created by the state of California for Greenhouse Gas Emissions reduction. The primary objective of the document is to come up with goals and policies to achieve that, but in recent updates, there has been an inclusion of climate adaptation and mitigation in these documents.

#### 4.2 Interview Descriptions

The interviews were conducted with various policymakers in different aspects of the planning process. Ten people were interviewed online with questions that fit their position and location. There were planning commissioners, city council members, non-profit employees and directors, affordable housing providers, and planners. The interviews focused on similar topics to the documents, including the internal process for creating those documents within the bureaucracy of those cities and the external process with public meetings and community input. They also focused on what they believe should be policy priorities in the communities they worked in and the broader San Francisco Bay Area. There was a consensus that sea level rise is an issue that needs to be addressed, that current housing availability is already strained in capacity, and that some methods for addressing sea level rise may become a detriment to addressing the housing crisis. The interviews addressed the interviewee’s concerns, positions, and policies that they see fit these two crises.

#### 4.3 Policy/Political Priorities

Policy and political priorities were mentioned in all the interviews, with differing opinions depending on the role and city or organization the interviewee worked for. There was a difference in practicality depending on similar parameters and the level of optimism in the government's ability to complete the tasks needed or not fall under political pressure. In most documents, sea level rise is mentioned as an issue that will cause problems in the future in the San Francisco Bay Area. However, the level of urgency and detail depends on the document,

with some dedicating entire sections to the issue and others a throwaway sentence acknowledging the issue without a mention elsewhere. Some of the cities where the documents come from are at a much further stage in terms of sea level rise adaptation, with zoning ordinances already created, as supported by the sea level rise agency for San Mateo County, while others are only just starting to create their assessments of future sea level rise vulnerability. In addition, as with many other areas around the world, housing is a significant concern, mentioned as a crisis in both the documents and the interviews, leaving less bandwidth for other crises to be solved by the cities. Until now, the climate priorities have primarily focused on reducing greenhouse gas emissions, with mitigation and adaptation only coming into the forefront more recently.

In the majority of reviewed documents, sea level rise was mentioned as much as required by regulations. In the state of California, as mentioned in Planning Policy Guidance to Protect and Enhance Bay Shoreline Areas of San Mateo County, OneShoreline (Document 4), there is a requirement that all cities “incorporate climate adaptation and resiliency into the general plan safety element” The exact language of SB375 (the state legislation that created this regulation) states:

1. Review and update the safety element as necessary to address climate adaption and resiliency strategies;
2. Complete a vulnerability assessment;
3. Develop adaptation and resilience goals, policies, and objectives; and
4. Develop feasible implementation measures

I reviewed the safety elements of San Mateo, East Palo Alto, and Millbrae as part of their General Plan, and each had a different way of including sea level rise into them. As stated earlier, the general plan is for each city to determine under the regulations set forth by the state of California. In the San Mateo Safety Element (Document 2), a whole section is dedicated to sea level rise with a goal, policies, and strategies to adapt and mitigate the effects. The overarching goal is to “Develop regionally coordinated sea level rise adaptation measures and programs.” There are five policies related to the goal included in the element as listed below:

*Policy S-P4.1 Sea Level Rise Planning. Integrate sea level rise planning into all relevant City processes, including General Plan amendments, Specific Plans, zoning ordinance updates, capital projects, and review and approval of new development and substantial retrofits.*

*Policy S-P4.2 Sea Level Rise Protection. Ensure that new development, substantial retrofits, critical facilities, and City-owned buildings and infrastructure are planned and designed to accommodate climate change hazards, including increases in flooding, sea level rise and rising groundwater.*

*Policy S-P4.3 Rising Groundwater Protection. Ensure new development and substantial retrofits are protected from rising groundwater levels based on best available science.*

*Policy S-P4.4 Natural Infrastructure. Prioritize the use of nature-based solutions and natural infrastructure in sea level rise adaptation strategies.*

*Policy S-P4.5 OneShoreline Coordination. Coordinate with OneShoreline to develop and implement coordinated approaches to sea level rise with other San Mateo County jurisdictions*

Only one of the actions proposed in the safety element relates to housing: *Action S-A4.2 Sea Level Rise Monitoring. Continue to review and use the best available sea level rise science and projections and regularly identify natural resources, development, infrastructure, and communities that are vulnerable to sea level rise impacts, including impacts from rising groundwater. Use this information to continue to develop or adjust planning and adaptation strategies.* This document is in the early stages of compliance with the state legislation, which is their primary aim. However, there is also some development towards housing and development as an element to be reviewed. It also is trying to incorporate elements of Planning Policy Guidance to Protect and Enhance Bay Shoreline Areas of San Mateo County, OneShoreline (Document 4), without creating a separate zoning ordinance like Burlingame and South San Francisco, which will be discussed later in the document. Without the political and governmental will to create a separate zoning ordinance and with other policy issues that are a more significant political priority, like housing development, an ordinance is put on the back burner. San Mateo is considered one of the most divisive cities in San Mateo County, with the housing ordinance causing all other land use and zoning issues to be considered not a priority. A mayor, one of the council members, had a recall campaign against her by some of the NIMBY residents over housing issues. Another Safety Element (Document 15) I reviewed was East Palo Alto, which they called the Safety and Noise Element (combining two components of a General Plan). According to the document, the city of East Palo Alto currently has about 49% of its land designated as SFHA (Special Flood

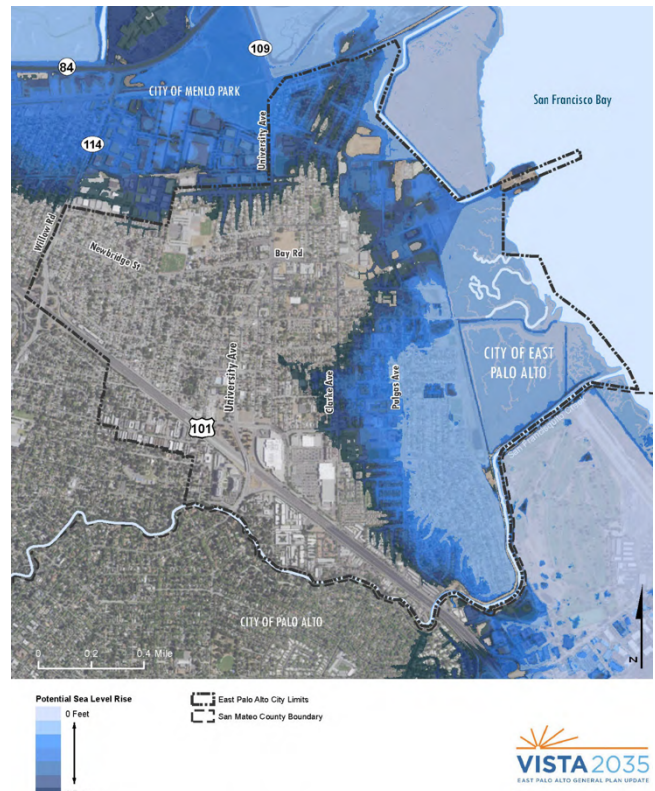


Figure 2 East Palo Alto Sea Level Rise (Safety Element)

Hazard Areas) by FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency), with the rate expected to increase in the coming years. Even though the risk is more significant for East Palo Alto than San Mateo regarding sea level rise, their Safety Element only contains one goal directly related to sea level rise, as stated: *Flooding related to sea level rise. Consider expanding boundaries of development control particularly where sea level rise could worsen flooding above predicted conditions.* There is more concern for generalized flooding, from annual rain events and creeks overflowing, than sea level rise in the document as that is the more pressing issue in the immediate. Because East Palo Alto is one of the least financially stable and poorest cities in San Mateo County, some sea level rise initiatives are cost prohibitive, like levees usually in the San Francisco Bay Area funded by bonds that taxpayers vote on and pay for. It must figure out much of its funding through grants from government and non-profit agencies, such as Resiliency through Design. It is in the early stage of sea level rise adaption and mitigation but needs more information and drive to protect existing buildings and developments through regulations. The last Safety Element that I reviewed was the City of Millbrae (Document 11), which has different problems to deal with in terms of sea level rise and flooding as it has a much smaller boundary with the San Francisco Bay and much of its bayfront is covered by the San Francisco International Airport, which is owned and run by the city of San Francisco and is regulated separately. The Adaption and Resiliency sub-section is the main section that deals with sea level rise, with its overarching goal of *“Improve the sustainability and resiliency of the City through continued efforts to reduce the causes of and adapt to climate change.”* Three policies within the section are directed at climate change adaptation in general, whereas two other policies are directed at sea level rise specifically, as stated below:

*Reduce Climate Change Impacts*

*The City shall support plans, standards, regulations, incentives, and investments to reduce the impacts of climate change as outlined in the 2020 Climate Action Plan.*

*(Source: 2020 Climate Action Plan) [RDR, MPSP, IGC]*

*Monitor Climate Change Risks*

*The City shall monitor information from regional, State, and Federal agencies on the effects of climate change, including rising sea levels in the San Francisco Bay, to determine if the City should implement additional adaptation strategies. (Source: New Policy) [PSR]*

*Climate Adaptation Collaboration*

*The City shall continue to collaborate with local, regional, State, and Federal agencies; business and property owners; and residents to address and adapt to potential effects of climate change, particularly sea level rise. (Source: Existing General Plan Policy S1.19, modified) [IGC, JP]*

*Sea Level Rise*



*The City shall establish standards that require new development projects to address sea level rise and flood risks that include the use of shoreline barriers, waterfront setback requirements, and minimum elevations for residential units. (Source: New Policy) [RDR, PSR]*

*Resiliency Through Development and Design*

*The City shall require appropriate setback and building elevation requirements for properties located along the Bayshore, lagoons, and in other low-lying areas that are susceptible to the effects of sea level rise to support resiliency through design. (Source: New Policy) [RDR]*

The policies are directed at all climate change impacts, including sea level rise, but are not specified to that threat only. Again, similarly to the East Palo Alto element, it is only directed at new developments rather than protecting existing properties in terms of its development standards. It is essential to include that aspect, but most of the city, like the rest of the Peninsula, is built out, and the room for new development is much less than the number of residences currently existing in the city and other cities. For example, one of the neighborhoods considered most under threat in Millbrae is a wholly developed single-family home neighborhood. The Safety Element also mentions sea level rise in Flooding and Earthquake (due to the effects on soil liquefaction) sections. In all three of the Safety Elements, it seems that sea level rise is discussed as a future problem that will need to be dealt with and should be at the back of people's minds. However, it is not at the forefront of the city's priorities, with other, more immediate problems taking precedence. Only one of the cities had a whole section of the element dedicated to the issue when, at the minimum, each should have. If it were a policy priority, there would be more concrete proposals and defined numbers and information to back it up.

In contrast, the City of Burlingame and South San Francisco have both made it a policy priority, with each creating zoning ordinances related explicitly to sea level rise, with the help of OneShoreline, who used those two ordinances to create a guide for future ordinances, when other cities come forward with the desire to create their sea level rise zoning ordinance. One significant difference, though, between these cities and the ones previously mentioned is that in South San Francisco and Burlingame, the areas that are under threat are their commercial hearts, with the hotels that make up 35% of the city's income in Burlingame and the biotechnical and airport infrastructure in South San Francisco. Money is a significant policy driver, and for those cities, their industries were concerned about the impact that led to the ordinances. In contrast, in the other cities (San Mateo, East Palo Alto, and Millbrae), the areas under threat are primarily single-family homes neighborhoods and with a small amount of industry. In the Burlingame zoning ordinance (Document 5), adopted in 2021, the big focuses are creating a buffer zone of 100 feet from the bay to create infrastructure to protect existing buildings and implementing new requirements for proposed buildings within an overlay zone

that was created. These include elevating the first floor of new buildings, creating infrastructure to protect the coastline, maintaining said infrastructure, collecting data, and monitoring the infrastructure and the hazards. Similarly, the City of South San Francisco zoning ordinance created a Sea Level Rise/Floodplain overlay zone (Document 8). It prohibits specific uses within the zone, such as emergency shelters, fire stations, hospitals, and schools, but not housing. Similarly, it creates a buffer zone from the bay to create future infrastructure and provide a defense against the bay, as well as requires elevating the first floor and minimizing the types of uses on said first floor. Both zoning ordinances focus on adaptation and mitigation to the effects of sea level rise without considering the possibility of planned retreat.

Regarding Climate Action Plans, the majority focused on the policy and political priority of reducing greenhouse gas emissions rather than the more comprehensive climate action of adaptation and mitigation to the effects of climate change. I reviewed San Mateo, Burlingame, South San Francisco, Millbrae, East Palo Alto, and Redwood City, which had differing approaches and information in their plans. Most of the text in the San Mateo Climate Action

Plan (Document 3) about sea level rise is about the potential impact on the state of California, without going into the specifics of the city of San Mateo and having implementation measures to deal with sea level rise and other climate change effects. The most concrete statement about the effect of sea level rise on the city of San Mateo is that *A sea level rise of 22 inches could inundate areas near Seal Point. If the level of San Francisco Bay rises 82 inches, water is projected to inundate all parts of San Mateo east of Highway 101, the area north of downtown, and large sections of the Hayward Park, Bay Meadows, and Laurie Meadows neighborhoods.* Similarly, in the City of Burlingame (Document 7), most of the adaptation measures come from the General Plan and the Climate Action, which is mostly about greenhouse gas emissions. However, conversely, there

is a whole section dedicated to sea level rise, as there is greater fear in Burlingame since, unlike many other communities on the Bay that have wetlands or levees adding more protection from

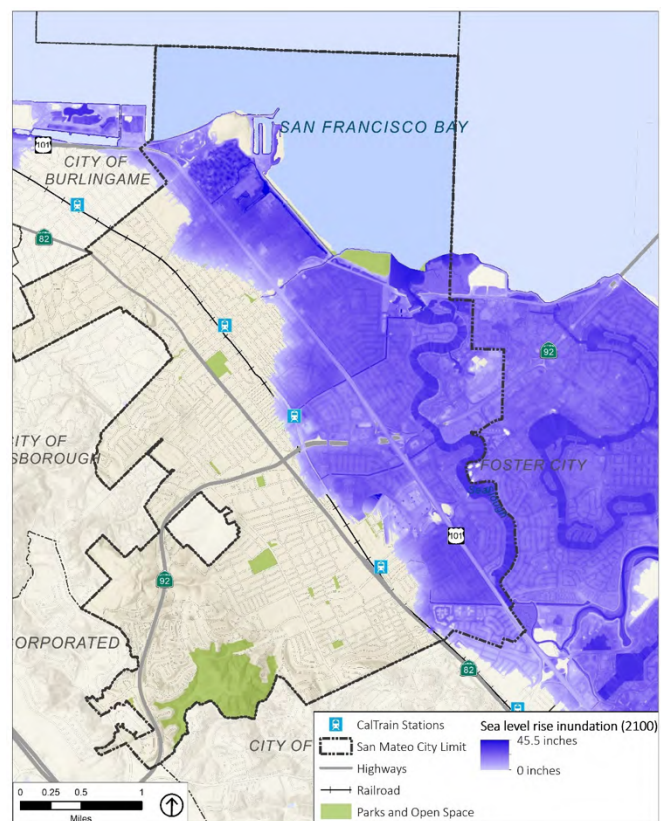


Figure 3 Map of Sea Level Rise, San Mateo (Climate Action Plan 2020)

the bay, their developments go right up next to the bay, with no protection. The document does identify the acreage and infrastructure that could be impacted by sea level rise in three different scenarios, as shown below:

*Baseline Sea Level Rise Scenario: 20 acres of land would be inundated, including a portion of Old Bayshore Highway.*

*Mid-level Sea Level Rise Scenario: 452 acres inundated, and nearly all of Old Bayshore Highway and Highway 101 and stormwater and energy transmission infrastructure vulnerable.*

*High-end Sea Level Rise Scenario: 813 acres inundated, and high risk of endangerment across all infrastructure and accessibility*

The Climate Action Plan also specifies the General Plan adaptation measures related to sea level rise. It states that adaptation planning is in its infancy, and practitioners are still learning how to do it effectively. Three of those measures are specifically targeted at land use and development policy, as stated below:

*Policy CC-6.7: Sea Level Rise. Require that new and existing development along the Bayfront make provisions for sea level rise and flood risks, which may involve payment of assessments to fund City or other efforts to build a unified defense system. Maintain minimum waterfront setback, with the setback area providing space in the future to accommodate sea level rise and flooding defenses. Design new buildings with habitable areas to minimize potential damage from exceptional storm events.*

*Goal CS-5: Protect vulnerable areas and infrastructure from flooding related to rising sea levels in the San Francisco Bay.*

*Policy CS-5.3: New Development in Vulnerable Areas. Continue to require appropriate setback and building elevation requirements for properties located along the Bayshore, lagoons, and in other low-lying areas that are susceptible to the effects of sea level rise. Consider other strategies to support resiliency through design.*

The city considers sea level rise a more significant policy priority than San Mateo, with more work already done to protect the community from the future impact. However, it is partially because their city's revenue base is at stake. In the City of South San Francisco's Climate Action Plan (Document 10), sea level rise is only mentioned regarding current conditions with no further policies. The focus is on the required greenhouse gas emissions reductions. However, as the city is considered commercial-industrial, with a large biotech industry that produces significant emissions, it is a greater priority. Again, though South San Francisco has a zoning ordinance with a sea level rise overlay, they could have wanted the Climate Action Plan to focus more on greenhouse gas emissions and have the sea level rise initiatives in the general plan. Fourthly, the City of Millbrae's Climate Action Plan (Document 12) mentions sea level rise in its own section but limits the adaptation to the appendix.

Adaptation planning is in its early stages and is a process that the city plans to do in the coming years in an inclusive community planning process. One of the most interesting statements in the sea level rise section, as related to development and the lack of funding towards adaptation at the current moment, is this: *The range of current sea level rise estimates presents very different scenarios to cities that must decide how to expend limited resources to protect critical land uses and infrastructure. As the shoreline migrates landward, habitats and flood hazard areas will also shift. Past development of residential, commercial, and public access infrastructure may limit the flexibility of set-backs or adjustments to the Bay shoreline.* This is a very telling statement of how the priorities are considered and how funding is a significant part of that. In many cities, the funding is limited by the amount of property taxes and sales taxes. For example, when events like COVID-19 happen, sales taxes will go down. Many cities have been facing budget shortages since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, reducing their capacity to accomplish all their goals and policies they may desire or need. Sea level rise may be a policy priority. However, it may not be a political priority, as funding, major infrastructure, and programs directly affect the population in the near term. The other aspect of the statement that is telling is that the plans are truly only for new developments and that the existing developments need to be more flexible in changing and will cause a problem. There should be a plan for existing developments in policy documents that include either planned retreat or mitigation measures for the existing structures, like retrofitting and building sea walls. Another Climate Action Plan (Document 16) that I reviewed was the City of East Palo Alto, which similarly had a sub-section about the effects of sea level rise, with greater emphasis on the specific infrastructure and natural protection that will be affected and the current flooding issues that the city faces within its Impacts of Climate Change section but the solutions again are considered to be appropriate to be in its General Plan and more specifically Safety and Equity Elements. The most interesting future planning included in the Climate Action Plan related to sea level rise and development was the plan to work with OneShoreline to create a new zoning ordinance similar to the previously mentioned in this section in South San Francisco and Burlingame, with the text reading: *Work jointly with San Mateo County and OneShoreline to establish zoning and design strategies for waterfront properties along the San Mateo County shoreline to maximize building and infrastructure resilience and reduce the climate change impact on buildings, in coordination with BCDC. An immediate, interim measure is to consider adoption of zoning guidelines equal to or superior to Burlingame's Zoning Ordinance "25.12.050 – Public Access, Flood and Sea Level Rise Performance Guidelines" [Document 5] to set minimal best management practices as a comprehensive approach is developed.* As East Palo Alto is currently a more residential city, it makes sense that they have started on or proposed creating the ordinance later, as their funding is not at risk in the way that more industrial cities are. Also, the city lacks funding compared to other cities as they have less property tax revenue, making hiring consultants to create the ordinance more cost-prohibitive. The last Climate Action Plan

that I reviewed was Redwood City (Document 18), which is similar to the others as it also focuses on current conditions and the future impact of sea level rise with adaptation to be considered in the future, with a vulnerability assessment proposed to be completed.

The other policy document that focuses on housing is the Housing Element, which, while part of the General Plan, is completed separately from the rest of the document due to the time requirement for completing it. I reviewed the ones from the same cities as the General Plans I reviewed. The first Housing Element that I reviewed was San Mateo (Document 1), which only contained one mention of sea level rise, stating, *“The city must also consider locating housing away from environmental constraints such as sea level rise...”* This was done with the housing inventory and where affordable housing should be placed. It is also related to other environmental hazards, such as fire, and existing opportunities in areas like schools and parks. Similarly, in the Burlingame Housing Element (Document 6), the statement about considering environmental constraints specifically states sea level rise, which is the document's only mention of sea level rise. In contrast, the Housing Element for South San Francisco (Document 9) contains a section regarding Climate Change, with sea level rise mentioned as the critical gradual climate change threat, contrasting to hazard events like heat waves. An interesting statement about climate change threats in the document is, *“These hazards and their impacts are likely to disproportionately affect the most sensitive populations in the city. Sea levels may rise by as much as 3 feet by the end of the century. East of Highway 101 and Lindenville will need to address sea level rise. The risks associated with climate change hazards have also increased, with sea level rise posing the greatest risk to South San Francisco.”* This is one of the most concrete mentions of the sea level rise threat to existing and proposed housing and the future impact, with the specific neighborhoods that will be affected. Other cities could have as concrete a statement of the effect of sea level on housing within their Housing Element. There also is a mention of sea level rise in the site inventory as areas that need to be supported to mitigate sea level rise. East Palo Alto's Housing Element (Document 14) has one of the most comprehensive sea level rise discussions. Like some of the other Housing Elements, there is an introductory statement within the Natural Hazards section within the Environmental Constraints portion where sea level rise is mentioned in addition to droughts, earthquakes, wildfires, and climate change. There is also an objective within the goal, *Apply environmental justice principles in planning for new housing development*, that relates specifically to sea level rise, stating: *Minimize new housing in highest-risk areas prone to flooding/sea level rise or due to environmental contamination.* The objective shows how sea level rise and the flooding it causes can be considered when dealing with housing. The Redwood City Housing Element (Document 17) also only mentions sea level rise with hazards, like some of the previous Housing Elements, ranking it as a high possibility and mentions two neighborhoods that could be affected with no further information about mitigation and changes to zoning. In contrast, the

Housing Element of Foster City (Document 19) does not mention sea level rise except in the appendix. In addition, unlike the other housing elements, the non-governmental constraints are not mentioned as an environmental concern. Sea level rise is mentioned in the appendix in the Fair Housing Assessment, with a previous Plan Bay Area document and the county's Local Hazard Mitigation Plan mentioning their determination that sea level rise would be a significant issue for communities within the Bay Area. The other mention is an existing mitigation measure, improving the levees to protect the city from flooding. Even though it is one of the most vulnerable communities within the San Francisco Bay Area to sea level rise, it has some of the least information and mitigation within its document. It makes it seem like sea level rise is not a policy priority while they are being pragmatic in the update to the levees, even if it is due to the need from FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) to reduce the property tax burden for the current residents. The policy concern and why taxpayers were more likely to approve a bond (extra property tax) is that it lowers the property insurance premium.

The last document (Document 20) that I analyzed was Plan Bay Area 2040, which is a joint planning guidance document for the nine counties created by different agencies, especially MTC (Metropolitan Transportation Commission) and ABAG (Association of Bay Area Governments), to guide future development within the Bay Area. It is not an enforceable document but is used for guidance in future planning within each city and county. There is one strategy specifically related to sea level rise within the Environmental Strategies category of the document. It is *EN1. Adapt to sea level rise. Protect shoreline communities affected by sea level rise, prioritizing low-cost, high-benefit solutions and providing additional support to vulnerable populations* with an estimated cost of 19 billion dollars in cost to local governments. The further description specifies housing in its description: *planning to protect homes, businesses and transportation infrastructure from sea level rise. As a guidance statement for further documents and plans from the individual cities and counties, this is a crucial step to ensure that the protection of existing housing is considered when dealing with sea level rise. In many of the documents reviewed above, future developments are considered when planning for sea level rise. As it is a guidance document, there are no actionable steps for protecting said homes, but that is what the individual documents are for from the individual jurisdictions. It also considers inundation, such as groundwater infiltration, which is another effect of sea level rise that needs to be discussed more. Furthermore, the document does come up with some solutions that the planners envision but need to be actionable since it is just a guidance. The vision is to address the sea level rise and housing crises, which "without intervention, flooding could have devastating impacts regionwide, including constricting an already limited housing supply even further."* The plan envisions a mix of human-engineered solutions and natural infrastructure, such as restoring marshes and ecotone levees to protect vulnerable areas.

In most of the interviews, the threat of sea level rise and, more specifically, the occasional flooding that will occur gradually has become more seeped into the public's consciousness after massive flooding in December and January of this year. The San Francisco Bay Area was hit with one of its worst storms in people's memories. Many of the creeks and shorelines flooded, and pictures of people kayaking and paddleboarding on city streets went viral. As with many climate emergencies, the actual experience of dealing with a climate event will lead people to action or at least awareness. According to Interviewee 1 (Sustainability Analyst at the City of San Mateo), in at least the short term, people were agitated and concerned about their property. However, she is unsure if there is an awareness of a direct connection between climate change and the increase in the frequency of 100-year floods. Interviewee 3 had a similar sentiment and thinks that sea level rise will be more considered in the next round of housing elements in eight years. The floods were also mentioned by Interviewee 6 (Executive Director at Community non-profit), in conjunction with the need for regional cooperation so that one community does not have the whole burden in terms of the flooding because the effects in their community had already been felt in previous years from previous floods.

Interviewee 2 (Executive Director of a Housing non-profit) believes that there needs to be a greater plan for dealing with sea level rise, such as how to deal with the possibility of planned retreat and for it to come before the flooding and inundation of groundwater in the area so that the residents are not stuck in a situation where they cannot move. The poorest are stuck in an unsafe situation. Interviewee 3 (Policy Director of a Housing non-profit) also thinks that there needs to be more specific criteria for dealing with sea level rise similar to other housing legislation in California, like density bonus laws, to ensure that the proposed housing will be resilient for the next hundred years. Interviewee 7 (City Council member for the city of San Mateo) also thinks that some plan is needed with regional cooperation because the issue is not a city-by-city issue but a regional issue, which was a sentiment shared by Interviewee 6. There is so much an individual city can do, especially in the parameters of the individual documents and with their limited resources and bandwidth. The city is doing it project-by-project, such as raising the wastewater treatment plant. An example of regional policy is what Interviewee 10 (Project Manager at OneShoreline) talked about: there are guidelines for dealing with sea level rise in planning that cities throughout San Mateo County can use within their general plans, housing elements, and zoning codes. However, as with most policy priorities, it came from the need to protect businesses and then was expanded to protect the whole of Bayshore, as cities have come to view sea level rise as a threat to them.

#### 4.4 Land Use

Of the Land Use Elements within the General Plans (San Mateo, East Palo Alto, and Millbrae) reviewed, only one mentioned sea level rise. In the San Mateo Land Use Element, the mention states, *“Effects of Climate Change. Consider the effects of climate change in updating or amending the General Plan, disaster planning, City projects, infrastructure planning, future policies, and long-term strategies. Recognize potential climate change consequences such as increased sea level rise, changing weather events, less drinking water availability, hotter temperatures, increased wildfire risk, changing air quality and more heat related health issues.”* Like in some of the safety elements mentioned above, it mentions sea level rise in conjunction with other climate-related hazards to land use, but again, there are no specifics to the policies but just a general starting point to continue the process.

The Housing Elements, as stated in this chapter's Policy/Political Opportunities section, determines locations for future housing, such as underutilized shopping centers and public parking lots. None of the ones that I reviewed consider sea level rise. In San Mateo's Housing Element (Document 1), one of the locations considered is Bridgepoint Shopping Center. Bridgepoint is located on fill and is within the area predicted to be inundated due to sea level rise. The area currently contains big box stores and a large parking lot in an area that is over twelve acres. The proposed density under the new general plan would be 200 units per acre, with a significant amount of affordable housing. There is no mention of sea level rise and how to address mitigation in the development, such as commercial development, parking on the ground floor, and plantings that reduce flooding. However, hopefully, that will be addressed in the future specific plan for the area. Similarly, in the South San Francisco Housing Element in the site inventory, two areas are identified as opportunity zones: Lindenville (which is mentioned in the statement on Climate Change in the Policy/Political priorities) and South Airport, which will both be inundated by sea level rise. Lindenville currently does not contain any housing but, in the Zoning ordinance update, will have the capacity for 5,000 housing units with varying degrees of affordability. The area currently is industrial and commercial, which has a less human cost with sea level rise, but as previously stated, the need to mitigate the proposed housing to be resilient to sea level rise and the fact that the area is close to the downtown and the Caltrain commuter rail station. South Airport is currently only for commercial and industrial uses, with many large life science developments. The proposed changes to the zoning will allow for more than 5,000 housing units. East of Highway 101, which bisects the San Francisco Peninsula, will all be underwater due to sea level rise. The constraints for this specific opportunity zone mention occasional flooding from the creek near the zone, as it is an immediate concern, without mentioning the future sea level rise that will affect the area. In contrast, the Housing Elements for East Palo Alto and Redwood City mention existing areas with the zoning designation for housing that will be affected by sea level rise without considering mitigation



measures. In Redwood City, two areas are mentioned: Redwood Shores (built on fill within the San Francisco Bay) and the area along Highway 101 (adjacent to the marshes along the Bay). These areas are mentioned in connection to the existing housing in the area, including a trailer home park, the existing improvements being built, such as a Channel, and the current infrastructure, such as a levee that surrounds Redwood Shores. There is no mention of further improvements and mitigation measures that could be made to reduce the risks of flooding and sea level rise.

Most interviewees agreed that the cities within San Mateo County are entirely built out, and the housing solutions are directly related to land use. According to Interviewee 1 (Sustainability Analyst for the city of San Mateo), the city lacks virgin land to build out. Due to some of the density and height restrictions, the ability to build out areas located within the areas not affected by sea level rise, such as the Downtown and the local mall, is reduced. The land use policy that the city has been forced into due to voter-approved height and density limits that do not match the needs of the housing crisis will force people to remain in parts of the city that are more affected by sea level rise instead of taking advantage of areas that are more centrally located with access to transportation for dense housing that will be sustainable to future sea level rise. In the same jurisdiction, San Mateo, Interviewee 4 (Planning Commissioner at the City of San Mateo) also considered that in the site consideration for the most recent Housing Element, they only considered 25% of the land within the city for future development, to maintain most of the single-family zoning. The areas they are considering are more likely to be affected by sea level rise and are currently more likely to be low-income communities, leading to further gentrification and putting the burden of the needed housing units on a small portion of the city. Interviewee 3 (Policy Director at a housing non-profit) also mentions similarly that bad actors could use sea level rise concerns to avoid building the needed housing. He gave the example of Foster City, including existing apartments located right along the San Francisco Bay that would be upzoned, and new apartments would be built on the same site in a manner that mitigates for sea level rise. The actuality is that new apartments would not be built, and there would be no mitigation. This method will be exploited by NIMBYs (Not in my backyard) who do not want any development in the area, but not because of sea level rise. In contrast, Interviewee 2 (Executive Director of a Housing non-profit) believes that when a larger scale project occurs in an area that will be affected by sea level rise in the future, there is more of a possibility for the city to impose mitigation measures, such as community benefits and infrastructure upgrades. She gave an example of a redevelopment of an industrial site in Redwood City, located next to the San Francisco Bay, proposing numerous mitigation measures that will minimize some of the worst effects on the development while providing much-needed development to the area. Because of the need for more spending on infrastructure by local governments and lack of protection, smaller developments are more

problematic for sea level rise mitigation. They are only feasible if there is more governmental support and funding.

Interviewee 10 (Project Manager at OneShoreline) had one of the most significant land use innovations to deal with sea level rise, which is an overlay district that uses the FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) rate of sea level rise, which is six feet above the flood level from a 100-year flood. Currently, the overlay district includes multi-family developments but not single-family, duplexes, and triplexes due to the messiness of state regulations. The organization, OneShoreline, the first sea-level rise specific public agency west of the Mississippi River in the United States, is for the county of San Mateo and works with individual jurisdictions within the county to implement their guidelines, including the overlay district. It is not about preventing development in those areas but ensuring that the developments can be adapted to the rising sea level.

#### 4.5 Equity and Social Justice

The documents' most prominent reference to equity and social justice was in the Planning Policy Guidance to Protect and Enhance Bay Shoreline Areas of San Mateo County by OneShoreline. A whole section of their templates was dedicated to Environmental Justice and Equity. The goal that they propose in this section is to *“Prioritize the disadvantaged, vulnerable, and underrepresented communities in risk reduction strategies related to climate change impacts and protect from current practices and policies harmful to these communities.”* OneShoreline defines disadvantaged communities as “Communities disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and other hazards that can lead to negative public health effects, exposure, or environmental degradation; and communities that are of low-income, high unemployment, low levels of home ownership, high rent burden, sensitive populations, or low levels of educational attainment.” Vulnerable communities are “Communities co-located in areas with current/future flood risk and in areas with high concentrations of households exhibiting factors that can reduce access to or capacity for preparedness and recovery.” Lastly, underrepresented communities are defined as “Communities that have been historically and are still systematically excluded from political and policy-making processes.” These communities are generally more affected by climate and housing issues while participating less and being shut off from the policy and political process. The proposal wants cities to identify and prioritize the climate process and evoke more community capacity building to involve these communities more. The other significant policies aimed at increasing equity in sea level rise adaptation are developing mitigation measures for dealing with contaminants that will arise from groundwater infiltration and reducing the possibilities for displacement by, for example, expanding and preserving existing housing options for low-income residents, placing new

affordable housing projects on sites that are not within the potential sea level rise zone and creating and implementing tools to evaluate and mitigate potential displacement. These proposals show how to consider the most vulnerable in a community to the impacts in a just and equitable way and to consider the less talked-about aspects of sea level rise that will disproportionately affect communities of color and low-income communities. Similarly, Plan Bay Area 2040 also reflects that sea level rise will have a disproportionate cost to communities of color and low-income communities. The document states, "Many contaminated land sites are still in or adjacent to communities of color in the Bay Area today, and homes in Equity Priority Communities may be over 50% more likely to experience flooding from sea level rise." Like other climate disasters, sea level rise will also have a more significant effect on these communities, and in the Bay Area, many of these communities are in the flat area close to the bay. Most of the industry in previous decades was located near the bay and the communities of color. In addition, the reinvestment that occurs after a climate disaster is less in these communities than in other communities. By putting this into words, the planners hope to have that not be the case in the future adaptation to sea level rise. This is an excellent first step before actual plans to ensure this is the case, as the government is currently doing with air quality and pollution.

Of the General Plans, Housing Elements, and Climate Action Plans, only one has a specific objective directly related to the environmental justice element of sea level rise adaptation and housing. As mentioned earlier, the objective is to minimize *new housing in highest-risk areas prone to flooding/sea level rise or due to environmental contamination*. The element that mentions environmental contamination that can occur from sea level rise, such as toxic soils and wastewater, which is something that was not considered in any of the other documents. East Palo Alto, in the past, had numerous industrial sites that have caused environmental contamination and has been affected by redlining and unequal development due to being a majority-minority city. The objective has two programs associated with it that focus on the mitigation of sea level rise, as shown below:

*Program 5.5: Leverage community partnerships to utilize and maintain data and maps wherever possible to monitor areas subject to flooding and identify sites for future development and to comply with Government Code 65302.*

*Program 5.6: Develop environmental "overlay" map with most up-to-date data to avoid housing in at risk areas or with prescribed mitigation measures.*

One program considers the community aspect, but both take into account data and map information to develop a more concrete plan to ensure that communities that exist and future communities will not be affected by sea level rise. It also considers the future issues that sea level rise will cause and how to monitor the effects while still providing housing more equitably to the existing communities and not pushing out existing communities as a form of mitigation.

The city has already faced displacement due to gentrification, and this seems like a methodology to protect the community as partnerships are usually with existing communities that are considered under the environmental justice part of the Housing Element, as the relationship is a social justice issue in terms of how it will affect lower-income communities and communities of color that will be disproportionately affected.

Equity and Social Justice were discussed more in the interviews than in the documents. As mentioned by Interviewee 2 (Executive Director of a Housing Non-Profit), one of the equity concerns with sea level rise is that in San Mateo County, many of the communities that will be more significantly affected by the impacts of sea level rise are communities of color and low-income communities. These communities were historically redlined, a process in which the United States government created segregated communities based on mortgage accessibility and are now becoming informally redlined due to flood insurance costs and the lack of planning for either mitigation measures or planned retreat. Interviewee 3 (Policy Director at a Housing non-profit) added an additional equity issue with the fact that the area had previously been redlined that most of the redlined areas are located near former industrial sites that have contaminated soils which with both flooding and groundwater infiltration, the housing will become even more dangerous. The possibility of sickness and groundwater pollution become higher. Interviewee 4 (Planning Commissioner at the City of San Mateo) also mentioned the issue with groundwater infiltration but with the additional element that as the soil becomes inundated with water, there is more standing water, and in the case of earthquakes (which are common in the San Francisco Bay Area, as the peninsula is located along a major fault line), there is a greater chance for liquefaction, which in turn causes greater damage to the structures. The areas along the shoreline are most on fill, meaning the soil is less solid and more susceptible to these effects. In addition, communities with fewer resources also have a more challenging time providing the mitigation measures needed to avoid the worst of the effects mentioned above. According to Interviewee 6 (Executive Director at a Community organization), East Palo Alto has fewer resources for mitigation than other communities due to the community's demographics. East Palo Alto is located downstream from Palo Alto along a few creeks. Since Palo Alto is an affluent community with more funding, they have already been able to mitigate some of the effects of flooding and sea level rise. In contrast, East Palo Alto does not yet have the resources to mitigate. In the storms mentioned in the Policy/Political Priorities section that occurred in December and January of this year, the creek overflowed, causing damages to some of the most affordable housing in the city that houses many recent immigrants. It caused mold, leading to a greater rate of asthma in a community with a more significant burden of asthma already. In addition, unlike other bayside communities that have either levees or wetland restoration projects, East Palo Alto does not have the resources, partially due to not being able to afford bonds, which are an additional tax burden on the

residents. In addition, there is a fear of “green gentrification,” whereas through mitigation measures and adaptation, the locals become displaced, which is already occurring with regular gentrification, but there is fear that it could be accelerated.

Interviewee 5 (Policy Director at Affordable Housing Provider) stated that there already is a more significant burden on affordable housing providers regarding what city staff and planning commissions require because of the prejudice against affordable housing tenants. There is a perception of the tenants that they will be dangerous and that the development will bring down the neighborhood. As Interviewee 3 stated in the Land Use section, bad actors will use sea level rise as an excuse not to approve projects and provide housing in bad faith; the opponents of affordable housing projects could use it as a mechanism to oppose the project and get the planning commissions and city councils to reject the project. Because affordable housing projects are usually funded through federal grants, there is already a more significant burden from FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency) regarding existing flood maps.

## 5 Discussion

The discussion will be divided into the different tensions between mitigating sea level rise and planning for housing. The documents and interviews have shown that the tension can be divided into the categories outlined in the theoretical framework: policy/political priorities, land use, and equity and social justice.

### 5.1 Policy/Political Priorities

Cities have many different policy and political priorities to deal with, and at the moment, sea level rise, as seen in many of the documents and interviews, is not a priority. There is one requirement for addressing sea level rise at the moment, and that is through the Safety Element. It is part of the addressing of climate change. All of the Safety Elements I reviewed contained the same generic language, with most taking the information from One Shoreline's guidelines without creating a specific language for their own element. Another document type, the Climate Action Plan, also mentions sea level rise in a cursory form, with a general statement of the number of feet of sea level rise and that it will be addressed in a different document since greenhouse gas emissions are a greater priority than sea level rise. Due to the state's requirements on greenhouse gas emissions reduction, cities are forced to focus on them, and they are easier to address with more tangible numbers to reach for, like a specific percentage reduction in emissions to reach a particular year's level. Different studies and models have different numbers for the feet of sea level rise, so it is hard for cities to plan. As I was researching for this thesis, I came across numerous predictions in terms of the effects of sea level rise, in terms of the feet and how far inland the water will penetrate, and they are also bound to change since the year that is being studied is 2100, which is over 70 years away. As a starting point, cities should use the same methodology as OneShoreline since they are the overarching sea level rise agency within the county and have created their guidelines and overlay districts based on that. The last type of document reviewed was the Housing Element, which some did not even mention sea level rise, and most included it under the Environmental constraints section of the element. Many cities included sites usable for development that were obviously in areas that will be inundated with sea level rise and did not mention that there needs to be some mitigation when proposing housing in those locations. No major document types that cities use for development have a solid way to address the issues arising from rising sea levels, but they could and should in the future. The guidelines set forth by OneShoreline include language that is a starting point for dealing with sea level rise's effects on development. However, there needs to be a policy to address the effects on single-family home neighborhoods cut out of all the documents. As Interviewee 10, who works for OneShoreline, stated, there is an issue with creating guidelines for single-family home neighborhoods in terms of preventing changes to the existing homes located there as well as interfering with state laws

that, for example, require cities to allow an ADU on any single-family home lot. Hopefully, in future document cycles, sea level rise will become a greater priority for individual cities before it becomes a dire issue that cannot be ignored. Many of the interviewees believed that after the major storms that occurred in December and January of this year, the consciousness of people became aware of the threat of sea level rise due to the massive amount of flooding. Some were not sure if people linked it to climate change. The cities should take the momentum from this awareness and include further mitigation in documents.

Conversely, housing remains a policy and political priority for many jurisdictions. In recent years, California has enacted numerous new housing laws to ease the regulations for building housing and reduce local control over zoning. This dynamic has occurred due to the need for cities to contribute their fair share of housing to reduce the housing crisis that has covered the state, especially in coastal urban areas like San Mateo County. The planning commissioners and city council members I interviewed all spoke of housing as an urgent issue, with quantity and affordability being the main drivers of the crisis. Housing prices have continued to rise at a rate higher than inflation, and the number of units to make the jobs-housing balance more balanced is excellent. So when these practitioners review housing at the Planning Commission or the City Council meeting, sea level rise does not come into their thinking because the other concerns outweigh them. This sentiment was shared by the housing non-profit employees and the affordable housing provider because the crisis with housing is just so great. The housing crisis is more immediate and urgent due to its visibility and the fact that everyday constituents are aware of it. In contrast, sea level rise will be a gradual occurrence that happens over decades. City documents show the high number of what will occur by 2100, which seems dramatic, but in reality, the effects will be slow and will not be felt for a few decades, except in low-lying areas and during 100-year flood events, occurring more frequently. Cities should encourage their housing developments in areas located within the future sea level rise, with ideas such as improved infrastructure in major developments, no ground floor residences, and other flooding measures. Cities need to be proactive so that the developments built today do not become uninhabitable and the resources used to build said developments are not wasted on projects that have a short lifespan. Climate and housing are inexplicably linked and will have a more significant link in the future. Planners would make a mistake not to consider it when approving development now and in the future.

## 5.2 Land Use

As mentioned above in the policy/political priorities section, land use decisions regarding housing currently need to consider sea level rise in the decision-making process. Very few Land Use Elements even mention sea level rise at all. In the Housing Element, the proposed housing is often located within the area predicted to be inundated with sea level rise. Some of the areas

considered are for large-scale development without considering sea level rise at all or even mentioning it. This does not mean that no housing should go in areas where sea level rise may occur since that is not a feasible solution, but there needs to be some plan to mitigate the future effects of sea level rise. It also needs to be understood that bad faith actors cannot use sea level rise adaptation to prevent development or maintain single-family neighborhoods where density is an excellent solution to the housing crisis. A few of the interviewees brought up a concern about land use that people who are already against any further housing, to begin with, will latch onto sea level rise as an excuse not to build any new housing when it is desperately needed. The converse is that cities should densify in areas where sea level rise is not predicted to occur at least by 2100. For example, in San Mateo, the area along the major highway and the downtown is currently low-density, with few buildings above four stories, including areas next to the train station. However, if this area is densified, there will be less pressure to build in areas affected by sea level rise. That is feasible in some areas, but some communities in San Mateo County are entirely located within the predicted sea level rise zone. Every city must meet its RHNA (Regional Housing Needs Allocation) numbers, which is the number of housing units a city must plan for within an eight-year period as set up by the state of California. Due to the current housing crisis, the numbers are higher than they have been in the past and are being more strictly enforced by the state's housing agency. In addition, most cities within San Mateo are already built out and lack virgin land to expand, meaning density is the key to meeting housing numbers. In many of the interviews, the interviewee discussed major developments, such as reusing shopping malls and transforming lower-density development into larger development. However, those did not seem to consider sea level rise but where the valuable land was located. Because land is such a scarce resource due to the lack of virgin land, the development cost is already expensive and cost-prohibitive for some; further restrictions on land use would further exacerbate the housing crisis.

The best solution to mitigating for sea level rise is the overlay district where there are further restrictions on what type of development and how the development is built, with, for example, height restrictions on ground floor development, but not preventing development outright. OneShoreline has proposed this and has been implemented by two jurisdictions so far, South San Francisco and Burlingame, and with, according to the Project Manager, many more interested in pursuing their own zoning ordinance with the overlay district in the future. This will allow development in a manner that allows mitigation for sea level rise and protects existing developments. The element of land use that has yet to be considered in both documents I reviewed and with policy professionals is how to deal with the threat to existing developments within the flooding. Cities need to begin to consider whether or not planned retreats will be necessary in the future. In some areas, six feet is likely as they are close to the bay, and mitigation measures will not be effective. Planners need to start preparing for the inevitable



reduction in the land that will be usable and how to accommodate all the existing and future residents of those areas.

### 5.3 Equity/Social Justice

Like any other crisis that faces a community, there needs to be consideration for solving it equitably and with social justice in mind. Throughout the numerous documents and interviews, the mention of the areas that will be most heavily affected by sea level rise in San Mateo County are lower-income, and communities of color came up frequently. The greatest example of this is East Palo Alto, one of the few majority-minority cities in the county and one of the poorest per capita. As stated in their Climate Action Plan (Document 16) and General Plan (Document 15) and my interview with Interviewee 6, they have some of the most future damage but some of the least resources to deal with. It also was an area that was redlined and divided by highway construction, which added greater pollutants to an area that already had the highest asthma rate in the county. Moreover, even in some of the more affluent cities of the county, like San Mateo, the areas that will be affected by sea level rise are historically redlined and have traditionally been the more affordable. Many of the interviewees brought that up as traditionally, the more affluent areas are in the hills in an area that will not be affected by sea level rise. Interviewee 8 (Planning Commissioner for the City of Millbrae) and Interviewee 9 (Planning Commissioner for the City of San Bruno) both stated that in their communities as well, with even areas not adjacent to the bay but near creeks that follow to the bay will be affected and have been traditionally more lower-income due to their proximity to the major pollutant, San Francisco International Airport. Cities must consider this when planning for future sea level rise and not leaving the areas that flood, as feared by Interviewee 2. As with most things in the United States, money is a driver of policy, as evidenced by the fact that the initial significant planning for sea level rise was done for the cities where their major industries, such as South San Francisco with its biotechnology campuses and Burlingame with its airport hotels, instead of cities where single-family home neighborhoods were the ones at the coastline. In addition, even in cities where there is mitigation for single-family home neighborhoods, it is for major infrastructure like the wastewater treatment plant, not protecting the neighborhood. Although there are plans for a network of levees and marshes, a lot of that infrastructure is funded by bonds, which is more feasible in affluent communities. The planning for sea level rise needs to include everyone and be done in a manner that ensures that the most vulnerable communities to flooding are not left out of the discussion. As sea level rise needs to be a regional effort and not just a city-by-city effort, the more affluent cities that have the resources to mitigate for sea level rise within their borders need to help the communities that are more vulnerable but lack the resources to mitigate.

In addition, one element that kept coming up in my interviews but was not mentioned in any of the individual cities' documents is the additional effects that sea level rise will have on the communities. There was a fear of groundwater infiltration as the water table rises due to the water rising in general, infiltrating existing low-lying communities, and the effects may occur earlier than the gradual six-foot sea level rise expected in the coming century. It is similar to the increased frequency of 100-year floods due to climate change. In addition, the soil infiltrated by groundwater could be contaminated with pollutants and cause further health concerns for the residents. It is an environmental justice issue and should be addressed when dealing with sea level rise mitigation, as seen in Document 20, which is the only document that acknowledges the relationship between sea level rise and health outcomes, mentioning the fact that many of the areas along the bay are former industrial sites that have not always been fully remediated and are near minority communities that already have higher rates of asthma, cancer, and other health issues. In the upcoming revisions of the General Plan, the Environmental Justice Element, a newly required element, should include references to the justice issues that sea level rise will cause and how to mitigate in a manner that does not exacerbate the existing environmental issues, such as containments to soil and pollutants in the water, but attempts to solve them.

The last portion of equity and social justice is that the process for determining where housing can be located still must be equitable, and sea level rise must not be used as a bad faith excuse for not adding housing. This was mentioned in many of the interviews. One of the interviewees who was particularly concerned about it was the Affordable Housing provider, who has greater hurdles to get their projects approved due to bias about tenants within affordable housing and the unfounded fear of affordable housing projects. The San Francisco Peninsula already has a significant population of NIMBYs (Not in my Backyard) that slow down the process of building affordable housing and other multi-family housing projects in many communities. There is a justifiable fear from some of the interviewees that they will latch onto sea level rise mitigation as a reason not to approve any additional housing, further exasperating the existing housing crisis. As stated earlier in the thesis, the San Francisco Bay Area is facing a significant housing crisis that has occurred for many decades and is desperate for more housing. To address the housing crisis and mitigate for sea level rise means that there needs to be mitigation measures in housing approvals in areas that may be susceptible to sea level rise, like changing the ground floor to non-residential uses and providing flood-resistant plantings. It cannot be a complete stop in development with no plan to add the housing units the area desperately needs.

## 6 Conclusion

In the coming decades, San Mateo County and the rest of the San Francisco Bay Area will face two crises simultaneously: sea level rise and housing. Sea Level Rise is expected to be six feet above the current peak tide, with vast portions of the land within the county expected to be submerged. There currently is a deficit of tens of thousands of housing units, and there is an even more remarkable dearth of affordable housing units. With these two crises, planning staff and policy practitioners are forced to make tough decisions between the two. There is a tension between planning for sea level rise and housing. This tension is seen through policy/political priorities, land use, and equity and social justice. In terms of policy and political priorities, planners must follow the guidelines that are set forth to them by state regulations for the different policy documents that are required. Much of the current sea level regulations are found in the Safety Element and, even though it is a climate issue, are not found in the Climate Action Plan. There needs to be more reference to sea level rise in the Housing Element, the primary housing planning document I reviewed. Regarding land use, currently, major developments are proposed and approved under consideration for mitigation and not densifying areas that are outside the areas predicted to face sea level rise. Regarding equity and social justice, the communities facing the greatest risk with sea level rise tend to be the communities of color and low income, with fewer resources to adapt and mitigate. In the future, more significant resources and consideration are needed when mitigating. In conclusion, there needs to be regional cooperation to mitigate sea level rise and eliminate the possibility of future housing. Sea Level Rise can be used as an opportunity to densify and sustainably redesign the cities within the county.

## 7 Citations

Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG)/ Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC), PLAN BAY AREA 2050 (2021).

California Department of Housing and Community Development - March 2022. (2022) A home for every Californian. ArcGIS StoryMaps.

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/94729ab1648d43b1811c1698a748c136>

City of Burlingame, Burlingame Zoning Ordinance (2021).

City of Burlingame, City of Burlingame 2030 Climate Action Plan (2019).

City of Burlingame, Envision Burlingame Housing Element (2023).

City of East Palo Alto, 2023-2031 Housing Element City of East Palo Alto (2023).

City of East Palo Alto/Harris & Associates, Draft Climate Action Plan and Adaptation Strategies (2022).

City of East Palo Alto, Vista 2035 East Palo Alto General Plan (2017).

City of Foster City/ Urban Planning Partners Inc., City of Foster City 2023-2031 Housing Element Update (2023).

City of Millbrae, City of Millbrae Final Climate Action Plan (2020).

City of Millbrae, City of Millbrae 2040 General Plan Policy Document (2022).

City of Redwood City, 2023-2031 Housing Element City of Redwood City (2023).

City of Redwood City, Climate Action Plan (2020).

City of San Bruno, City of San Bruno 2023-2031 Housing Element (2023).

City of San Mateo/PlaceWorks, City of San Mateo 2020 Climate Action Plan (2020).

City of San Mateo, Draft General Plan Goals, Policies and Actions (2022).

City of San Mateo, Housing Element of the General Plan 2023-2031 (2023).

City of South San Francisco, City of South San Francisco Climate Action Plan (2022).

City of South San Francisco/Lisa Wise Consulting, City of South San Francisco Zoning Code Update (2022).

City of South San Francisco, South San Francisco Housing Element 2023-2031 (2022).

Ekstrom, J. & Moser S. (2014). Identifying and overcoming barriers in urban climate adaptation: Case study findings from the San Francisco Bay Area, California, USA, *Urban Climate*, Volume 9, 2014, Pages 54-74, ISSN 2212-0955, Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.uclim.2014.06.002>.

Elmendorf, C. S; Elkind, E.; Lens, M.; Manville, M.; Marantz, N.; Monkkonen, P., et al. (2020). Regional Housing Need in California: The San Francisco Bay Area. *UCLA: The Ralph and Goldy Lewis Center for Regional Policy Studies*. Retrieved from <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/69j2b63r>

Fulton, W. (2022) *GUIDE TO California Planning* sixth edition. Solano Press Books. Kindle Edition.

Gagnon, Y.-C. (2010). *The case study as Research Method A Practical Handbook*. Presses de l'Université du Québec.

Heberger, M., Cooley, H., Moore, E., & Herrera, P. (2012). (tech.). *The Impact of Sea Level Rise on the San Francisco Bay*. Pacific Institute. Retrieved from [https://pacinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/sea\\_level\\_rise\\_sf\\_bay\\_cec3.pdf](https://pacinst.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/sea_level_rise_sf_bay_cec3.pdf).

Lindsey, R. (n.d.). *Climate change: Global sea level*. NOAA Climate.gov <https://www.climate.gov/news-features/understanding-climate/climate-change-global-sea-level>

Lubell, M., Vantaggiato, F. P., & Bostic, D. (2019). (rep.). *The Governance of Sea Level Rise in the San Francisco Bay Area: results from a survey of stakeholders*. UC Davis. Retrieved from [https://environmentalpolicy.ucdavis.edu/sites/g/files/dgvnsk6866/files/2019-10/SLR\\_survey\\_report\\_final.pdf](https://environmentalpolicy.ucdavis.edu/sites/g/files/dgvnsk6866/files/2019-10/SLR_survey_report_final.pdf).

Materman, L., Wong, M., Boles, E., Beggs, K., & Bailey, E., *Planning Policy Guidance to Protect and Enhance Bay Shoreline Areas of San Mateo County* (2023). San Mateo County Flood and Sea Level Rise Resiliency District.

McMillan, J; Birkmann, J; Tangwanichagapong, S (2021). Chapter 13 - Climate risk information as a basis for adaptive spatial planning: A case study from Thailand, Editor(s): Indrajit Pal, Rajib Shaw, Riyanti Djalante, Sangam Shrestha, *Disaster Resilience and Sustainability*, Elsevier, Pages 301-320, ISBN 9780323851954, Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-323-85195-4.00006-8>.

MTC. (n.d.). *Housing production | vital signs*. <https://www.vitalsigns.mtc.ca.gov/housing-production>

NASA. (2023). *NASA Sea Level Change Portal*. NASA. <https://sealevel.nasa.gov/task-force-scenario-tool>

*New interagency report highlights alarming sea level rise predictions for all U.S. coastlines: U.S. geological survey*. New interagency report highlights alarming sea level rise predictions for all U.S. coastlines | U.S. Geological Survey. (n.d.). <https://www.usgs.gov/programs/cmhrp/news/new-interagency-report-highlights-alarming-sea-level-rise-predictions-all-us>

OPR. (2023) Chapter 4 Required Elements. In *General Plan Guidelines*. Retrieved from [https://opr.ca.gov/docs/OPR\\_C4\\_final.pdf](https://opr.ca.gov/docs/OPR_C4_final.pdf).

Phillips, S., Reid, C., Cuff, D., & Wong, K. (2022). *The Future of Housing and Community Development: A California 100 Report on Policies and Future Scenarios*. *UCLA: The Ralph and Goldy Lewis Center for Regional Policy Studies*. Retrieved from <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/13g6x45t>

Vandever, J., Lightner, M., Kassem, S., Guyenet, J., Mak, M., & Bonham-Carter, C. (2017). (rep.). *Adapting to Rising Tides Bay Area Sea Level Rise Analysis and Mapping Project*. BCDC/MTC. Retrieved from <https://www.adaptingtorisingtides.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/BATA-ART-SLR-Analysis-and-Mapping-Report-Final-20170908.pdf>.

Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods* (4th Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

## Appendix: Interview Transcripts

### Interview 1

Speaker 1:

Okay. So, um, what is your exact title and what are your duties um, with the city?

Speaker 2:

So my exact title is Sustainability Analyst. It's a position within the city of San Mateo City Manager's office. Uh, this role has been a lot around for a while. I've, I've held the role for five years. I work on our climate action plan. Our, you know, overall strategy do document to reduce greenhouse gas and emissions in our community. My focus has tended to be around buildings, uh, specifically like reach codes and policies to, for new development to construct greener buildings. Uh, also a focus on energy efficiency and things in our own municipal buildings. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, uh, and then I do work kind of generally in the community on different sustainability topics, encouraging sustainable action and behavior change.

Speaker 1:

Okay. So mostly on like the updating because they have, do they, does San Mateo currently have an updated version of their climate action plan?

Speaker 2:

Yeah, we updated our climate act plan plan in 2020.

Speaker 1:

Okay. So pretty, pretty recent because I know a lot we're in like the original, we're all in 2011 or something like that a long time ago. Yeah. Um, yeah. And so what is the main focus when it come for the city when it comes to like sustainability and climate change adaptation?

Speaker 2:

We have done a lot on climate medication. I think we have done less on adaptation, but it's definitely something that that's on the minds at the staff level. And I think we're starting to see it work its way into more formal planning documents with this general plan update. Uh, and but it, it is not something like adaptation specifically isn't part of our climate action plan. Yeah. It's definitely focused on mitigation.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Uh, okay. So they still are more focused on mitigation? Um, yeah, cuz I did the climate action plan as part of my undergrad. So I kind of have a little bit of <laugh> uh, understanding for my university, my undergrad university. So it's more on mitigation instead of adaptation. And is there anything like to deal with like, um, sea level rise in either the climate adaptation? I saw a little bit in the housing element, but not that much. But is there anything in like the climate action plan or any of the other work that's done through the city?

Speaker 2:

So with this general plan update, there is more referencing to climate resilience and adaptation. So that's, I mean we're going through that update right now.

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

So it's in progress.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. And are they dealing a little bit sea level rise too, or, because I know that like at least most of the stuff on the other side of 101, um, is very susceptible. So are they putting that in the current general plan as well?

Speaker 2:

Yes, there will be. Well I guess your question was whether or not like sea level rise and resilience will be referenced in the journal plan? Yeah. Yes.

Speaker 1:

And yes. Will there be, do you know if there's like any like adaptation measures that are being proposed for it in it or, or in the climate action plan? I, I wish

Speaker 2:

I had looked at our most recent discussion I had with our, um, our general plan team. Yeah. So we

Speaker 1:

Could

Speaker 2:

Have more information on this for you, but I might have to look through my emails. Oh that's fine. You on that. Um, but there's actually a really interesting article from the Daily Journal that I'll forward you. Yeah. That was by one shoreline. And did, did McKenna ever reach back out?

Speaker 1:

No, she didn't

Speaker 2:

To you? Okay. I know she's really

Speaker 1:

Busy. Yeah, I emailed her again cuz I also got her information from somebody at the county as well. So I'll email her again. Um Okay. Yeah, I understand. I know it's like everybody's crazy right now with like housing elements and all the general plan stuff going on with everything. I know that. Yeah. I've heard that from a lot of people that I've contacted <laugh>.

Speaker 2:

Yeah, I mean you're researching a really interesting topic because I've worked very closely with one shoreline and they're just also, while their main mission is to, you know, raise awareness and actually implement projects that make our Bay Bay, uh, shore and coastline more resilient to climate change impacts including flooding and sea level rise, they also extremely sensitive that we are in a housing crisis. Yeah. Housing

Speaker 1:

Shortage.

Speaker 2:

Yeah.

Speaker 1:

These, yeah. Cause I remember well cause I worked for the city of Oakland before I went here and I remember them talking about, cause a lot of our house new housing was right on the bay and like the project that's not gonna happen. But the Oakland coliseum too without the proposed stadium too. Um, okay, so in terms of like housing, what type of sustainability do you



guys, um, other than like the reach codes or stuff, is it like the reach codes or is it more, um, yeah. So what type of sustainability in terms of housing do you guys work on?

Speaker 2:

Okay, so for, I, I can talk about specifically reach codes from my perspective, but I wouldn't wanna minimize like that's, that that that is the only aspect

Speaker 1:

Of Yeah. And like what other

Speaker 2:

Tale is thinking about.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. And like what other happens

Speaker 2:

To be the space that I, I

Speaker 1:

Work in. Yeah. And I know that they, they're very recent cuz I've seen my mom work on a lot of this stuff. Like, or like advocating. Yeah. Yeah. So I know that they're very recent. That's more, yeah.

Speaker 2:

So the reach codes and the building amendments that I have helped with, uh, are related to uh, removing natural gas from new buildings and electrifying existing buildings in different ways. And the specifics of the existing buildings is a bit nuanced. It depends on your project, but it's either preparing you for electric appliances and equipment in the future or it is going, um, a little further than that and requiring electric equipment during certain appointments. So it, it varies. Mm-hmm. <affirmative> depending on your project. But it is very much focused on decarbonization. On electrifying. And then another requirement of new buildings is more electric vehicle infrastructure. Uh, charging infrastructure for uh, yeah. For new buildings. So that's really speaking to like the electric transition we're going to see in transportation. Yeah. So preparing our buildings to have that infrastructure so people have places to charge.

Speaker 1:

And do you ever deal with like the land use element of like where thing in terms of sustainability, like where housing is placed or is that ever considered? I know, I mean there's not as much sprawl cuz there's not much land left, but like in terms of like more con concentrated or sea level like to be less in areas that are expected to have sea level rise or is that ever considered?

Speaker 2:

So there's a lot of discussion right now with our housing element Yeah. On where we should have denser housing and like you're mentioning we are, we don't have that challenge of sprawl in San Mateo cause we're very much built out. Yeah. And there's just more, uh, I I'm sure you're aware of the tensions around building heights Yes. And densities and the community. So, uh, I there <laugh> of course that remains a pious topic, but two. Okay. So addressing uh, like flood zones and sea level rise. I mean this is where I wanted to like look back at the email mm-hmm. <affirmative> like how far, uh, the general plan went to address that topic. So I know you mentioned in your work previously that you didn't see cities addressing this. Well I know we're required to have an environmental justice Yeah. Theme or like element

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Element. It's thoroughly addressed through, through this general plan update. Yeah. So I know that's in draft and then that there were other language that was actually developed and I think with comments from the group one shoreline that was providing some, some general feedback and, and comments and suggestions mm-hmm. <affirmative> that through their planning guidance policy to protect and enhance, I'm just reading this, the bay in shoreline of San Mateo County. So there's definitely mention of it, but I'm, I'm failing to remember how far, because I think that's exactly what you're looking for.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. And I, I know that a lot aren't that far, um, since it is something in the next, it's not as urgent as say housing at the moment, if that makes sense. Like sea level rise will be in next like a hundred years, whereas housing is an existing current crisis. So I understand, but I think

Speaker 2:

It, but what has

Speaker 1:

Shifted, okay. I think,

Speaker 2:

And so we, we are preparing this document and thinking about, um, one shoreline's recommendations. Uh

Speaker 1:

Okay.

Speaker 2:

Considering that and including that in the policy. I'm just trying to figure out, I would love to share with you.

Speaker 1:

So has a lot though happened with the like current general plan process? It's a lot more in the current process that's happening. This current process. Yeah. So like less in like previous processes, um, and more now. So it's like a very, uh, new development that it's being considered.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. And I, I wouldn't say it's not like everyone woke up this year and was like, we need to address sea level rise again. It's been

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

At the staff level, it's been integrated in our hazard mitigation plan mm-hmm.

Speaker 1:

<affirmative>,

Speaker 2:

Uh, which is a common plan to address that type of Yeah. Um,

Speaker 1:

We have none hazard.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. But yes, it is kind of new for our general plan.

Speaker 1:

Okay. Now that makes sense.

Speaker 2:

And we've always had an interest in doing a city specific adaptation plan. I know some cities like Burlingame

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Burlingame has one. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. So I think that would be kind of our next step on that. But like we are, like our project, um, with our pump station, I'm forgetting the name of the pump station that's right on the bay.

Yeah. And that's directly related to moving community like homes out of the flood zone. Okay.

So

Speaker 1:

It's,

Speaker 2:

So that's like a real implementation project, but I think you're more focused on how planning documents Right.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. And like implementation as well. Um, more for like proposed planning, like, like when people propose new housing. Um, kind of, if that's considered. Cuz I know like there's, you know, there's all the, there's empty lots and I know I've seen like San Mateo has their sewer plant, they're moving or at least fixing. Yep. So I've seen it more with like larger infrastructure.

Speaker 2:

So that's another good example. Yeah.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Clean water, like mm-hmm. <affirmative>. Yeah. Um, and then are there like any policies that you wish the city would implement in terms of sea level rights or any climate action that like hasn't?

Speaker 2:

I mean, I think with adaptation specifically, like I mentioned, I think starting with more of like an overall strategy Yeah. Uh, document would be helpful to address adaptation in, in San Mateo.

Uh, but we're doing quite a lot. Yeah. I'm, I'm pretty proud of where, where we're moving.

There was a recent lawsuit, uh, in Berkeley. I don't know if you covered up to date with that. No.

Around building electrification where the court said that their ban on natural gas infrastructure actually preempts the federal policy. And so it's kind of throwing, um, some of the Yeah. Local jurisdiction restrictions into question. Oh. So it's been an interesting space to just

Speaker 1:

Watch. I think my mom said something about that one <laugh>.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. She's chalking

Speaker 1:

That. Yeah. Uh, that I've heard a lot from her. Yeah. Okay. I think, yeah, I think that was all of 'em. Is there any other like information or that you'd would like to share? Um, in regards to the topic or?

Speaker 2:

Well, I, I don't think so. I mean, I'm glad we, I at least got to mention some of the actual implementation projects Yeah. That are taking into account the impacts of sea level rise, uh, and flooding issues. I mean, we saw with the really bad storms in December and Oh yeah, February. Oh my goodness. I think, I mean it's interesting to think, I know in the kind of the immediate short term aftermath of those events, people were obviously unreasonably very upset and concerned about their homes Yeah. And their property. Uh, uh, but I like definitely made me wonder like, are people connecting this to, to climate change? Like that is an impact of climate change is seeing these, these 100 year storm rain events like this. Yeah. Um, and the frequency at which we'll see them. So I don't know if that was really, really

Speaker 1:

<crosstalk>. Oh yeah, no, I, I remember I saw, I remember seeing all the, the news coverage of it. Um, yeah,

Speaker 2:

Yeah. It's, it was big. I mean like San Francisco, we, I mean we, we had some bad flooding here, uh, in San Mateo, but like the shocking videos of people like on standup paddle boards in the street, like

Speaker 1:

Yeah, they're in like St. Carlos too also. I felt Love it. St. Carlos really bad. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. Yeah. Okay. Yeah. Yeah. This was me.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. I think, I hope the takeaway here is we've got implementation projects that are addressing these issues. Our general plan update, which is in draft will we'll start to address this, but we don't have a like, larger assessment focused on the city of San Mateo. Uh, you're probably very aware about the countywide vulnerability assessment.

Speaker 1:

Yes. And I'm, I think I'm gonna talk to somebody from the county as well.

Speaker 2:

Okay. Yeah. And now that's crazy, but it's like maybe eight years old now at this point. Yeah. Which is okay. I mean, I think, I don't think, um, things have changed too drastically. No. Except for just the urgency

Speaker 1:

Of Yeah. Well I just think more urgent at this moment. Yeah. Yeah. But yeah. Okay. Thank you. This was very helpful. Um, I really appreciate it.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. Good luck with your, uh, with your work and let me know if I can offer any more insights to Yeah. Our.

Interview 2

Speaker 1:

Um, so I'm currently working on my ba my thesis, which is, um, and I'm using the Bay Area as my case study. Um, and I'm kind of doing the relationship between housing and sea level rise, which is not something that's normally talked about in, um, land use planning that much. Um, nope.

Speaker 2:

Not

Speaker 1:

Enough. Yeah. And so kind of, and like the policy implications. Um, and so I'm doing interviews with, um, you know, nonprofits and, um, people from the city and the county, um, as a way to gain more as in an for my data collection. Um, so yeah. And so I have a few questions, um, and I'm also talking to Jeremy next week, um, some more of your policy side. Yeah. Um, so how did

Speaker 2:

Redacted respond

Speaker 1:

To you? No, I haven't heard, but I feel like a lot of people are very busy right now, so yeah, I've had a, this one <laugh> little bit of challenge to get people to respond, but with everybody with their housing elements and everything right now. So I understand and lots of work. Um, but yeah. Um, just for the record, what is your exact title and then what are your duties within the hlc?

Speaker 2:

I am the executive director. I am, uh, I set the political and financial direction of the organization and manage the board and the <inaudible>.

Speaker 1:

And then how long have all staff <laugh>, how long have you been in that position or with hlc?

Speaker 2:

Uh, since 2016.

Speaker 1:

Okay. Um, and then when you guys are doing your housing advocacy, does um, climate considerations ever come into consideration?

Speaker 2:

Yes.

Speaker 1:

Okay. Um, and do you ever consider sea level rise when you're dealing with your Um, absolutely. Okay. Um, and how, uh, when you are, how does it come into effect? Like, um, if you have any like examples or,

Speaker 2:

Yeah, so, um, for us, um, we are

Speaker 1:

Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, oh, it kind of went away. I can't hear <laugh>. It's fine.

Speaker 2:

Uh, we are very concerned about the preservation of existing homes

Speaker 1:

Mm-hmm. <affirmative> and,

Speaker 2:

Uh, that are at risk of flooding from sea level rise and are especially, uh, distraught by the idea of plan to treat

Speaker 1:

Mm-hmm. <affirmative>

Speaker 2:

And, uh, the redlining of, uh, areas that are at risk of inundation. Uh, we have, you know, obviously we really wanna see, uh, great protections for the bay and we wanna see clean water and we wanna Yeah. But not without, uh, and we would be supportive and interested in having a conversation about relocation or planned, uh, or figuring out ways to subsidize the, uh, we're buying out areas mm-hmm. <affirmative>, but not, but the idea of waiting until the flooding comes and then just having people not be able to move home is disgusting to us. Yeah. And so we are very interested in seeing, uh, in the absence of having a publicly funded plan, which is our first choice would be a publicly funded plan that has some sort of combination of protecting current residents, relocating current residents, and uh, you know, uh, coming up with a, a comprehensive plan, especially for the lowest incoming

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Folks and have, yeah. And have you guys seen that there's already been a little bit of like red lining? So like people every places like, um, east Pow Alto,

Speaker 2:

A lot of it is informal,

Speaker 1:

Right? Yeah. Informal. It's not the, like the sixties or previously we

Speaker 2:

Don't, we don't wanna see any development in this area cause of sea level wise Right. Which is a <inaudible>.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. And so when, when the housing elements come up that, you know, you guys advocate for, um, some of the sites are located in areas

Speaker 2:

That are, that was given in

Speaker 1:

<inaudible>. Yeah. And what, what

Speaker 2:

We would rather see, and I know this is like the least popular opinion that's ever been given, but we would rather see larger scale development that come with infrastructure funding and the community benefits that will create the, the long-term protections for those areas. Yeah. So for us, we would rather see a car bill come in and develop than piecemeal individual small condos.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. So higher, higher density in areas that are so like near Hillsdale Mall or something where it's not as close.

Speaker 2:

Right, right. Right. Well, yeah, if you're, if we're doing small scale develop, we either need to have large public in, in infrastructure investments or large private infrastructure investments or

a combination. But I, the, the, the just not seeing, just not allowing things in an area and not having, uh, a funded plan is really, uh, problematic.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Yeah. Um, yeah. Cause I know some of the, like the, some of the stuff in like Redwood City is right on the bay. Um, so when, and

Speaker 2:

Most recently there was a navigation center that was opposed by the Sierra Club, uh, for homeless people and there's a large homeless encampment there.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. There's one, there's a shelter by, I forget who I'm volunteering there in Redwood City.

Yeah, that's right next to the freeway. Yeah,

Speaker 2:

Right next to the jail. Yeah.

Speaker 1:

<laugh>. Um,

Speaker 2:

And, and they open the navigation center, uh, and it's with temporary homes and it's, I think, I think most people agree that it was a big success. Um, I would rather see a long term plan, but we are not gonna oppose an navigation.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Right. Yeah. Um, but some of the like larger scale, like not navigation, but like, um, regular, not regular, but market rate. Market rate or even affordable housing, um, since there's such a dire need for more housing everywhere in the Bay Area, um, is there like

Speaker 2:

It's better if they could be part of a larger development Yeah. That

Speaker 1:

Pays

Speaker 2:

For the infrastructure

Speaker 1:

To Yeah. With those areas. But when you guys are doing your advocacy, you still would support or do you still support housing wherever it is or you do, it's still taking, it's taken into consideration. So say if there was like a large scale right near the bay,

Speaker 2:

We, we would support it and we would and we also want the infrastructure.

Speaker 1:

Okay. So you would add that. Yeah, no, that makes sense. Yeah, cuz um, part of what I was I thinking in my thesis is that they're the two Es that, um, the barrier faces in other parts face, but I'm using the barrier specific case, um, of like sea level rise and the lack of housing that like both are gonna, um, one's more urgent in terms of immediate and then one is like coming in the next dec few decades that like the barrier is facing and so, yeah. Um, so, and then also when in advocacy advocating for housing elements, um, does it ever come up in your comments like any of the climate change ad adaptation or sea level rise?

Speaker 3:

Hello?

Speaker 1:

So, uh, when advocating for like, um, housing elements,

Speaker 2:

Can you

Speaker 1:

Hold on? Yes. Okay. So when advocating for housing elements, um, and you know, wanting to make sure that the cities meet their arena requirements, um, if some of the like priority sites, I believe that's what they're called, um, are located within an area that's expected to be inated. Is it still part of, or do you look at the specific sites when advocating for them to meet their arena? If they, if

Speaker 2:

They have areas that are urbanized that are in areas that are at risk of flooding, that needs to be part of the housing element Yeah. Is their plan for protecting those areas. So it's not so much about the new development, whether or not it happens, it's about what's gonna happen, how, how are they protecting the closed neighborhoods

Speaker 1:

Mm-hmm. <affirmative> what funding? Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Is there gonna be a new impact fee in that area that or in the city to help pay for the, is it, is there going to be a bond? Is there going to be like we wanna plan? Yeah, we wanna plan. Um, and if we can't get it regionwide, then we want it countywide and if we can't get it countywide, we want it city by city.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Cause I know one city at least one city has one.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. And there is the one San Mateo, the, the plan that Dave Pine has been working on, but whatever we ask to hear about it or to be a part of it, suddenly you get uninvited considered too noisy.

Speaker 1:

<laugh>. Yeah. Because one shoreline came up with some guidelines, but it didn't, when I was looking at it, it didn't look like much about housing the one shoreline guidelines. It doesn't,

Speaker 2:

It it's just enough. So I don't care if they've even mentioned new housing. Right.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Or even existing plans. Yeah, yeah. It's existing. Yeah. And like, it's like bur games is also mostly just about the Bayshore, which is not housing at all. It's all um, commercial, which is a different, right. Yeah. And that yeah. Hotels.

Speaker 2:

Right.

Speaker 1:

And everybody

Speaker 2:

Cares about the airport and Highway 101, but nobody cares about each follow up.



Speaker 1:

Yeah. Or like the, cause I know San Mateo is already their sewer plant, they water waste water. Yeah. Cuz I've seen that I that a lot of the planning, and I remember this also when I was in school, um, undergrad, that like a lot of the planning is like wastewater treatment plants the airport like infrastructure and less. Right. Actual people. Yeah. Cuz like when I was in slow, they were doing the wastewater treatment plant was on the beach, which is very stupid, uh, <laugh>. But they had to move it not uncommon in California, not uncommon. Yeah. And a lot of the maps you see are also always showing all the infrastructure, like they're all three airports are within. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. How much, you know, it,

Speaker 1:

It's important an

Speaker 2:

Airport, I kind of, I understand, but at the same time it also costs a lot of money to relocate a city.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Yeah. And it's, yeah. So that makes sense. Yeah. Yeah. Um,

Interview 3

Speaker 1:

Thesis. So I'm currently in a master's degree program at the University of Groningen Netherlands. Um, and it's in sustainability society and planning. So basically the more social sustainability element. So planning and less the, um, cuz there's another one that's environmental and infrastructure planning. So it's more the other side of planning. And so I'm working on my thesis, which I'm doing on the relationship between, um, housing development and sea level rise, or the lack thereof. Um, in terms of in policy discussions. Um, and I kind of came across this from my past work when I was working in the Bay Area. And so I'm using the Bay Area as kind of a case study in, um, whether or not it's taken into effect either land use decisions or policy decisions. What's taken into effect, uh, sea level rise. Okay. Uh, when making, determining, um, housing policy. Um, okay. Yeah. So it's kind of what, and so I'm talking to different, um, people within the policy sphere, um, and seeing who,

Speaker 2:

Who have you talked to so far? What, what have

Speaker 1:

You learned? So, I've only talked to two people so far. So I've talked to the sustainability analyst for the City of San Mateo as well as your boss, <laugh>. Um, I've talked to Evie as well. Yeah. Um, yeah, and they're both, that it's starting to be taken to effect, but not as soon, not very long. It hasn't been for a while, but it's more recent developments than it is starting to be taken into consideration, but not as much as due to because of the housing crisis that we are, that the area's going. So that's the priority. Um, yeah.

Speaker 2:

Who, uh, who are you scheduled to talk to? Who, who are you hoping to, to be in touch with?

Speaker 1:

Yes. I have a, I have a lot of emails out. I haven't, it's struggled cause everybody's working on their housing elements right now, so everybody's busy and I understand that. Um, so I have some with the county, um, as well as other nonprofits. Yeah. And then just one other person with the city. So yeah. I'm mostly focusing on Sano County cuz I just, I have more contacts within the Makes sense. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Very hard to do. Hard to do the cold calls.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. And especially from here, uh, with the time zone <laugh> difference. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

What, what time is it there now for you?

Speaker 1:

Uh, eight o'clock.

Speaker 2:

Okay. And it'll be like light outside until 11:00 PM presumably, or

Speaker 1:

Like nine 30. Right. It's not as like, it's not like Norway or something where it's till like midnight.

But we'll get to I think like 10 30 by June, which is crazy. That's pretty cool.

Speaker 2:

10 30 is pretty solid. Yeah. It's not all sun.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Compared to home. Yeah. Compared to the Bay Area. It's a lot lighter later. Yeah. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Cool. Um, alright, now, now I'm, I'm happy to answer any questions.

Speaker 1:

Perfect. Okay.

Speaker 2:

To know what I'm gonna talk about.

Speaker 1:

Yes. Um, and so just for like basic, uh, what is your exact title with HLC and what are your duties?

Speaker 2:

So, like I said, I'm the policy manager, uh,

In that role help oversee a lot of the dimensions of H C's policy work. I, I, I know that's pretty abstract, but what that means is working with cities and their leaders largely to change housing

policy. And in the last year a lot of what it has meant is working with cities to, to update their housing elements and reviewing those documents, providing feedback, working with local

community groups. So it's hard to say like a week to week. Like Yeah. You know, sometimes I write letters, sometimes I organize community meetings. Sometimes a lot of what I'm doing is

lobbying calls and talking to people one on one and just trying to explain what's going on. And when I say lobbying more often than not, that's just like teaching them how policy works

<laugh> and how the process works. Like Yeah. It's not even, it's, it's so basic. It's

Speaker 1:

No, I understand. I, I worked on the other side

Speaker 2:

People out fancy hitters and I almost always, I almost only talk to people on Zoom, frankly. Yeah.

Speaker 1:

I'm

Speaker 2:

Almost, but like I, I, uh, a lot of it is just talking to people and making the case.

Speaker 1:

And then

Speaker 2:

Yeah. I'd say it might be easier to talk on a monthly basis, like, uh, or break things down by campaign. Like I am running a housing element campaign, which has largely been driven by me and it's less of a, there's not a lot of community organizing. Like it's a lobbying campaign in which I have reviewed housing elements, done a primarily technical analysis of what the law requires and what cities could do to make it easier to build housing. Yeah. I'll talk to a local stakeholder or an affordable housing developer who works in the city. I might talk to like a staff person or a city council member. And then I send a letter with my feedback and then the city take some of that and I work with the state regulator to help facilitate their review. And then, uh, so that's the housing elements. There's a big county housing element campaign, which is me working with a, a coalition of organizations and people focused on the county of San Mateo. Yeah. And their housing element, which affects all of the local jurisdictions in that county is the largest source of funding for affordable housing, not funding for subsidy, for affordable housing. And so their housing plan is pretty important and, and the county also has a lot of unique populations like farm workers that most of the other cities don't.

Speaker 1:

So their

Speaker 2:

In the same way. So

Speaker 1:

Their housing element isn't just the unincorporated area, it's the whole county and not just, it's

Speaker 2:

Just the

Speaker 1:

Unincorporated area. Okay. That's what I was thinking. But yeah. But that probably has a lot of

Speaker 2:

Land use.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. But

Speaker 2:

It affects, you know, when they talk about money, it affects the whole

Speaker 1:

County. Oh yeah. So the money element. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

And the things the county does like for, for some tenant protections, like a, a just cause for eviction or rental registry protections. Yeah. You don't have to know what those are, just for me

to say. It's easier if the county does it and then other jurisdictions can sign on and like contribute resources. But the county manages it. Yeah.

Speaker 1:

The county has

Speaker 2:

<inaudible> from the jurisdictions floating around. Like it has a big sales tax where they can pull money from for any priority that comes up.

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

You know, the priority is farm worker housing, so they just Oh, that's good. Been pulling money outta thin air to support farm worker housing. And it's not really outta thin air, but like there's money floating around in the county unlike mosts.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. The way that, and they're probably, yeah. Just thinking. Yeah. And

Speaker 2:

Aside from these housing elements specific campaigns, I'm also involved in, uh, the San Mateo general plan update.

Speaker 1:

Oh yeah. It's like

Speaker 2:

A local major rezoning discussion.

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

And so it's not my main campaign, it's kinda like a side project more so, but I have been providing support to local advocates and it, it, it's convenient timing because the general plan is connected to the housing element, which is theoretically, you know, it's a part of the general plan.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. And it's,

Speaker 2:

Yeah.

Speaker 1:

So Yeah. And they're just, they're doing more than one element at once. Yeah. And then

Speaker 2:

There are, there are a lot of size projects that come up, I would say with all of the different cities.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Um,

Speaker 2:

I spend a lot of time supporting local partners and just teaching people about the housing element process, but also like going beyond housing elements. Like why is it hard to be able to in San Mateo County, what are the policy barriers to that? So yeah.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Okay. Yeah. That's a long answer, but Oh, that was good. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Gives you a clear-ish picture.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. And with the housing elements, when you've reviewed them, have you seen anything about sea level rise in them? Um, or has it, does it not come up at all in any of 'em?

Speaker 2:

It's really not a, a major theme of housing elements I would say unfortunately. Uh, it's, it's really, um, yeah the, the housing element plans don't tend to consider sea level rise on their own and they're the, the dis I should say some of the plans discuss it like it's given a chapter, a

Speaker 1:

Section. Yeah. I've seen like a little section but not much.

Speaker 2:

I don't wanna say it's been like completely ignored. It's just sometimes it gets a section and like a lot of things in the housing element, cities sometimes include useful data and then don't act on it. Yeah. It's like you think they care but you know, they've got a lot of things to care about and it just doesn't top the list enough to, to have devote resources or time. So yeah, there's that little section and it mostly gets ignored in a lot of them, but cities like Foster City

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Will probably

Speaker 2:

Considering climate change and a risk in some of the things that they did.

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

In the sense that there were some sites where they used sea level rise as a justification to not plan for housing there. Well

Speaker 1:

That's kind of good. Yeah. But

Speaker 2:

It's hard to say that it was a mo

Speaker 1:

But if it's also a, just a way to excuse not putting any housing there. Oh, it froze again.

Speaker 2:

Really have sea level rise risk. Like they have some pretty big apartments that are like right on a bay.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. And

Speaker 2:

Those, and they're saying that all these apartments are gonna get redeveloped at like a very slightly higher density, which is just seems pretty unlikely. It doesn't happen that often.

Speaker 1:

No, it big

Speaker 2:

Apart complex too. So it wouldn't happen overnight. And they're saying it'll happen pretty soon and again without a lot of incentives and so

Speaker 3:

<affirmative>

Speaker 1:

Yeah. The likelihood of like actually like apartments becoming other apartments,

Speaker 2:

It hasn't been a good faith factor.

Speaker 1:

Ah yeah.

Speaker 2:

It's just what it seems

Speaker 1:

Like. Okay. Yeah. So they, because like I'm assuming with all the like site analysis that they have to do of like what are the, you know, all their available sites, I'm assuming like places like Foster City and East Palo Alto where the most of it probably will, they'd not include, they include places that will be affected. I mean it sounds like Foster City, you said they didn't, but they did say Easton is an excuse. But um, did any other cities keep breathing? Why did it freeze again?

Speaker 2:

Um, I can hear you but I don't know if you can hear

Speaker 1:

Me. Oh yeah, it went mute for a sec. I don't know. Sorry. I, the WiFi's normally pretty good in my apartment, but I don't know, it's weird today. Okay. Um, yeah.

Speaker 2:

Um, I was saying I, not that I can think of.

Speaker 1:

Okay.

Speaker 2:

But in some public hearings, like if something city council members might have talked about 21 jurisdictions in San Mateo County. Yeah. Maybe in the housing element in simultaneously I did not attend most of the public hearings.

Speaker 1:

Yeah, no that's a lot. That'd be, that'd be too much. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

So there I, I don't wanna say that no discussion occurred but not a lot made in impact.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Yeah. That made sense. And in with hlc, do you guys take um, that into consideration like seal rise when you're discuss like thinking of different policies for housing or is it more the other considerations for housing?

Speaker 2:

We tend to be focused on affordable housing. I I will say the areas that we're typically advocating for more housing are west of 1 0 1.

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

So away from the bay. Yeah.

Speaker 1:

In San mate. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Cause east of 1 0 1 as environmental challenges and is also historically redlined in a lot of places and that's, you know, whether that more, it's more industrial. Um,

Speaker 1:

Yeah. So

Speaker 2:

I mean there may be spaces for, I'm sure there's some good places for housing east of 1 0 1 but, but that's just almost never our, I was just in my time at H L C I have never once proposed that.

Yeah. So it kind of takes the sea level rise considerations out of it for us I

Speaker 1:

Think. Yeah. So like the other environmental issues, like probably a lot also have like soil problems from past industry and other issues that you see so that the other issues that you see basically eliminate the same <laugh> level rise. But um, yeah, cuz you guys also, um, I'm talking to ev was the advocating like of the existing housing to make sure that is still, that's already there. So a lot of it is, well now it's in that nothing's affordable but was previously <laugh>, um, the more affordable housing was located east of um, 1 0 1. Um, and to make sure that that is still, like those houses are still feasible to be lived in without worrying about flooding and that like those people aren't. Is there any policy you guys do there like in terms of like the general plan or housing elements to make sure that existing housing we

Speaker 2:

Have not been doing a lot of like environmental mm-hmm. <affirmative> resilience or uh, social justice related to like trying to preserve habitability of those homes? Yeah. And I don't know what the organization's,

Speaker 1:

Yeah I think it's a really not very common, but I was just curious. Yeah,

Speaker 2:

I think, I mean I think it's something that could become of increasing importance and, and part of me is like we should, we should come up with a separate way to, to, you know, reward people who got pushed into formerly redlined areas. Yeah. I don't know what that way would be, but if, but if there was something that we could do that, that might be worth pursuing. I don't know if encouraging people to continue living in flood zones

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

By, by fixing all the problems makes a lot of sense. Long term. Much like I think we should be gradually, you know, it's fine if people wanna live in places like paradise that burn to the ground sometimes. I don't think they should get fire insurance subsidized by the government if they choose to do so. Yeah.

Speaker 1:

I think they

Speaker 2:

Should have to deal with the risk that they themselves have chosen and if their house burns down then and they couldn't find insurance cuz no one's stupid enough to give insurance in the middle of high fire danger areas. I'm like that's fine. They chose to do that. Um, you know, that's, and I think that's, you know, five years ago maybe that wasn't the case but, but now I think we are pretty aware of the risks and with sea level rise and being east of 101, it's a little more complicated than what I'm saying. Yeah.

Speaker 1:

A

Speaker 2:

Lot of people living there. It's

Speaker 1:

Historically redlined. Yeah. Historically the poor more, um, poor areas. It froze again.

Speaker 2:

Me again,

Speaker 1:

Now you're frozen. Yeah. Froze. Good. Sorry. I dunno what's going on with the wifi. Okay.

Hopefully now it's back. Um, but yes, I understand. Um,

Speaker 2:

I think you get the point. Yeah. It's, it's a complicated issue but I don't know how to solve it and so we haven't

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Time

Speaker 2:

We haven't touched it much so I haven't had to explore

Speaker 1:

It much. No, that makes sense. Yeah. Cuz it seems like, um, the more urgent in terms of next five years of housing crisis is more the focus of the more urgent current crisis. Yeah. Yeah. Also, like

Speaker 2:

It would, it would make it a lot easier for people to move from the areas that are going to be affected by climate change if there's a ton of everywhere else.

Speaker 1:

Exactly. So like

Speaker 2:

I I I do think it helps facilitate a just transition away from those areas

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

By making sure that we have a, you know, in a slow motion sense flee to as the, the inconvenience of being, you know, dealing with water all the time gets too high.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. And I think post December with the bad floods maybe people understand a little better.

Yeah. Um, let me see what else. Um, is there, like if it could be taken into account with like some



of the housing elements, would you guys, um, be, I don't know, like is that something you can see happening, um, in the future where um, they are taken into account with the housing elements in the future? Maybe not this round, but maybe the one in eight, eight years?

Speaker 2:

So I'll say I think there's two, two parts of that. Um, the first is like what is taken into account to me because I think there are a lot of jurisdictions in Marin and San Mateo County that are like taken into account means we are wealthy coastal cities and we should not have as high of an obligation to build housing.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. That's not what I was meaning, but Yes.

Speaker 2:

But I don't think that's what you mean at all. No

Speaker 1:

<laugh> more like placement.

Speaker 2:

Cause it's, it presents, it illustrates the political challenge Yeah. Of accommodating climate change. It is an easily co-op thing when people are like, I my

Speaker 1:

Wifi,

Speaker 2:

What about, you know, Marin city on the coast, you know, saying that part of your area is in a flood zone. Well okay, you better figure out how to build some damn housing and the rest

Speaker 1:

Like Yeah.

Speaker 2:

And, and I think that is just a real challenge in accounting for environmental factors. Like when, when we try to get like environmental factors accounted for, it often ends up being manipulated in some way

Speaker 1:

Used by the nimby

Speaker 2:

The ideal way to account for the environmental factors rather than having that influence like the number of homes a jurisdiction is expected to plan for. It's just like a, a rule that could be like if you are going to plan for housing in these areas, you need to describe how you're gonna make sure that it is resilient for a hundred years or it doesn't pay. Yeah. And it doesn't need to be a hundred years. But these analytical requirements are something that, that there are a lot of them for different parts of housing law not related to climate change. Yeah. You know, right now in the past five years they did it for fair housing where there are all these, I mean it's basically like they're like city fruit, show some data and then describe the situation related to segregation and integration and poverty and and such.

Yeah. And then, you know, maybe you have to make some policy changes based on that information. And the fact is the law is a little squishy. Yeah. Because the whole process is a little squishy. Like cities often intentionally ignore data or they present data and then don't do anything or they present data and then misrepresent what it means. And it's just, you know, you

can imagine all the common often completely not even done with intention. It's just like yeah. Staff members are trying to do their job and they're trying to put this document together and not getting too much controversy and so they go the route of least controversy and Yeah. It's, it's not even necessarily something sinister. It's like the, maybe the nature of government.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. It's more the council and the planning than the staffers. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

I think the dialysis I think would be the, the most likely thing mm-hmm. <affirmative>, um, could be legislated and made a factor. And then, you know, in communities where, or in administrations governor administrations are like the Department of Housing and community development is empowered to enforce the law strongly

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Then they will be able to, to enforce that requirement. So that's all the one thing. The second thing I'll say is that the housing element may not be the best vehicle for full consideration of climate change. There's a recently added thing, an environmental justice element. Oh yeah. Um, and and that's new. It doesn't have any teeth. I mean there's like a little teeth, but like it's not, it's not like the housing elements in terms of like kind of enforceable requirements Yeah. Or penalties for really failing to do it. And, and that might be an opportunity like to, to a tool to strengthen, which is often how these things develop. Like they get introduced as like a two plus exercise and then like requirements get tacked on over time and it's just like you have to do it incrementally to be non-con virtual basically.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Kind of like what they've done currently with how much more they're actually enforcing the housing elements here.

Speaker 2:

Sorry. How the housing element process worked.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Like now how they're actually at least the government, the state is attempting to be a little better on them this time. Yeah. Okay. Yeah, this was very helpful I think. Is there anything else in regards to the topic that you wanna say or else that was very useful?

Speaker 2:

Um, you mean just related to like housing elements and climate change in general?

Speaker 1:

Yeah, that works too. Yeah. Yeah. Or housing climate change in general doesn't be housing elements. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Okay. Yeah. I could, I could say a couple things. So one, one thing, and this isn't just the housing element. It, it's the housing element, but it's also a lot of the state's planning efforts mm-hmm.

Speaker 1:

<affirmative>

Speaker 2:

Center housing around preexisting transit.

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

And so it's like if you have a Cal train stop then you have to allow housing around cal train stuff. Yeah. And you'll have a park station, then you have to allow housing in that parking lot that far out and all these things that's like focused on housing around preexisting transit. And there are kind of two fundamental problems with that. It creates really bad incentives.

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

So communities like Atherton shuts down their Caltrain station in large part because they did not want the state housing mandate to like, and in other cities in like Santa Cruz County, I forget it's like Carmel or something. I was just talking to a guy who's like, yeah, like one of the council members wants to get rid of a high frequency bus stop so that the housing wants don't apply cause they apply if you have a high frequency bus stop. So it's, it's, it's, it's good because we want that housing in your I'm Yeah. But it does present a fascinating disincentive. Yeah. Uh, just,

Speaker 1:

And seems to be more in the suburban because like I, when I worked in Oakland, they basically have done every single station at this point.

Speaker 2:

Well they've done all the stations, but it's like in Oakland, even Oakland is not well covered by

Speaker 1:

Public. Oh no. And the thing is, is like yeah. It's like bus lines also can go away. That's his big,

Speaker 2:

That's the thing. And so yeah, Oakland, I don't know if Oakland, Oakland hasn't expanded public transit. No. I can say that. No.

Speaker 1:

But

Speaker 2:

I I I don't think that they're continuing to make it easier. So the disincentive of tying housing to transit is, I I don't think it makes it bad policy. Like it should be, you think about housing your transit example. Yeah. But, but it's just one, you know, policy is rarely good or bad. It's like costs and benefits and Yeah. The benefit of building the housing, your transit comes with this cost community stop planning for transit. And I think the second thing is these housing elements in many ways, like even the most ambitious of them in San Mateo County do not touch single family zoning. And so there will continue in San Mateo County to be single family neighborhoods. Yeah. Right. Next to Caltrain stations. And there will be, you know, uh, yeah. It's, it's, that's, that's the plan. And most communities concentrated as much housing as they could along El Camino rehab.

Yeah. Right along El Camino react. And the argument is it's for transit, it's near the businesses, this is what we want. But the fact is it's a pretty big environmental injustice to put all of the renters right next to a big, loud polluting transit cord with tiny sidewalks and no bike plane. Yep. Like that's the plan that the vast majority of cities have come up with. And it's, it's worth taking a step back and appreciating that these housing elements in many cases are relative to what

these cities have done for the past 50 years. Big divergent. Like it's a lot more housing than they've ever planned for. So I don't mean to say that it's not, uh, meaningful, but it's like, it's not a revolution yet. You know, all the city's making noise about how much is being asked of them. Like Yeah. They haven't touched their single family neighborhoods. So I don't know what they're making this. I mean, I do know what is must have, they've gotten used to changing nothing ever. And now they have to change a tiny event

Speaker 1:

Because this is the first one. They're really enforcing the Rena numbers. Right.

Speaker 2:

And kind, you know, kind of, I'm about to talk with an h cd person after we get off the phone who I think is not enforcing h the Rena numbers. Well, when I want them to force them more strongly <laugh>. Uh, so it's like, so the law is is, and I I'm a moderate on that side. Like I I do think that they have to be flexible and Yeah. They have to allow cities, like cities are not touching single family zoning. And it is disturbing to me. But I also think they are, they can comply with the law in most cases without touching single family zoning. Yeah. It doesn't require them to do that yet. And

Speaker 1:

Maybe they should a little bit, but that's a different story. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

In a couple, I mean, in a couple places like Atherton and Hillsborough.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. That's not feasible. They have

Speaker 2:

To do a little something, but it's like, I don't know. I want single family zoning to No, no longer apply in like San mate, like a real city. And

Speaker 1:

We, certain neighborhoods like where I grew up. Yeah. Like the neighborhood I grew up in would be so convenient for like, even like a, a four plexes. Like, not like even like massive. Cause it was so close to downtown apartments all Yeah. Like little apartments. Yeah. Not even massive. Yeah. Okay. Well this was very helpful. Thank you.

Interview 4

Speaker 1:

So, how long have you been on San Mateo's Planning Commission and what got you interested in joining it? Just so for background?

Speaker 2:

Sure. Uh, first of all, thank you for making the Bay Area your point of discussion for your studies. Um, every, every, every little bit helps us become more educated and I'm will be so excited to read your final documents.

Speaker 1:

Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. Um,

Speaker 2:

So I was born an environmentalist. I, um, just came to me naturally and, um, probably about 10 years ago a friend, um, and I started chairing and, uh, vice chairing the, uh, local cool cities, um,

team. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, I dunno if you were familiar with their work, but through the Sierra Club.

Speaker 1:

Oh, yeah. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

We ran it for about, I don't know, probably about five or six years. Um, and I started to become somewhat interested in city and local government, um, near around that same time. So I just got to get to know all the, um, council members by interacting with them on sustainability type of issues.

Speaker 1:

Mm-hmm.

Speaker 2:

<affirmative>, subsequently the city decided to, um, get a new commission put together, which was called the Sustainability, um,

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Commission. And

I was, uh, appointed to that board, I guess nine years ago, um, as the, and then I became the vice chair. Um, subsequently we put together our cap, um, that first year and then an opening in the planning commission came up. Um, and I'd already turned them down twice, so I figured I wouldn't get a third shot or I wouldn't get a shot turned out again. So I, I took it. Um, and that's how I ended up being a planning commissioner. And in, in, in hindsight, I missed the sustainability commission a lot because it was able to actually work on policy mm-hmm.

<affirmative>, which we, which we don't do. Yeah. Um, so, you know, it's, you get different roles, you get different, different things you have to adhere to to, you know, um, work within those roles. And that was one of the things that was sad to me. But, um, that's how I ended up being a planning commissioner.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Um, and in terms of the planning commission, it's mostly cuz every city's a little different. Um, and I know, so in San Mateo it's mostly just you guys do the house, you guys, uh, work on the house, like approve the housing element as well as, um, housing developments. Yes. Right.

Speaker 2:

All all developments.

Speaker 1:

All developments. Yes. Um, um, and when you are thinking of the developments, um, does um, either climate issues or sea level rise ever come into consideration?

Speaker 2:

Um, every time there is a development, I look at it through a variety of different vein mm-hmm. <affirmative> or lenses, but none of the issues are disconnected. Yep. So, so it's relatively simple to look at projects and determine if they're going to be beneficial to the ci to all of the citizens of San Mateo or not. And that's part of what, how you're supposed to look at them is if, if they're beneficial to everyone in the city of San Mateo. And you cannot say that, that there's ever been a project that's been beneficial to everybody, but that's what you're sworn to do.

Yeah. Is to look at it for benefits of everybody. So with that said, um, the sustainability component to me reaches throughout the whole discussion, um, and, you know, all the way from what does a, an affordable housing unit mean to us sustainably, um, um, and, and, and for our resiliency.

Um, and the location is just as important as the, um, uh, is it close to schools? Are they close to schools? Are they close to the bay? Yeah. Um, are there parts around that? That whole discussion is, is, is intertwined what, what, um, I now am focusing on more, um, than anything is the, um, you know, I, I don't think that we are housing advocates. Um, I think that we are, um, how should I put it? Um, we, we, we try and come from the, the side of just being, just being human. And I know that that's an odd statement, but we don't treat, we don't, we don't have any ways to look at a project and say, you know, what's the human scale here? What are we benefiting from? How do we check these boxes? We don't have that mm-hmm. <affirmative>. So we have to think outside of the, the, you know, documents themselves. Yeah. Um, and look at ways to address, address the equality, how it ties into sustain sustainability and what's it do for generations. So I know that was a lot and I'm kind of robbed, uh, I'm kind of, uh, being a little bit random and I'm not, not sure why my mind isn't completely focused. Right.

Speaker 1:

No, that's good.

Speaker 2:

So, so the, my issues with, there's a couple of issues with the housing element, which are, um, pretty difficult to grasp in the sense that why we are not doing the housing element as the state has directed us to. And what does that mean to the city sustainably going forward. Mm-hmm.

Speaker 1:

<affirmative>.

Speaker 2:

Um, and so I don't know if you're aware how, how closely you've been watching the housing element.

Speaker 1:

I've seen, I've heard what my mom has told me, basically <laugh>. Okay. And she tells me stuff. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

It it's an utter, it's an utter, and I know you're, you're looking into Bay Area, but it's a, it's, it's complete failure. Uh, um, yeah. From day and it's really sad. Yeah. Um, cause there was no reason for it whatsoever. So the failures put themselves in an extremely difficult position and they chose that route and now they're starting to pay the consequences for that. Unfortunately, what that does is it, it it, it delays implementing the, um, affordable housing components that are mandated by the housing element. So we are all losing because of their choice to follow a path that is has so far failed everybody, um, including the state. Um, the state, uh, regulators

Speaker 1:

Is they failed twice. Right. They've had a,

Speaker 2:

Oh, it's failed twice and it was

Speaker 1:

Failed a third. Okay. Yeah. I just, I wasn't sure how many times since gone to the state.

Speaker 2:

No, it's, it's, it's honestly, it's an embarrassing document. It is so bad. Yeah.

Speaker 1:

It,

Speaker 2:

It, it's like how could you even think of submitting

Speaker 1:

This because a lot of cities have now failed. Or like, it took 'em a while. Like I know the city I worked for before, cause I worked for Oakland, it took 'em like one or two rounds, but not that many one round. I think Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Keep in, keep in mind that the reason San Mateos has failed is because we have decided that we are not going to follow the guidelines and that we are and that we are. Right. And that city attorney has stated that clearly that he feels that the state has overstepped their bounds and that we are in, are, we are substantially in compliant and we're not. So, but let, let me, let me make it real simple about the C level rise as far as I can see, and this could be a really good thing for you, Rebecca, to, to um, incorporate as part of your, your, you say you're doing your masters, your thesis. Yeah,

Speaker 1:

I was on my thesis. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Okay. So in a housing element and in the general plan, because they're one and the, they're not one and the same, but housing element is part of the general

Speaker 1:

Yeah. It's one of the elements of the plan. Yeah. <laugh>.

Speaker 2:

Right. So, you know, it also has to do with sustainability. Um, and, and environmental justice actually they call it. So, so that's an element that could be a standalone. Um, or you can incorporate it into your other seven or eight elements. The city has decided to abuse it, uh, uh, to intertwine it, intertwine it, intertwine it with all the rest of the elements and not have a standalone. I think that's a mistake also. Yeah. Um, because you can't really verify, you've gotta spend so much time going through the all of the other ones and all they'll say is, well, we addressed it in blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, transportation circulation. Well, to me it would've been so much easier for them just to have a standalone environmental justice component. Yeah. But they chose to do that and they chose not to do that cuz they don't want to do it. <laugh>.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. So,

Speaker 2:

Okay. You have an option. You don't have to, but it has to be, you have to address it in the other elements. So what we're looking at right now, um, is for the shoreline, um, are, are you familiar here with, uh, one Shoreline?

Speaker 1:

Yeah. I'm gonna be later today talking with somebody from them.

Speaker 2:

Who are you talking with by the way?

Speaker 1:

Mind? Uh, McKenna.

Speaker 2:

Oh, McKenna. Okay. Yeah. Um, so one Shoreline is doing a lot of good studies mm-hmm. <affirmative>, um, and hopefully they're gonna be able to continue to be funding because we need, we need that independence, uh, arm there. Yeah. For all of them. So my, this is, this is where I see the city of San Mateo having its biggest challenge, um, for sea level, sea level rise is, is obviously on the east side of 1 0 1. Yep. And what the city's own maps now show is there's a, um, in, in, in their, in their general plan is they've mapped out areas that are prone to, uh, seawater sea level rise, um, implications. Um, and there is also the problem of shallow groundwater tables mm-hmm.

Speaker 1:

<affirmative>.

Speaker 2:

And so one shoreline, they just completed a study, I don't know if you've seen it, um, on the, in inundation of, of the shoreline with water, um, coming from below and in, in and interacting with surface water, which will end up being standing water. Yeah.

Speaker 1:

I haven't seen that. I'll look for it. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. It's a, it's a, it's a really good study. So now what we have is we don't have a protected shorelight.

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Yet that's almost less important now than what are you gonna do with this soggy soil? And that in turn has made the city look at the degree of exposure that those areas have to electrification during an earthquake.

Speaker 1:

Oh wow. Yes.

Speaker 2:

And um, there are areas on the east side of the highway that are now being labeled as highly susceptible to major electrification movements. Mm-hmm. <affirmative> direct directly attack, you know, going to have, uh, you know, substantial damage to properties. Um, and nobody wants to think about this, but I honestly, I honestly think that we're at a point where we have to think about retrieval or whatever you want, however you want to call it. I don't know how you do, how you fix this, Rebecca. Yeah. It, it's placed on my mind a lot. How are you gonna fix, you can fix water from coming in from above,

Speaker 1:

But coming from below is a lot harder. Yeah.

Speaker 2:



Coming from Guo and all of the infrastructure that is there currently Yeah. Is going, is already stressed and going to become considerably more stressed. So I am just, you know, I'm not a scientist. Um, but it just intrigues me to, to try and figure out what, how can you fix this? Cuz I haven't seen any solutions yet.

Speaker 1:

Yeah, me either. Because,

Speaker 2:

Because the county of San Mateo, the county of San Mateo is the most at risk county in this state of California to the effects of sea level rise.

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

And we are the tar the center of that target.

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

We you meaning the city of San Mateo.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. And I think, cuz I'm thinking like Foster City and at East Palo Alto, they know more just because they, it's very obvious for not know more, but like, it's very obvious for them since they're all at sea level versus San Mateo. It's only like half the city. Um, and it feels kind of like, um, segregation, not segregation, but cuz of what more east east of the 101 is traditionally more less affluent.

Speaker 2:

Correct. Yeah. So, so you know, but you know, again, it kind of ties in with our housing element.

Speaker 1:

So Yeah. Let

Speaker 2:

Me, let me give you a brief description of what happened very, very briefly. Yeah. Almost two years ago, uh, the old housing, uh, guru came to our planning commission meeting and said, we've got the site's inventory already done. Um, we don't need to change any zoning, any zoning at all, and we've got the capacity to, to make this happen. Well those are all inaccurate. Yeah. So because they did that, and also we are gonna leave 75% of the city out of our housing element upgrade because, uh, we're not gonna touch any R one neighborhoods. So to your point, you now have 25% of the city that is supposed to take the burden of these 7,500 homes or 7,000 homes over the next eight years.

Speaker 1:

Yep.

Speaker 2:

You are, you, you are not looking at one of the high opportunity areas, what state law says you're supposed to, um, to incorporate some, to spread some of this housing throughout the city. We're not doing that at all. So just think about the numbers. You've got a hundred percent of your housing has to fit in this 25% of your city, meaning it's gonna be more expensive because we've restricted our, our, our land mass that we can even discuss. Yeah.

Speaker 1:

Right.

Speaker 2:

So, so that leads to continued high cost for purchasing of land and building, which in turn takes away the opportunities for low-cost housing.

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

And, and the where you are designating some of that low-cost housing, it's in, it's in susceptible areas to flooding and other environmental degradation.

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

So the whole, the whole equation of what we're doing dampens our ability to firmly further fair housing. Does that make sense?

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Yeah. Cause I know my parents' neighborhood, even though it's so close to downtown wasn't included <laugh>.

Speaker 2:

Oh no, no,

Speaker 1:

No, no, no, no. Don't touch Baywood

Speaker 2:

<laugh>. No. So, um, so that's where we're at. So, you know, the psychological part to all of this, to me, Rebecca is relatively simple. Yeah. Um, there's still rampant prejudice in in our country. Yes. And it's, it's very strong here in the city of San Mateo.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. I've seen some of, I've heard from my mom. Yeah. <laugh>. Okay.

Speaker 2:

So we've got restrictive, restrictive laws on what we can build, how big it can be. Yeah. And how dense that's all directly related to excluding others. Yes. And it's same discussion that's going on today that has been going on for quite a while. There's a lot of upheaval, uh, because of what the planning commission has done, um, which has been in simply following the rules of the state.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. And we,

Speaker 2:

We've been thrown under the bus. It's the reason that that, that the reason that staff and counsel has said the reason that the housing element has failed is because the planning commission, um, denied it. So

Speaker 1:

<laugh> Yeah.

Speaker 2:

It's, it's amazing sometimes And I had a, I had a, a city council member tell me it to my face, you know, we're gonna fail this and it's gonna be the planning commission's fault. So

Speaker 1:

I can imagine which one,

Speaker 2:

Well actually it was Redacted. Oh.

Speaker 1:

Uh, I was thinking one of the worst, uh, more extreme ones.

Speaker 2:

Well, Redacted obviously was clueless and, um, yeah. Was has stated it public Joe never stated it publicly. Well, he may have. I I don't watch the planning commission or the city council meeting too much and longer there's a waste of time <laugh>. So, um, yes, the environmental component drives it comes into it quite a bit. Um, also that, um, a lot of our housing is, is is now, um, being proposed a lot, a decent amount of housing now is being proposed including the, the, uh, affordable housing near major transit routes, which, um, open up another can of worms for the exposure to, uh, uh, you know, fumes from, from, uh, diesel and from uh, just, uh, regular, uh, automobile traffic. Yeah. Um, and that's a hard one. That's a hard one to fix because we're getting forced into, in the, into, you know, areas where housing just shouldn't be, but you don't have much of a choice. Um, so

Speaker 1:

Yeah,

Speaker 2:

That's, that's a, that's a big thing too because, um, you know, you, you, you again have left so many of the areas out of, out of, out of the mix that you really don't have much choices left on where you can build. Phil, let me, let me back up one second. And this is why I think this, this, this could be a really good point for you to watch is, so for a housing element, you don't have to do a c a document

Speaker 1:

Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

But for the general plan you do. I know, actually, let me back up. If you don't change, if you don't do any zone zoning changes for the housing element, you don't have to do a c equa.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. It's so zoning changes doesn't make it, they want

Speaker 2:

Yeah. That's one, one of the reasons why they said they weren't going to have to do any changes is because they didn't wanna do a c equa. Um, but with the, with the, the general plan, you do need to do a c a and, um, I'm, are you on the, on the updates with the, with um, the housing element or the general plan with the city, do they send you notifications?

Speaker 1:

I think so. I think cuz when I was living at home like four years ago I did stuff and then I kind of, when I moved out and then moved here, but before I moved out and moved to the East Bay, I didn't Yeah. Pay attention.

Speaker 2:

Okay. So,

Speaker 1:

But yeah, I know Siqua cuz I know, I mean my experience more is with Oakland, but they did se a so they didn't have to do se a again <laugh>, they had a whole, their special, they just did it in their housing element and then it counted. So now their new developments had to do it. Yeah. Which was smart way to do it.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. So, um, I I would think that you looking at the cpla for the general plan would be part of your process.

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Um, if you wanna get that detailed on one jurisdiction.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. I mean, mostly people I'm talking to just cuz it's my mom, you know, it's hard to find people and it's easier, not easier. But, you know, my mom has connection, uh, more connections with San Mateo, so I have a lot of people I've been talking to with San Mateo. So. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Well this is really an interesting study to tell you the truth because it, it's, it's clearly um, an, an area that has or is trying to avoid at all cost to change. Yeah. Um, and that's driven by the

Speaker 1:

S smug

Speaker 2:

R one neighborhoods. Yeah. Um, and so that's the big friction is is yeah. The whole point of change just frightens everybody. Um, and yeah. So it's never quite as clear as numbers. Right.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Yeah. And I think a lot of the people in the R one s, not all, um, but don't, since they've lived in their houses for a long time, don't understand fully the housing crisis and like the pressures that, you know, they, their children face or even other people face in terms of finding, um, housing like the, cuz there is, you know, there's the two crises, the housing crisis and the climate crisis Oh, definitely at once. Yeah. And a lot in the R one s have, you know, they bought their houses before everything was over a million dollars.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. Oh definitely. And um, you know, I honestly think that the ego is the biggest problem here because we're all mil, we're all millionaires. Some of us are multimillionaires because of the purchases that we made 20 years ago. Yeah. And that whole psyche is just so powerful. <laugh>, uh, you've got all these people that have these hugely inva in, in hugely strong ego feelings because they are the smartest and they're the richest. And that's the way it is. And honestly, I think it's really a huge part of the problem.

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

People won't acknowledge, uh, but you know, to your point of the 70 or, or they are ones and they're kind of ignoring it <affirmative> when our, I shouldn't even say this, but I will, when our

sewage treatment plant fails, they're not gonna be flushing their toilets up on the hills anymore than I am down on the bottom. So, you know, people, people think that they're living in this little protected bubble and that bubble's gonna pop. Yeah. Um, and unless we are able to do things, um, that are going to ensure our ability to be resilient, um, this, this is not gonna turn out positive.

Speaker 1:

No. Um, yeah.

Speaker 2:

And it, it's really a shame because we've got the time and we've got the knowledge, um, other than the groundwater now that we gotta deal with that. But we've got, we've got the resources to really prepare ourselves to be a resilient city and, um, I don't see that the, the uh, the overall will to do that.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. And the staff just kinda has to follow what the council says. So they are,

Speaker 2:

Well

Speaker 1:

As a former planner, the

Speaker 2:

Discussion, but as far as, as far as I see it, honestly I've been doing it long enough is that staff runs this city. Yeah.

Speaker 1:

Um,

Speaker 2:

And they spoonfeed. See that's their problem. One of the problems with the planning commission is that usually nobody ever questions staff.

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Uh, we didn't only question them, we pointed out their, their mistakes. <laugh>, you won't see council do that. Oh, council, council always wants to work with staff. Well, that's fine. Council is elected. They need to play the political game. Yeah. The planning commission is not elected and we don't have to play any games. We can just stay it straight up Yeah. And walk

Speaker 1:

Away. I guess I'm less used to smaller. I was in Oakland, so that has a different vibe. Um Oh yeah, sure. And then I, I had worked in St. Carlos, but that was so long ago and it wasn't as divisive.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. Well what's hap what happens is that, you know, you can only be a planning or a city council member for 12 years and most of 'em have been lately going out after two terms. Eight years. Yeah. And staff is there. So yeah. The turnover is actually beneficial to staff for the most part because they get a new crop of planning or city council numbers. And quite frankly, if you put the city council, this current city council, in fact most of them up against the planning commission in a debate, uh, because of the very young, intelligent, educated planning

commissioners that sit with me, um, we would just kill the planning, the council <laugh> meaningful debate. And it's really sad. No, it's really sad.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Because,

Speaker 2:

Because we are choosing people who will, who only for the most part are going to say we're not gonna make any changes. And that's all that that's, that's all that gets done is no progress gets made. Yeah. And it's, it's sad. It's really sad.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. And so then, um, save 10 minutes, uh, then the state kind of has to take it over.

Speaker 2:

Oh,

Speaker 1:

Absolutely. Well I know, I don't know if it's actually happening, but I know that there's some stuff with uh, wasn't it, that they could do duplexes on all this <laugh>

Speaker 2:

Well this is the deal. So right now our housing element is out of compliance. Yeah. So one of the deals is that it's called Builder's Remedy.

Speaker 1:

Yes. Now I was more thinking SB nine. Uh, I

Speaker 2:

Don't know, it may be Oh

Speaker 1:

No, no. That was a different, that was a thing where you could just build a ton of duplexes everywhere. Right.

Speaker 2:

So what you can do with the duplexes is you every lot can be split.

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Um,

Speaker 1:

Yeah. I didn't have to deal with much of it. Cause it ca Oakland didn't have that much single family zoning <laugh>

Speaker 2:

Whoa. <laugh>. So yeah, you can, you can do split lots here and you can put a couple of duplexes up Yeah. On the, on the adjoining lot, which is, it's nice. It might catch on, uh, as our ADUs are starting to pick up and, um, possibly the next step will be people will start to do the lot splits. Who knows?

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Who knows if building wasn't as expensive for individuals.

Speaker 2:

Correct, yeah. As we do.

Speaker 1:

Okay. Yeah. Um, yeah, that was very useful. Yeah. Um, good. Yeah. So sounds like it's not taking into consideration yet and it should be no <laugh>

Speaker 2:

Well, oh, say, that's why I really hope you can, you can look at the, uh, the general plan, the squa when it comes out. In fact, we could, if you wanted to, to follow up again, um, I'm going to strongly challenge the legitimacy of the squa if, if they are not, um, addressing sea level rise. So what they're gonna probably say in the sequel, something to the effect of, uh, we are continuing to study, that's not gonna be enough.

Speaker 1:

No. There's enough studies of it.

Speaker 2:

Right. So we've got, we've got, uh, um, some momentum on the planning commission where this, we know the C Q A is gonna be extremely important mm-hmm.

Speaker 1:

<affirmative>. Um,

Speaker 2:

And I've seen the city issue se q a that were non-factual, um mm-hmm. And uh, this one's gonna be really critical to get right. Yeah. And I'm hoping that a bunch of people, um, educate who, you know, people who understand the process are able to dive in and, and, and give some comments on it. It's gonna be important.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Yeah. I'm not sure, I don't have that much time before I have to, cuz I have to finish this by beginning of July, so.

Speaker 2:

Okay.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Yeah. That's when, yeah. Well this is very helpful. Thank you so much.

Speaker 2:

You're welcome.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Um,

Speaker 2:

And, uh, good luck with, uh, your.

Interview 5

Speaker 1:

Yeah, sorry. Yeah, continue.

Speaker 2:

Sure. And I've been at <inaudible> about 16 years and I've done mostly, um, different roles in development. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, uh, until a few years ago I was the director of housing development for our Silicon Valley real estate team, which was about a team of 10, uh, working on about 1.4 billion worth of Oh wow. Uh, construction, uh, buildings and whatnot. Um, and then a couple years ago I moved over into a policy position that supports the whole organization. We are in 11 counties. They're taking the blinders off and, um, you know, engaged

in other parts of the state and including state, federal advocacy. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, it's just kind of a much broader focus.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Um,

Speaker 2:

But's still kind of grounded in development. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, that's the big part of what we do.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Um,

Speaker 2:

Because practical policy is sort of our thing over here.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Are, so if it's 11 counties, are they all, where else is on the Bay Area? Is it the Bay Area?

Speaker 2:

It's all the Bay Area counties plus the Monterey Bay

Speaker 1:

Area. Oh, okay. So yeah.

Speaker 2:

San Monterey, Santa Cruz, and then going up, um, we're in Napa, Sonoma,

Speaker 1:

Uh, the whole nine ones. Yeah. Deerfield,

Speaker 2:

Solano, all those. Yeah. And then kind of our omni ones that are really core.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Um, and so in terms of when, um, with policy and development, um, when you're considering like locations for housing, and I know probably most of your locations are based on where this is it the surplus land, most of the locations that you guys end up, that

Speaker 2:

That's a bill that we haven't used as much as I hoped. Um, but it's often, it, uh, often it's a public lands like a

Speaker 1:

City. Yeah. Public land, so, yeah.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. So more broadly taken the concept. Yes. Public lands are things. Sometimes we acquire sites privately. Mm-hmm. <affirmative> market just like a regular developer does. Um, but you know, at least half of our sites are, are public sites.

Speaker 1:

And when acquiring and I know, um, does like future, um, sea level impact ever come into um,

Speaker 2:

Well you have to be able to finance it.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. They're

Speaker 2:



Gonna look at the flood maps and you have to be able to ensure it. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, they're gonna look at the flood maps. Um, there's different levels of Yeah. Flood maps, you know, there's flood, I don't know if you got this into it with like FEMA and whatnot, but you're in the X part can be quite far along and all of sudden know you're gonna get a call from your risk manager at your lender place and they're gonna be like, can you explain this <laugh>?

Speaker 1:

Yeah. I was just thinking you

Speaker 2:

Might not have invested in it.

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

It's for a shared consideration, not just from insurance standpoint, but from like, can we build it at all?

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Um, well I was thinking like if you guys have any sites in like East Palo Alto or um, Redwood Shores or something like that, that are all Yeah.

Speaker 2:

We do

Speaker 1:

<laugh> susceptible in the future and if there's any shores

Speaker 2:

Yeah. But you know, I live in the middle of Menlo Park, west of the 101 and I have to carry flood insurance. Yeah.

Speaker 1:

So it's like

Speaker 2:

There's some level of like, you know, the San Sto creek regularly threatens to overrun itself. Uh, and until that's fixed, you know, some of the most toy neighborhoods in the, in Silicon Valley Yeah. Are a threat of, of flooding. So there's like, and there's a lot of underground creeks that kind of run through cities mm-hmm. <affirmative> as culverts that you don't see. So the flood maps aren't something that only impacts the, the very coastal area.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Impact

Speaker 2:

Inside too. And these weird like kind of fingers that run through the uh, cities.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. I know somebody, one of the other people I interviewed was saying how like with silver rights too, that like the groundwater is also getting more susceptible to other issues that are making it. So some the other lands are subsiding. That's another like impact. Yeah. Um, yeah. Cuz is it easy for, is for mid pemp to like acquire land, um, when they're like trying to build new developments or do

Speaker 2:

Well, so if we are looking at a site, you do a, a full feasibility analysis mm-hmm. <affirmative>, which is like a very long process. Yeah. Takes a couple months to do it. Cause you have to go out and buy all these different reports. Then you wait to see their results and you're gonna get a report from a soils report. It's gonna say, yeah, you can drop piles into the earth here. Uh, or actually no, you really, uh, you don't need to do that. Um, you know, is your soil at risk of liquifaction and spreading? Uh, it impacts. And then the flood plain, uh, maps, like they absolutely, they impact like what kind of design you could do there.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. So different like mitigation measures.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. You mitigate the issues through design if you can. Yeah. Um, it's okay to have like flood pooping. Yeah. You can have the ground floor with a garage and a bunch of office space. Um, flood.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. But,

Speaker 2:

Uh, you can't, uh, so one, one mitigation is not putting any units on the ground floor. Uh, and this is something that, you know, also in the middle of San Mateo on Delaware Street where the old, you know, behind the Whole Foods where the old uh, PV

Speaker 1:

State was. Oh yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Speaker 2:

And I totally had to like write a memo about wet blood pooping <laugh>. So we did it all the way in

Speaker 1:

There. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. There could be some feeder water like Oh wow. Downhill. Got it. Yeah. You know, also the thing that's coming up is the county measure pay funds. There's a lot of county, uh, plans

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

To do various resiliency measures, um, including flood protection, sea level rise, uh, protection. So those things are also taken into account because they have the ability, like once those things come into play and some of them have already been done, you know, they change the maps. So a lot of times we're dealing with changing maps while we're trying to develop the site. Yeah.

Speaker 1:

Um,

Speaker 2:

Or you know, sometimes the maps are not correct or we find them and like, oh, somebody should have filed a correction of the seventies and it looks like they never got ready doing that. It's just like a lot of weird, like you uncover a lot of weird stuff as you go on.

Speaker 1:

Oh yeah. I sweet that when I was working. Um, yeah. Cause you are the number, not in terms of seal rights, but like in terms of the number of units that you guys are able to develop is, are you guys able to develop sufficient to like meet your needs that you see or, um, I mean, no. Our wait  
Speaker 2:

Lists are like for every one person applying it for every two, for every 20 people applying this one apartment for them. So like no

Speaker 1:

<laugh>. Yeah. Not me. I assumed I was just wanted to confirm cuz I remember seeing the list when I was working <laugh>. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

It's really as tough as it is to build them. It's like we're, it's, we're, we're not keeping up with what we need is. Um, and right now in the state of California there are 14,000 units that are entitled affordable homes that are entitled that don't have the money to get through the state system and start construction.

Speaker 1:

Geez. So it's too expensive at this point. The biggest

Speaker 2:

Issue, it's like our, that's our biggest issue right now cuz we can usually find some sites and, and do, it's not just sea level mitigation site. We're mitigating for all sorts of

Speaker 1:

Things. Yeah. I think on and like, you know, like the hills, you probably

Speaker 2:

Know this like a lot of downtowns like brought in like sort of minimally dirty fill in the seventies and sixties. Geez. You know, so the top two feet of Redwood City is like, you know, it's dirty dirt but not that dirty.

Speaker 1:

Oh yeah. So

Speaker 2:

All sorts of, all sorts of funny little issues that we have to mitigate

Speaker 1:

For. Yeah. It's lots of mitigation. Yeah. And um, has the, um, is there, cuz like I know that there's been a housing crisis, I don't know for as long as I can remember. Uh, <laugh> has it felt like it's gotten worse more recently or like with any of like the city or state policies feeling like it's helping like to make it better. Oh, let's do

Speaker 2:

Policies that make our project se exempt that helps <laugh>.

Speaker 1:

Oh yeah.

Speaker 2:

So se exempt streamlining of all sorts. Um, it's quite useful. Yeah. Uh, it means that's something that could have taken two years, sometimes takes, you know, three months by statute and probably four months if you count the little bit of back and forth on either side. Oh yeah. I mean that's, uh, that's significant. That's, um, a lot less risk for us to get to a place where we know whether or not the project's gonna move forward. And during that, if it takes two years to even

figure that out, you know, we're carrying the property, the cost of the property, we might have to be fencing it or landscaping it. We need to be paying taxes on it, uh, et cetera. So, you know, reducing carry costs, reducing uncertainty, uh, until you know whether or not your investment is gonna bear fruit. And then, you know, staff time not having to put a person on at halftime for 18 months. Oh

Speaker 1:

Yeah. That's a lot. Yeah. Um, have any of like the local jurisdictions made it easier for you guys or the county, um, made it easier for housing for you guys to be able to make affordable housing at the time or? Um, I see thing I, some cities

Speaker 2:

Are kind of interested in production and they mm-hmm.

Speaker 1:

<affirmative>

Speaker 2:

Get behind it and you know, you have this little city mayor who, you know, most mayors get to set the agenda <crosstalk> what comes forward and they're deferring what they may not wanna see. So you find a mayor that's not in support of your project, they could really def they could defer for the whole year. Um,

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

So yeah. You wanna find new champions who, there's definitely some that are doing whatever they can to kind of keep us moving.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. And they don't. Um, and have you seen any, um, that have because of cl sea level rise or other like have required other climate annotations to ensure that your project goes forward? Or has that ever been a consideration when you're dealing with your projects from them? I don't know

Speaker 2:

If I maybe say the question another way. I don't know if I quite get

Speaker 1:

Like have you ever had any of the city's um com like comment, um, in regards to like locations for future climate issues or Yeah. I mean

Speaker 2:

It's usually used as a Mindy

Speaker 1:

Tool. Yeah. And that's like the justice issue with it. Yeah. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

So along the, you know, if you look at there's some, like there's some climate justice advocacy group that published something and I was like, this doesn't, in every single site we're working on would not Yeah. Would not meet this. My single family home in Menlo Park would not

Speaker 1:

Meet this. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Like we are, uh, my house sits on a known contaminated groundwater plane also, I don't bathe and drink the groundwater. I've city water. Yeah. Way down deep and like Okay. Like just because issues ha are present doesn't mean that's a full stuff can't live there. Um, we live here. I mean Yeah. Yeah. So you have to kind of think like okay, uh, there's some sort of balancing act between um, looking at what market rate folks are being held to in terms of standards Yeah. And affordable folks. And I think at some place, if we're held to such a higher standard than it's contributing to the lack of housing

Speaker 1:

And built. Have you noticed like I, I mean I feel like I hear that like, um, and I remember seeing it too when I was working that uh, the you guys' affordable housing producers because of unfair stigmas that NIMBY have, um, are held to much higher standards in terms of development because of people's Yeah. Insane. I

Speaker 2:

Mean every single public policy role out there is layered on most of our projects. And then people are like, why is this so expensive? I'm like, well if you do a prevailing amount project that needs to be all electric, that also has super cheap rents that also needs to provide a bus pass to everybody over the age of five that also do just keep going of that list. Rightt you.

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

All these things are not things that market developments are doing. Right. They're not paying for mailing wage.

Speaker 1:

No ma'am. They're paying

Speaker 2:

For land. So we're, we're not paying for land. But then it almost washes itself out. The free land comes with so many strings attached that it's, it usually kind of is about the same.

Speaker 1:

Oh yeah. Cuz if it's

Speaker 2:

Cheaper land or free land and do all this stuff.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. And if Yeah, that makes sense. Yeah. Cause the extra cost of construction and production. Yeah. That makes sense. Yeah. Um, yeah. Um, is there, so like is there anything that you would like to see different in terms of how climate including like electrification, any of that, um, is taken into consideration with housing or, but not in and still ensuring that there's justice? I

Speaker 2:

Know if we look at the um, SB three 30 mm-hmm. <affirmative> who wants to get gas out of everything by 2030. So that's in seven years. Like we don't have the resources to do that and we also don't have a power grid that's capable of supporting those much over there. So like investments in infrastructure, um, are, will be important. I mean all that seems that goal is just not gonna happen. Right. Until there's some sort of push to do that. Yeah. Electrical good thing is real. I've had to like go in and put in uh, neighborhood improvements for just 140 unit project that served the whole neighborhood. Oh wow. Um, so sa with those um, kind of lasting costs,

uh, is not, it's not appropriate. Yeah. That happens all the time. So because crop 13 means that cities have no money. Yep. So, you know, that's a balancing act.

I would like to see those two things kind of considered in the long term because the short term benefits are not there for us. Yeah. Like most of these technologies will break before they've paid off what the cost is to come in and they have to be implemented perfectly. So, you know, somebody unplugs some part of the system by accident and you get a huge water bill and you're like, why didn't my solar thermal was like it's supposed to. Oh cuz sometimes it wasn't plugged in or like, or it wasn't cleaned on a quarterly uh, basis. Which by the way is not a small task if you're talking about five stories above the El Camino. Oh yeah. Needs to be, you know, the, you know, OSHA tie downs on the roof. We contemplate all of that but actually have to get somebody out there to do it.

Um, and if, and I think in most cases we are doing it correctly but you know, things slip through the cracks and don't happen to get the bill and you're like whoa, whoa, whoa. Like must be something going on over there. Um, <affirmative> Yeah. Has to be is this, the systems have to be not only thought through front but when they have to be done perfectly and and frankly like I was pretty happy with some of the buildings that still had uh, gas on the water heaters. We were without power for many days, uh, over this past winter.

Speaker 1:

Oh yeah. During all the storms. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. And it's like, okay, so the elevators aren't working and the lights aren't working. But also now we can't have a hot shower. We can't cook like, so at the moment it seems like a little bit of a backup, um, that uh, is really revealed to be helpful during some of the actual times. Cuz apartments are not really prioritized during a crisis like that as long as everything is stable. But we do have seniors that are seven stories up and Yeah. We had a backup diesel, good backup diesel generator in a project in uh uh, foster City and you know, that thing gets turned on three times a year. <laugh> mostly for inspections. And it was pretty helpful when you have, you know, 120 frail seniors.

Speaker 1:

Oh yeah. Yeah. And it seems like

Speaker 2:

That's like in play, right.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. And that seems like the, from like what I've seen, the biggest climate mitigation that's happening is the electrification when there could be other ones that are less prohibitive or like less invasive to people's lives. Like the first floor stuff.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. Continuing to rest in transit.

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Building within the urban footprint, not going way off into the edges. Uh, where you also then become at risk of fire. Yeah. And

Speaker 1:

Other things

Speaker 2:

Or have to do with really a lot of infrastructure. I mean those are all things that are uh, so how housing is a climate change

Speaker 1:

Measure. Yeah. Oh for sure.

Speaker 2:

Uh, against housing. Um,

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Were

Speaker 2:

You familiar with like that old build it green checklist?

Speaker 1:

Uh, maybe. Maybe. Um,

Speaker 2:

It's like, it's like a less expensive way to demonstrate sustainability, um, accolades without having to go all the way to the designer jeans like lead version.

Speaker 1:

Oh yeah.

Speaker 2:

You can just have your architect like self-certified and do the like content and inspection of somebody else coming in.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. I think they used it in Oakland. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. In San Mateo they used it too in Sunnyvale. They did it in a really good way that you might be interested in, I don't know if this policy still exists but 10 years ago it was like you actually gotten an additional density bonus if you met certain sustainability measurements. So you've got five Oh wow.

Speaker 1:

Percent

Speaker 2:

More. I'm like, you are speaking our language people like we're gonna look into that very seriously. If you can get a 40% boost.

Speaker 1:

Oh wow. That's a huge one. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. So we usually can get

Speaker 1:

35%. Yeah. That's like the state average I think. Yeah. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

If you do and enough affordability you get that.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Adding,

Speaker 2:

You know, five more percent Cause I'm like that's a, that somebody's thought through

Speaker 1:

That. Yeah. That's a like one or two more units way more. Yeah. Yeah. And it what like in terms of the policy advocacy what or like the big housing policy advocacy that that uh, mid Penn is advocating for at the moment. Other, I mean probably more dense. Uh,

Speaker 2:

Unfortunately not much of it has to do with climate change because of that.

Speaker 1:

Just in general

Speaker 2:

Get through the Yeah. You can't get, so it's a lot about money securing additional resources.

Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, um, it's connections with healthcare cuz we're being asked increasingly to serve the hardest to serve. Mm-hmm <affirmative> supportive housing people exiting homelessness Oh wow. Lining the healthcare system such that we actually have the resources. Cause we can usually find the money to build the buildings, but if you get somebody in there that needs ongoing resources and you know, seniors are the fastest growing group of homeless people in San Mateo County. Oh. Oh, that's so, you know, folks are like, well what are you gonna do to get those people back? They're like, we're 68 years old

Speaker 1:

And they're not gonna work

Speaker 2:

Sometimes two or three illnesses that would prevent them from really, uh, being able to do a, a large number of jobs. And I'm like,

Speaker 1:

Oh yeah.

Speaker 2:

That's not what we're solving for right

Speaker 1:

Now. <laugh>. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Um, we also have younger folks that of course where um, once they're kind of medically stable, uh, but you know, when people come in doors they have deferred a lot.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Makes sense. Um,

Speaker 2:

So after their nervous system to kind of calm down, like usually they're stuck under, we feel layers off the, I mean it's like somebody actually needed a knee surgery three years ago and is getting that ACL repaired.

Speaker 1:

Oh wow.

Speaker 2:



Um, now needs to recuperate. Right. Because you're living outta your car, you're probably not prioritizing your creaky knee. You're probably prioritizing a host of other things that are much more front and center.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Um,

Speaker 2:

Money for services, the 2024 election will be an opportunity to go to the voters for um, a host of things, uh, including something that could help sustainability. So ACA one is, um, to push statewide to repeal a portion of prop 13 that requires infrastructure secured on local property parcels to, if you wanna invest in that via bonds and that those bonds are secured via local property tax, it needs to get like a super majority. So 66

Speaker 1:

Oh yeah. There's all those bonds Yeah. That are so high. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

And that makes it really, but it's undemocratic. Oh yeah. 66% of people say yes they want a school bond or whatever. Now the school bonds are lowered to 55 but it was the last time we voted a government here in Menlo Park, we we got 71% and that is unheard of. Right.

Speaker 1:

Like Yeah. I've seen some of the ones in San Mateo. Yeah. Where they're like, I think there was one that was higher

Speaker 2:

Than 72 or

Speaker 1:

73. It's

Speaker 2:

Just like, because there's 20% people who vote now on

Speaker 1:

Everything. Yeah. They don't wanna spend any money anyway ever. No matter what it's

Speaker 2:

Supposed to be white homeowners that are the voters. Right. For period

Speaker 1:

County.

Speaker 2:

So

Speaker 1:

I know the ni here's that.

Speaker 2:

Um, but ACA one would open the door afterwards for a host of other infrastructure investments, uh, critical public infrastructure. And so repealing that part of prop 13, it kind of gets up that problem I was hinting at earlier where we're having to come in and put an infrastructure and the city knows that they should be paying for that. They just don't have any money. Like you can't let squeeze blood from the stone. So

Speaker 1:

<laugh>, I didn't realize that part was part of prop 13. I always had just heard about the property tax part, not the part of the requiring 66%. I knew that like property tax staying the same forever.

Speaker 2:

She's really involved in that part. The ACA one push. Yeah. Her post, uh, um, czi, uh, they're really backing that campaign as early at risk money, so.

Speaker 1:

Hmm. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Seem would be transformative for housing but transformative for other things too.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Any type of infrastructure Yeah. That's required.

Speaker 2:

The resiliency measures, et cetera. Those would almost certainly come in future elections if we can get the housing thing passed now.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. And all the state bills have been probably helpful for you guys as well in terms of policy. The all the ones that like Wiener and all the other that have been passing. Yeah. So I'll

Speaker 2:

Send you, we, I've written up various things about this, um mm-hmm. <affirmative>, you know, state legislation and action where we've used it to, uh, actually build projects that's on our website. Um, and the list of bills that we're supporting this year's on our website that's up to date coming is a little bit of a, you know, now what's so what, um, probably by the middle of June they'll be a, these are our priority bills and here's why. Here's why they're important to us. Um, that will be coming.

Speaker 1:

Okay. Yeah. Most

Speaker 2:

The money <laugh>.

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

So money and there these uh, uh, proposed hundred percent affordable housing could have a C exemption. Oh wow.

Speaker 1:

Um,

Speaker 2:

So that would really dovetail nicely with that housing element.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. And ha have you, you guys have, sorry, have done a lot of advocacy on all the housing elements or in your terms of your policy or

Speaker 2:

Yeah,

Speaker 1:

I,

Speaker 2:

Last night about it <laugh>, I followed the housing elements and I'm here for over 15 years and we did another white paper on kind of like how we used housing element policies to unlock sites for development mm-hmm. <affirmative> and we have 17 sites in development right now that are taking advantage of this cycle and those sites are on those, these housing

Speaker 1:

Elements. Oh wow. So

Speaker 2:

Hey, accelerate you don't have to do a standalone general plan amendment, which you're one of the few people that that probably means something to <laugh>.

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Right. Two years of your time and uncertainty and hundreds of thousands of dollars. Like sign us up.

Speaker 1:

<laugh>. Yeah. Any staff

Speaker 2:

You would think they might not like it but they embrace it because it's a lot of work for them too.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. I didn't, yeah, I mean I was fortunate Oakland had like an overall se a that they did years ago. So we like basically were exempt from all SE a, which made our projects go a lot faster.

They did

Speaker 2:

Like a mag.

Speaker 1:

Yeah, they did one years ago. So like everything from like a general specific plan years ago that made it so like how was it? Area

Speaker 2:

Plans are another way to do that if your city has their act

Speaker 1:

Together. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Well I think I have at 11

Speaker 1:

O'clock. Yeah. Thank you. This was very useful. Yeah, this was very helpful. Thank you.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. Well keep in touch with us. We like to see what some of these interviews, how they go

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Move through time.

## Interview 6

Speaker 1:

Just some background. Um, I am currently doing my Masters in society Sustainability, um, and planning. And as part of my thesis, which I'm doing, I'm using the Bay Area as a case study on the relationship between C level rise adaptation or lack thereof and housing policy. Um, and I previously, before I went and got my master, did my master's, I worked in both, um, San Carlos and Oakland. So I had a little bit of front row seat. I know they're, um, Oakland especially. Um, and so I just have a few questions from different policy, um, people.

Speaker 2:

Yeah.

Speaker 1:

Um, so just to begin with, just for background, um, what is your like exact title and duties?

Speaker 2:

Uh, my exact title and what, sorry,

Speaker 1:

And duties.

Speaker 2:

Oh, sure. Uh, my exact title is Executive Director of the organization, youth United for Community Action, more commonly known as Yucca here in East Palo Alto. Um, my duties include, well, it's interesting because Yucca, since our inception in 1994 has been, uh, was created, led and still to this day, managed and still is led by young people of color ages 12 to 18 mm-hmm. <affirmative>. So our central decision makers really are our youth organizers, our main kind of base, if you will, um, me as a staff member, as part of the staff team. A couple important things to note is that we have a very horizontal leadership structure mm-hmm. <affirmative>. So while we definitely have, you know, unique kind of roles in the organization, and there's definitely, uh, executive director kind of functions and duties that I have when it comes to the decision making part of the campaigns that we work on, the policies that we work on, the kind of climate justice efforts that we take on, they're all directed, um, by the youth. So what my responsibilities entail are, uh, it will include of course, being a mentor and, um, helping guide our staff, our youth, um, in terms of their decision making process, things to consider, um, issues to consider when we are deciding what kind of, uh, campaigns we wanna take on in our community. As well as I specifically come from a background in urban planning and public policy mm-hmm. <affirmative>, which is super helpful and very, um, yeah, just very much like a synergy point with our work here because a lot of the campaigns that we do decide to take on have to do with systematic change in our community and in our city. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. So that typically entails always through grassroots organizing, um, but typically in the last few years at least, has entailed advocating for equitable land use. So, you know, part of what I do is, um, help support the political education of our youth, our base, our community members, um, who work with us as well in terms of democratizing the knowledge around what is zoning, what is land use. Yeah. What's the purpose of separating the uses of things, um, as well as from the policy perspective. What are the kinds of, um, what are the kinds of understanding the way that policies have harmed us, harmed our communities, and are just built environment as well in the past. And, you know, helping, helping really just imagine and be creative about now what sorts of policies can we help advocate for? What sorts of projects can

we take on that will, um, intentionally address the inequities and, um, injustices that we experience in, in our communities.

Speaker 1:

Wow. Okay. Um, so the focus of a lot of your, your organization's campaigns are either like on climate justice and housing equity, and I know in East Palo Alto, I saw the map that they showed for that one shoreline showed of like the, the fema, I think it was fema, um, yeah. Of that basically the whole city, um, yeah. Will be impacted. And if I'm not wrong, it was historically redlined, I believe. Right?

Speaker 2:

Correct.

Speaker 1:

Okay. So how does like the mixing of, like wanting climate justice in terms of, as well as like trying to get, you know, enough housing for, um, the residents, um, since we, we all know that the berry has a housing crisis.

Speaker 2:

Yeah, of course. Well, you know, from the perspective of like, from the perspective of the radical on the ground, just, you know, kind of thinkers and dreamers who live, work and play in our community and support through mutual aid, our neighbors, we are of the mind that our community, our society does not have to operate in this zero sum kind of way. Mm-hmm.

<affirmative>, we think that we think and we believe and we work as if we can have it all, we can have housing stability, we can achieve housing justice, and we can also work toward a more sustainable, um, you know, climate, just transition of our economy, of our, of our workforce. So because, because they're really,

It's an interesting, it's an interest, it's an interesting sort of field to be working in right now because a lot of these issues that we're working on, as I'm sure you know mm-hmm.

<affirmative> are just not, they're not mutually exclusive. Yeah. They're not housing justice campaigns that we work on are very, very intimately connected to the climate justice work that we do. And one very specific example that I can give or that I can kind of Yeah. That I can give that recently transpired here in our community is on New Year's Eve of this year, there was severe flooding

Speaker 1:

Of Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Probably there was pretty like, and I mean, severe for the families that are impacted. Right.

Yeah. Um, maybe not in terms of like scale, perhaps of like other cities, but certainly very deeply impacted mm-hmm. <affirmative> family here who live on the west side, the west side of town, which happens to be, you know, the west side of free, the Highway 101. Mm-hmm.

<affirmative>, uh, and the dentist part of town that has the largest stock of price controlled housing. So all of these issues kind of that the, that historic redlining, the freeway expansion, the, the placement of, um, all of the rent stabilized price control, basically housing on the west side of town, all sort of manifest in a way that egregiously harm our families when climate disasters happen. Um, we, we saw in that instance on New Year's Eve that the San Francisco Creek flooded. So there was, um, you know, way more rain projected or way more rain. We got

way more rain than was projected. And the last time I believe that it flooded was like in 90, 94, 96, I can, yeah. I

Speaker 1:

Don't remember ever having a flooding incident.

Speaker 2:

<laugh>. Yeah. Yeah. So, um, you know, this is happening in, hold on, excuse me just one second. No,

Speaker 1:

You're good.

Speaker 2:

Thank you. Um, this happened in, um, this happened just very recently affected a lot of working class families of immigrant background at that. And what we saw is that, you know, our calls for more decent standards of living could have helped, could have helped those families weather the storm a little bit better, where usually the first impacted, but yet the last in line when it comes to government resources being dished out to see, um, capital improvements and big scale projects, uh, done to our done to help us, you know, um, whether it's addressing to address flooding. So whether that's somehow what we've been advocating for years for a horizontal levy, something that's more, more, um, uh, more respectful, more sustainable in harmony with the earth. And that also is more beautiful, honestly, than just a vertical concrete wall like a levee. Yeah. Um, but those are things that, you know, we're always told like, well, that's really hard.

Cities have to work together. All these political or geopolitical boundaries make that really hard. So we are always given the runaround, but yet we've been ringing the alarm for years saying, Hey, you know, we need adaptations too. Yeah. And Palo Alto has been getting them, um, up the upstream, those adaptations have been happening, which is super important. Yeah. I'm saying they don't happen there, of course. Right. Um, but don't forget about us. And of course, because we're last in line, um, and we're first to feel those impacts, it's our communities that it's our housing stock that is, um, getting damaged when flooding happens. It's our community that is experiencing the burden of that mm-hmm. <affirmative> and it's, it's so intimately tied with, for example, the housing justice work that we do around tenants rights. Yeah. Because when that water retreats, the moisture is left, the damage is done, there's mold in the walls because of how of, of how, um, wet the kind of area got.

And then, you know, we're already a community that has disproportionate rates of asthma among our children, then the rest of the county. So now there's mold in our homes and, you know, we're having to kind of make do with that. There's a lot of slum lords, um, unfortunately in East Palo Alto, and we are seeing the compound of these issues. So when we advocate for more equitable, um, housing standards, fair housing standards, decent indignified, um, standards of living, we're also very much, um, you know, saying that comes along as well with the climate adaptations that are necessary. The sort of what we don't wanna see happen to kind of another kind of step out. What we don't wanna see happen is to see very thorough adaptations done what we call basically green gentrification. Yeah. We don't wanna see gentrification in our communities where the happens

Speaker 1:

In Oakland. Yeah,

Speaker 2:

Yeah. Exactly. There's a lot of investment in our cities, um, and it results in our folks getting priced out. Housing is, uh, improved and all of a sudden our folks can't afford it anymore, or they have to leave because of the way projects are done and buildings are demolished and it takes years to construct and displacement of our community continues to happen. That's what we don't want to see. Yeah. That there's a way to do it all equitably.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. And I know that like a lot of, like levee, the other levee projects have been through bonds, which can be expensive for cities, like the ones in Foster City and stuff. They're levee projects were all through like individual bonds, which I think mm-hmm. <affirmative> are much, are easier for more affluent cities to be able to afford.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. They're something that, that bonds are something that we hear our city council talk about here and there, but they're not as much of, um, we don't our, our city, when I say we, I guess I'm saying our city. Yeah. Our city council doesn't take that approach as much as you're right. Other more affluent cities in our surrounding areas do I think we rely a lot on the jpa to be honest on the joint powers authority that's mm-hmm. <affirmative>, um, working on, on those adaptations.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. And do you guys work a lot? They work probably also a lot with, um, or do they work a lot with one shoreline, or has there been a lot of,

Speaker 2:

They, I don't have a lot of insight into that just because we've been, we have stepped, uh, we've taken a little bit of a step back from, from that kind of Yeah. Um, end it. But we follow the updates from a city council member that sits on that j p a mm-hmm. <affirmative> and they do mention working and collaborating with one shortly.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Cuz I would think for, also for East Palo Alto, especially with what their like proposed guidelines and stuff that they want would be mm-hmm. <affirmative> very, yeah. Um, and then, yeah. Cause you mentioned the, which I was, something I've heard from other people that I've interviewed is that fact that like some of the times with the wanting to like adaptation can lead to gentrification or nimbyism in a way of No. Um, additional like high rises or, um, the affordable housing. Yeah. Yeah. Um, oh lord. Yeah, because is there, um, I know there's a lot, like, I've seen her and my mom talk a lot about it in San Mateo, but <laugh> with the Nimbyism, but is there a lot in East Palo Alto in terms of like, for multi-family, or is that as much, and has there been a lot of displacement already?

Speaker 2:

So there's been a ton of displacement, um, and

Speaker 1:

It's been, yeah, it wouldn't be

Speaker 2:

Surprised. I mean, you know, in 2008 that whole, the housing market crashing was, we were hit very, very hard mm-hmm. <affirmative>, um, that's putting it simply. And then in the aftermath and the recession folks continued to be displaced and during covid um, yeah. During a time of

economic hardship that that, that folks still to this day are still trying to recover from. It has also, um, caused waves of displacement in our community. Interestingly enough, though East Palo Alto as a city, um, has been, I mean, I feel very confident saying East Palo Alto is the most progressive city in San Mateo County when it comes to our public policy. When it comes to, um, oh wow. Just the way that we do, the way that we strive to do, um, you know, our land use, uh, uh, kind of, oh my gosh, what's the word I'm looking for?

The way we do like community outreach, like Yeah. Like the city, the city. It, it's kind of as good as it gets here, to be honest. Um, that being said, obviously it, it's not enough. I mean, yeah. The proof is in the, if folks continue to be displaced, um, it's, you know, there's still things that, there's still more things that can be done, but I say with confidence that East Palo Alto is the most progressive city in San Mateo County because we have upwards of 13 very progressive, progressive housing policies that other cities in San Mateo County, I mean, I, I don't the world like hell would freeze over, sorry, <laugh>, probably before they adapted some of these policies. Like for example, just cause for eviction. Just cause for eviction has been a huge fight to even

Speaker 1:

Try get it. Yeah. I know some other cities, I, there's a huge case that just came out in San too.

Speaker 2:

Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. Yeah. So that's something, there's now a little bit of protections on that front afforded from the state of California, of course only, um, kickstarted by the Covid 19 pandemic when we've been saying forever that it was, it's a basic necessity in all of our communities. Yeah. But, you know, just cost for eviction, rent stabilization, um, is a huge one like that. I, I don't see, there's been a few cities throughout California and literally a few, maybe a couple here and there that have adopted it, um, in the, in the recent kind of years. But in San Mateo County, that would be a huge fight. Yeah. And then of course we East Palo Alto very much above, uh, um, does, goes above and beyond when it comes to building affordable housing. We have probably one of the largest concentrations of affordable housing and in different ways price controlled housing. Whether that's, you know, folks that take Section eight vouchers mm-hmm. <affirmative> Place space vouchers, um, 100% deed restricted affordable housing. Oh wow. Rent stabilization, of course. Like we have some of the, we have probably the largest portfolio of housing that ha that is price controlled some way or another, I believe a third of our housing stock. Um, that's pretty

Speaker 1:

Good. Wow. That's,

Speaker 2:

Yeah. That's a lot. That is, yeah. That has to be confirmed, but I'm pretty confident that it's, it's around a third give

Speaker 1:

A mean. That's more than anything I've ever heard. So <laugh> mm-hmm. <affirmative>. And you said you've heard

Speaker 2:

Yeah, so we've, we really do, we're not, we're not a NIMBY community in that sense. What we really ask is for other Menlo Park, Palo Alto, Redwood City, San Mateo, like, do your part. We can only build so much. We only have so much land. We're a 2.5 square mile radius city. Oh. There's only so much we can do in terms of building housing. Right. Yeah. So we ask other cities



to do the same. I will say though, that because of gentrification and because of the displacement of largely people of color working class people in our community, there is more, there is more NIMBY type of kind of the, the, there's more kind of, there's, how do I say this kind of nicely? More people who have like NIMBY values are moving into East Palo Alto because we're that last stretch of kind of quote unquote affordable. Yeah. Affordable place to live in San Mateo County. So that has really,

Speaker 1:

That's affordable.

Speaker 2:

That has really Right. I agree. Um, that's really raised questions for us. The very progressive, if not radical, like organizers on the ground. Yeah. About like what's gonna mean politically for our, our landscape, our housing landscape here in East Palo Alto and what it means just generally politically when it comes time for like elections, you know? Yeah. We have a pretty solid track record of electing people who are from the community born, born and raised here and have progressive values. But in the last five years of me organizing here, I've seen a couple people get elected who are much more centrist and that scares me for the future of the city. Yeah. It's scary to think that folks are being elected who are not as progressive, who are not as, you know, mindful of the diversity of people we have here racially, ethnically, economically, um, just in all sorts of ways and are more middle class minded and therefore are more, even more, I guess you would say fiscally conservative. I don't know. Um, but very much think about the kind of land uses and housing policies that are gonna bring the city tax revenue as opposed to protect our people.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. And is there, cuz does East Palo Alto have mostly single family zoning or is it more multifamily? They have eliminated,

Speaker 2:

Yeah. We have, um, we have the majority, like geographically speaking in terms of like space is single family home zoning. Um, the densest part of our town is the west side area. Mm-hmm. <affirmative> and we lost a lot. We have lost a lot of multi-family, um, housing through redevelopment in the city. Interesting. In the, in the early thousands.

Speaker 1:

Oh, that makes sense. Um,

Speaker 2:

Late nineties, early thousands, we lost a lot of multi-family homes in the city where once, once where there was a large stock of apartment complexes here on the east side of town. Now there sits in Ikea there. Oh, I

Speaker 1:

Didn't realize that was housing.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. That used to be housing a large chunk of it. Um, yeah.

Speaker 1:

Cause Ikea went in when I was a child, so I didn't <laugh>.

Speaker 2:

Oh yes, yes. Yeah. So that, I mean I was, I was pretty young, but I still remember one of my like best friends from third grade used to live in those apartments. Oh God. I got knocked down and then, you know, IKEA got put on top of that. So, um, apart from that too, like obviously very, very classic kind of environmental racism with the expression of the freeway of highway 101. There was a lot that was knocked down including our sort of old historic kind of downtown area. Um, but also certainly, um, some multi-family housing complexes. Yeah. Very similar to like Oakland for example. Oh yeah. Hard with the freeways. It, I mean

Speaker 1:

It's classic. Yeah. I have all the freeway freeways are just the history of red lighting, very aligned. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. Yeah,

Speaker 2:

Exactly.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Interesting. Yeah. Cuz it was ah, okay. Yeah. I mean yeah. It's very interesting. Yeah. Cause mostly other people I talk to have been more from, shall I put the more affluent parts of San Mateo County. Um, and so it's very interesting to hear this perspective of like how the, you know, cuz I, um, the environmental racism part of it, you know, I think when, when I've usually heard about it in school, it's like more the, like pollution, you know, those elements of it, which I, if there's higher levels asthma, I would think that that's also an issue. But then, you know, they're not getting the levies or the some of the other resources to help with sea level rise that other municipalities that have more money it sounds like. Yeah,

Speaker 2:

Yeah.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Which is like a different element that I hadn't really to be honest thought of when I thought of like environmental racism in the same way. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, like I thought of like the freeways and like the pollution you get from that. Yeah. That's very interesting. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

There's different kinds for sure. Yeah. There's like, so when we think about environmental justice here at Yucca, um, we often say that obviously the natural environment is very important. Yeah. But kind of like you were mentioning with the freeways and what does get built, our built environment is just as important and just as much of a factor. Yeah. Um, in terms of like health determinants. Right. So the fact that roic toxic waste facility used to operate here for decades of, up until 2007 Wow. Um, is something that definitely impacted the health of everyone who was here and even in the af aftermath as they were closing. Um, that continues to be a super fun site to this day. It's, it's being remediated as we speak, supposedly <laugh>. Um, and then, um, there's things like that. And then of course there's things like expansion of the freeway, east Palo Alto being very much a traffic artery. Yeah. So that connects the North Bay, south Bay or the, the San Francisco, the South Bay and the East Bay, because we're kind of right in that little nook that is super easily accessible Yeah. To 84 and eight 80 and then 101. And of course, you know, that's that traverses like San Francisco, San Jose. So yeah, there's all those aspects to it. Um, not to mention just the, the quality of our housing stock is, um, not very decent anymore. So the pollutants,

Speaker 1:

Is there a lot of asbestos or

Speaker 2:

Um,

Speaker 1:

Or No,

Speaker 2:

That I'm not sure about,

Speaker 1:

But like you said, mold and Yeah, there's

Speaker 2:

Mold, um, there's issues with our water quality. The last time that we were aware of asbestos in buildings was in the early thousands and that was, um, in the late nineties, early thousands. And that was, um, apparently addressed to redevelopment. The, this building, uh, that used to be a high school that had a lot of asbestos in it. Oh wow. Has now redeveloped, has been redeveloped for some time, um, as a shopping center. Yeah. So that's the last that we were kind of more, um, familiar with, uh, that being in inside buildings that we used. Um, but yeah, definitely a lot of molds because we're very flat, very low lying. Um, uh, in terms of like sea level. Yeah. And also there's like local flooding apart from, there's local flooding because we're so low to the ground. Right. Apart from the San Francis Keto Creek being there. And of course the, the bay itself being covering or bordering a good chunk of our city

Speaker 1:

And there's already been existing flooding from the Bay even before the per expected increases that are expected in the next century. Has there already been some flooding from the bay?

Speaker 2:

There's, I don't think from the, uh, well,

Speaker 1:

Well it's also the groundwater coming up too, probably more too.

Speaker 2:

That's what, yeah, that's what I was gonna say. It's more so, so in the gardens neighborhood back in the 20 teens, there was some pretty scary flooding in the gardens neighborhood. The gardens neighborhood is the one that borders the bay. Mm-hmm. <affirmative> that's closest to the bay. Yeah. And very low lying. A lot of single family homes. A lot of elderly people live in that area. Oh yeah. And when evacuation, um, orders went out, people weren't able to mobilize the way that, you know, as fast as the orders were sent mm-hmm. <affirmative>, in fact, folks chose to stay in their home because one, there was nowhere they could go. Our folks don't really have the means to just go and rent a hotel for Yeah. Who knows how many days. Um, and it's just like mobility issues were a real thing as well.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Well, I don't wanna Thank you. This was very helpful.

Speaker 2:

Mm-hmm. <affirmative>.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Um, give, give a very good perspective. It'll be very useful. Thank you. I very much appreciate it.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. Happy to help. Yeah.

Interview 7

Speaker 1:

Perfect. Yeah, I'm, I mean, I'm trying to get like a various different levels and different types. So I've had, you know, people from nonprofits that deal with housing plan commissioners and having another one from another city. Um, and, you know, staff, like a mix of people who deal with decisions. And I know you are also on the, um, sustainability committee before, so I might also have had, or was it infrastructure?

Speaker 2:

So, yeah. Well now it gets sustainability and infrastructure in the city of San Mateo. So it used to be a, a separate

Speaker 1:

Sustainability. Yeah. A good com. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

But we did end up merging it with public workshops, I think is appropriate. I think the, the farther out we get from that decision, the smarter it looks.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Um, so just to begin with, so I can just have background, um, what, what is your position and what are your exact duties and like dealing with housing?

Speaker 2:

Hmm. Well, my name's redacted. I am a council member for the city council, the city of San Mateo. This is my first term. I was elected in November, 2022. So I've been in for, uh, you know, I officially started in December. It's been about half a year. Um, you know, I, I feel like my main responsibilities with regard to housing in the city of San Mateo relate to the housing element and the general plan. Uh, we are updating our general plan right now. Uh, we have had updates about once a decade. Uh, the general plan itself, uh, has been a 20 year document that tries to plot out a blueprint for the city, uh, to plan housing and other amenities and services, um, throughout the city in a way that should allow for it to provide, uh, good high quality of life and, and, uh, service to its residents and visitors.

Uh, particularly as we look toward the future. And, uh, which for the city of San Mateo for many decades has been a future of growth. And, uh, that certainly, uh, if has only amped up, uh, this is the biggest, most ambitious general plan of any in, in, in, in the city's history. I think he has thinking to say maybe with the exception of the very first one was good, perhaps half half. So that, that's a big one. Um, the, the state has, uh, issued a regional housing needs allocation to the city, uh, in this last eight year, uh, cycle from 2023 to 2031 of about 7,000 housing units we need to plan for, uh, in addition to what currently exists within the city, uh, in our, uh, housing element, which is a piece of the general plan. And of course, this general plan as it's a 20 year document and we're working on it, is, is through 2040 and,

Speaker 1:

Uh, like three more cycles.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. Basically we, we need to plan for multiple housing element cycles. We're anticipating that, uh, the, the next arena, if you will, R H N A, um, following 2031 will be in the thousands. We don't really know how big or small it will be, but, um, I think it's, you know,

Speaker 1:

The likely go higher the

Speaker 2:

Process has been with that in mind. Yeah. And for a city that's currently at 105,000 ish, uh, residents, that's, that's a big change. Yeah. Um, it's, it's, uh, it's a city that's completely built out. I, I don't know how much you want me to explain

Speaker 1:

These sort. This is fine. Yeah. Like

Speaker 2:

You are of course well versed, so

Speaker 1:

Yeah. I,

Speaker 2:

I think because I was being recorded, I wasn't

Speaker 1:

Sure. No, it's fine. I mean, they're gonna be used more for my, the recording is more for like myself when I go back and write in, they'll have the transcripts in the back of the thesis, but it's less for public consumption. It's more for my own remembrance, uh, in the future. But yeah. So there's been, well, I know there was a meeting last Monday. I'm guessing that

Speaker 2:

That satisfies your question.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. I know there was a meeting on Monday, cuz my mom tells me all the women on there's meeting <laugh> or like about them when she goes. Um, and so cuz you guys, it's failed huh?

Three times?

Speaker 2:

Um, it's, it's, it has, uh, it has been returned to us twice.

Speaker 1:

Okay. I think is

Speaker 2:

Is fair to say.

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Um, so yeah, this, this has also one of the most challenging and ambitious ones,

Speaker 1:

Uh,

Speaker 2:

In, in certainly our city's history. Um, I, I think, uh, you know, some of our planning commissioners can, can best, uh, detail why, but the, the state over a number of years on a high

level has implemented a number of extra laws and, and, and sort of measures and momentum toward, you know, really getting the, the cities in our, our state particularly high resource and opportunity ones such as Mateo Yeah. To, to, to really plan for growth, um, in a way that results in housing, uh, getting built to, to resolve a, an expanding, uh, gap between, uh, you know, the, the population we have, where the jobs are and, and, and just straight housing units available. And then of course, in particular, um, affordable housing units. Because in San Mateo housing is, is largely unaffordable for most. Uh, and, and I mean, you know, as, as fellow San Mateo residents, you can, you can relate Yeah. I, I grew up in San Mateo and my parents bought their first home as a family in 1995 in San Mateo for \$250,000. Wow. You know, which at the time was an extraordinary

Speaker 1:

Amount of money. Money for them. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

And, and, um, and a big investment. But that same, um, without modifications, uh, you know, in terms of extra bedrooms or anything of the sort sold, um, about, I wanna say like pre pandemic, but like 2019 for like \$1.3 million, so over a million dollars more in just multiple times. Um, you

Speaker 1:

Know, yeah. I've seen that with my parents even though they haven't sold it. But like the Zillow estimate evaluated over from my parents, you know, <laugh>.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. So, you know, I, I've come of age and, and seen like, and, and I feel like in particular this last decade, right? Yeah. 2010 to 2020 we've seen, um, the, the value of, of homes, uh, sale price rise significantly and rents have skyrocketed, um, including my own, uh, as a renter in the city. So, um, we, we have a crisis. We, it, it, you know, the city and the county, the broader area is, is an area of haves and have nots. Yeah. Um, and, and you know, building more housing, uh, is seen as one of the solutions to help bridge that gap and make this a, a more equitable, sustainable place.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. And, um, have, as like, have any of the, your constituents asked you about like promoting affordable housing? I know, you know, I think you, you are the southern park, like southwestern kind of corner of Yes, that's right. Yeah. Um, of San Mateo and how they're like, has that affected, I know cuz there is a decent amount of, um, nimby the route they don't wanna be too, but Yes.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. Yeah, I think that's right. I mean, you know, I think San Mateo is at a crossroads for sure.

Yeah. Um, where we have, you know, generations, uh, who, uh, came in, you know, somewhat like my parents and perhaps lawyers or, or others, um,

Speaker 1:

Mine were a little later.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. They bought and, and, and ex you know, came in with various expectations, um, for, you know, suburban lifestyle. And I think, um, you know, that is facing tension with the, you know, the, the price spice. We've seen the demand in this area a change in how I feel like San Mateo, like San Mateo's role in the Bay Area. Yeah. Um, with the rise of the internet, I, I feel like, um,

we, we used to be a bedroom community Yeah. Where people like my mother would, you know, go to San Francisco to work. Um, yeah. And, uh, now we have a lot of jobs in San Mateo and people are coming from elsewhere here that's presenting other pressures and, um, as we try to work through it, you know, I think we, we've seen a mix. I've seen a mix when I knocked on doors and, and talked to constituents.

Yes. There were certainly people who are, are certainly concerned about, um, any development. Yeah. And what, uh, you know, in some cases, any, in other cases development that seems out of step with a suburban city. Um, and then there are others who, you know, are, uh, wondering where their kids are going to live when they graduate high school. Um, you know, there might be, uh, renters who are, you know, interested in more opportunities. There are, uh, you know, people who, uh, may not live here right now, but work here and would like to live here Yeah. And are instead commuting from very far out. Of course, some of our police and fire, uh,

Speaker 1:

Or teachers Yeah.

Speaker 2:

They work in, um, Tracy or Modesto.

Speaker 1:

I have teachers in high school. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

So, you know, I I I feel like I've heard a mix throughout. I think, um, almost everybody agrees that we need more housing and more affordable housing in San Mateo. Yeah. Uh, the, the question is how do we do it in a way that still sort of, um, furthers the, the, the a shared vision, uh, of San Mateo? Yeah. That's what we're working

Speaker 1:

On. And in either of the documents has like sea level rise or like other environment, like other climate concerns come forward. I know I, when I talked to Andrea, I think, or was it John, I forget somebody from like the groundwater infiltration, especially with like all the, you know, all the storms that were happening in January. January. Yes. Yes.

Speaker 2:

Absolutely. You know, I think, um, I I, John did share that study with me and, uh, I, I found it sobering. Um, I think it's just a reminder that, you know, there's not going to be a silver bullet or magical solution to a lot of what we are needing to, uh, sort of, uh, prepare for. Uh, you know, to me, in the back of my mind, uh, yeah, I I think it, it hasn't played a prominent public role, um, in, in the current development. But I know when John, uh, shared that study with me, I had a discussion with the city manager, um, and a deputy, uh, community development director, people involved with the general plan team and, and were assured that, uh, they are paying attention to, uh, studies such as that as they come out. Yeah. Um, and we're are interested in, uh, in integrating learnings and, and documents and materials, uh, such as those into our general planning process.

Um, there, there was a, a, a article recently in the, in the Daily Journal that I want to share with you. Um, I, I, I want to say that like on a high level, I, you know, I personally think it needs to play a large role. Yeah. I think this is a huge opportunity, um, to, you know, just make sure that because we're looking out into 10 to 20 years and because of the impacts we've already like other climate impacts. Yeah. Um, you know, we, we certainly need to be, uh, going in with eyes

open and, and planning responsibly. Uh, as you know, San Mateo County is one of the most vulnerable counties in the country to seeable, rise, rise, um, as it's, you know, by the ocean and the bay. Um, and then our city, of course has has a large Bayside. Um, so it, it's, it's, uh, you know, I it it factored into some of the planning around our wastewater treatment plant, which we're currently working on a billion dollar project. Um, and

Speaker 1:

So they're moving, are they moving it or are they just putting levies?

Speaker 2:

Um, they are moving it a little bit back

Speaker 1:

If all correctly. I just know like ones that are, cause it's the Bay and people don't think about it as much with sea level rise. And like I know, like where I went to university, they had to move on cause it was literally on a beach, um, <laugh> and it was infiltrated. I, I would

Speaker 2:

Say that like, you know, I mean, I think in San Mateo, it's fair to say like, we haven't gotten to the, uh, like

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Like, um, you know, huge discussions on managed retreat yet, for example. Or

Speaker 1:

It feels like more like the major infrastructure, at least what I've been seeing, it's like it's a waste on treatment plant the airport, like in the county than like houses. Absolutely.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. Yeah. Although, I mean, I, yeah, so I, I, and, and, and I, I, I'm not sure like how much it will, IM, it would impact like the land use map, for example, at this time. Yeah. I, I think, um, you know, I I I will say that there's been some thought about, you know, just, I, I think there is kind of a relationship between, um, the, you know, one of the focus points of the current general plan draft is, uh, with regard to housing is concentrating more of it, uh, in a smaller spaces closer to transit. Yes. And so I think that helps address a little bit because it's, it's bringing it more into the central areas of the peninsula as opposed to up in the hills in District five, uh, where we have seen, you know, some fire, uh, activity

Speaker 1:

Oh yeah. A little bit.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. We feel like Belmont and Laurelwood Park. Yeah. Um, uh, and you know, I, I think that would extend to the other opposite side as well. I, I, you know, there's, there's

Speaker 1:

Like shoreview,

Speaker 2:

You know, I

Speaker 1:

Sorry, like Shoreview or something like that that has Right,

Speaker 2:



Exactly.

Speaker 1:

More Yeah. Impact anything like east of 1 0 1, basically. Yeah. I would think. I used

Speaker 2:

To live in and, and really he, like I used to live in North Central Yeah. And I was, you know, I was maybe west of 1 0 1, but just west. Yeah, right. And, and 1 0 1 is, is right there. And so, you know, I I, I do think I, I'm not sure if, we'll yeah, we'll have to see, I, I'm not sure if we'll see like a land use map that reflects manage retreat at this point.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. But I feel like that's,

Speaker 2:

It's a living document too. I mean, I think we'll get, we'll get more opportunities to, to re re uh, revise and, and reflect. But, but I don't, you know, I do also think it's important to, to begin the conversations and, and get in the latest thinking mm-hmm. <affirmative> in these opportunities. Otherwise it'll be a huge missed opportunity. So my high level, you know, uh, you know, feeling is like I'm interested in supporting, getting the latest science into our process. Yeah. I sort of, I, I included that as part of my campaign and, um, I feel like when I look back at this article, I see that, uh, I, I want, I need to keep my eye on this because it looks like they're finalizing, um, a, a document that I think will be key in later this month.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. They, I, I talked to, uh, what's her name, McKenna from them, from once she went and she sent me something that's not public, but of like the map they have and that they want all the cities to be able to like have like a buffer zone so they can still build, but like build ining away. That's, that's resilient kind of resiliency more than, yeah. Um, cuz she was saying, I don't, I'm not, I don't know if it's with the planning staff or with the council that you guys are, that san mate's considering their overlay district. That's part of it.

Speaker 2:

Um, I mean we, we were just talking about potential housing overlays in this last Monday's meeting. Yeah. Um, I don't think they had a climate focus.

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

But, you know, I mean I I,

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Cause there's some of the historic, sorry, I just see that with my parents district.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. Yeah. There, there were, there were a number of topics, uh, uh, on Monday. But I, I think, um, yeah, so I guess like I personally, I, I hope, yeah. I don't know Rebecca. Like, uh, my, my my thought I will say I'm not a, a climate scientist.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Um, do you have I I'm doing the planning point. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

You know, I just, I just want to make sure that, you know, when we talk about planning for our future, when we talk about where housing should be and you know, what the, you know, what

San Mateo would, uh, look like in the future. I think it needs to, to be planned in a, in an environmentally responsible way. Um, of, of course, you know, like the fires in New York City, uh

Speaker 1:

Oh yeah, I've seen the pictures. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

But like smoke in New York City, you know, that just jolted me right back to the, you know, bay area in the pandemic in 2020 we had this C CCU fire and, um,

Speaker 1:

Oh yeah.

Speaker 2:

We, uh, you know, like I just feel like there are climate impacts. We, as you mentioned, we had the atmospheric rivers, our stormwater infrastructure needs rehabilitating. That was an item in our last, uh, council meeting. Yeah. So I, I just think, you know, personally I'm interested in, in ensuring that we're doing what we can to, uh, position ourselves as best as possible for a resilient and sustainable future. It's, it's going to take, um, careful attention to, uh, continuing study and supporting that continuing study. Yeah. I think making some hard choices and realizing that, that, you know, San Mateo is going to need to change, um, to, to meet those needs. And, um, so it won't necessarily be the same San Mateo any of us grew up in,

Speaker 1:

But Artism. But yes.

Speaker 2:

And, and, and I think if we, if we, we, we can't wait until the impacts really hit us. Yeah. I think Covid presents a huge example of that. Of course. Right? Like

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

It, it's, it's not gonna be something we can see, you know, coming from the horizon. And we can maybe hurriedly, uh, put those elements from one shoreline into a plan and start, you know, doing it at that point. It's going to hit us like a ton of bricks and, uh, it, it will be too late at that point.

Speaker 1:

So Yeah. It'll be very, it's like a slow moving. It's a slow moving and then it'll be six feet. Yeah.

Yeah. And with the, yeah, cuz yeah. Interesting. Yeah. And like individual housing projects, they don't come in when you guys have those. I know. They don't really come into effect the cl I know from what I've seen and heard, it's mostly the like, energy for like individual projects when you guys are reviewing those, the energy. Yeah. You

Speaker 2:

Know, I think our climate action plan has, it, it's been focusing on reducing emissions and, and, you know, I'm not sure that we have the same kind of robust Yeah. Uh, you know, sea level rise plan. I think this one shoreline is, uh, the, the result of some larger regional efforts. Yes. And of course, it, it's, it's a, it's a bigger problem than, than one city, uh, can take on by itself. So, um, yeah. I I I feel like, um, I've heard of like a projects here and there that are, um, trying to, I, I do think the way far treatment plan is probably the, the biggest, most recent example I believe they had. They did, you know, e elevate it.

Speaker 1:

Ah, but yeah, that's a mitigation measure kind of way. Yeah. Yeah. Like mitigating the futur effects. Effects. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. And, and, uh, you know, I think we've seen some, some maps, uh, in, in various, uh, meetings in which we've seen, uh, you know, I I actually ke crossing sort of stands out as an interesting example because like that's, it's, uh, you know, right. By the training tracks.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Okay. Yeah. That

Speaker 2:

And, um, you know, the, it seems as though like if, if you needed to be somewhere, um, that might be one of the places you, you know, it might be just far enough in, I think we would hope.

Um,

Speaker 1:

Yeah, I think from the map I've seen, we might want

Speaker 2:

To be,

Speaker 1:

Yeah. So like the El Camino corridor or Yeah. That kind of area that won't, unless it's crazy, insane more than we ever it, um, like El Camino corridor, that kind of area downtown that won't hopefully aren't predicted to be affected as much than like north central, north Shoreview kind of areas.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. So I, I think it's maybe been more of a, you know, of, of a, you know, an overlap of, of interests. Yeah. And, and, and purposes.

Speaker 1:

I mean, it helps that they're the transit corridors too <laugh>.

Speaker 2:

Right, exactly. Yeah. So I think like maybe the, so far the general planet housing element has, has shown a little more of, of that Yeah. As, as, you know, as opposed to directly saying, you know, this land use piece is like this because we're worried about sea level rise by 2040. Yeah. Um, but, but I, I will say like once this larger, um, document comes out, I just want to make sure that there's at least acknowledgement throughout Yeah. That, um, you know, it's, it's part of, you know, how Yeah. I, I think there's a, a, some information in here by, for example, that sort of points to the, the idea that when developers come with future projects, uh, there, there, you know, at least is, is, you know, guidance on, you know, climate appropriate

Speaker 1:

Design. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

You know, that I think, you know, we need to start discussing now and, uh, not have, there, there was a, a good quote about, you know, sort of shifting the paradigm from having, you know, climate, uh, you know, climate, climate go from a public benefit that may or may happen, you know, or may not happen to something that is built into every project, um, as a rule. I think that's, that's, that's useful for me. Yeah. You know, and, and others, because I, I do think, like,

when we think of like, you know, maybe we get a, a, a bike lane out of it and like we're reducing car trips or something. Yeah. But, um, you know, clearly we, we need it to be, um, you know, something that will stand the test of time and, and in addition to mitigation efforts, we need to be looking at adaptation as well. And, um,

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Building toward a, a climate, uh, you know, appropriate city

Speaker 1:

Maybe. Yeah. And we'll take hard, hard discussions, especially with some people, uh, from what I've seen, uh, yeah. Especially in sub more suburban cont or ex suburban context. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

It will, I think like the, the hope I have for what it's worth is, is I think we've seen some successes, um, to date and every time we, something that seems to serve the city of San Mateo well, um, I, I'm hoping we can use that as a way to help tell a story that is not about what we're losing Yeah. As a result of this change, or what, you know, is being restricted or ta or ta or ta away from us, but rather, you know, how this could be a net positive mm-hmm. <affirmative> for us, um, or a at very least, you know, a a a way for us to continue to live well in changing times. So the, you know, like we closed a couple blocks of our downtown industry. Um,

Speaker 1:

That was lovely. Yeah. You

Speaker 2:

Enjoyed that. Yeah. You know, I, I think, uh, it's, it's quieter. It's, it's, you know, um, and, and offers, you know, you can walk in the street and, and things of this nature. Yeah. Um, I, I think Kiku Crossing will be that as well. I think people, you know, who now might be worried about the, the, you know, advancing of a lot. I, I think part of the problem too, right, historically is I, I used to work in the, the building that now has a Roel sign downtown.

Speaker 1:

Okay. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

It's one of the tallest buildings in the city. It's like 14 stores.

Speaker 1:

Oh yeah. I mean, sixties and seventies architecture is really ugly. So that's probably why the fear. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. I mean, anyone, you know, looking at that and thinking like, oh, if there were four or five more of these in downtown, you know, that would be a tremendously different look. Yeah. And um, and you know, I think that, you know, by contrast, Kiku Crossing, it's eight stories, if I recall. Actually, I think it's only seven.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. I think cause they got the density bonus, right? So they were allowed to go over the measure, whichever measure, I forget which number, the what ladder, the current one is, uh, height limits. Yeah. About Measure Y. Yeah. I was gonna say p but that's the wrong letter, but yeah, that's

Speaker 2:

Right. Um, it's same, same thing though. Yeah. Yeah. And, um, and, and it's just, you know, it's, so that's a diff it's like half right. And then, um, I, but it's, you know, it's, it's tall enough that it allows for, you know, more units to serve more people and it's in the right spot. It's across the street from transit. And so I'm hoping people will, will see that

Speaker 1:

As, um, is that one a hundred percent affordable? Yeah. Oh wow. That,

Speaker 2:

That's the home run crown jewel project of the

Speaker 1:

City, I think. Yeah, I think so. Yeah. That's the most

Speaker 2:

Important project in a long time. And we were able to take, uh, redevelopment land, uh, that had been used as a ground level street parking lot

Speaker 1:

And Oh

Speaker 2:

Yeah. Um, may, you know, an active deal that allowed for a vertical parking structure so that, you know, there was still, uh, you know, helping people who still drive, but, um, including, uh, resident parking, but also the, uh, this, this new opportunity for, you know, 200 plus units on one acre, uh, right downtown and a hundred percent affordable. So a number of below market rate, uh, levels, including, you know, missing middle workforce, uh, folks who make, you know, like maybe around six figures, but around here, six

Speaker 1:

Figures. And that counts as affordable here. Yeah. Median.

Speaker 2:

Yeah.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Cause I remember when I worked in St. Carlos, I think it was like 130,000, which I thought was crazy. And that was like five or six year, five years ago when I was there. How high it is. Yeah, Yeah,

Speaker 2:

Yeah. So it's about making, you know, housing opportunities for, uh, you know, diversity of workforces. I mean, I feel like there's a lot of, um, there's a lot of relationships

Speaker 1:

Yeah. In,

Speaker 2:

In our connections.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Well I don't wanna waste anymore, uh, cause it's 5 2, 8 30, so, or 1130. I'm thinking time zones. But, uh, yeah, this was very helpful. Thank you.

Speaker 2:

Was it really okay.

## Interview 8

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Um, so to start off with, what is your like, position as like a planning commissioner and what are some of your duties?

Speaker 2:

Uh, well, um, you know, the planning commission is charged with applying and interpreting our zoning and planning codes. Uh, that's one of our duties. So projects that come before us, um, we, that, you know, are big or they're asking for some kind of, uh, variance, uh, from the codes. Like we have to decide like, do we think we should allow that variance to move that to move forward? Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. And then we also, um, have a, uh, legislative role. So we get to, uh, uh, we are consulted and we can make recommendations to council on changes to the planning code, which I actually have done, been doing, done a lot more of that. Um, so we had like, oh wow. In the time that I've been on the planning commission for the last year, we've done like a, uh, SB nine ordinance update, a general plan update and a housing element update. By the way, you were recording this some outside of Zoom or

Speaker 1:

Something? Yeah, I'm just doing it on my phone. It's easier to do it on my phone. Oh, okay. Alright. Sounds good. Yeah, it's just easier using the, uh, voice memos app. It's smaller in, yeah. Yeah. Easier. And you, so you've been on for, has Millbury housing element passed the state or not?

Speaker 2:

No, it is, um, it went out, we submitted a second revision, um, based on H CD's, comments. H C D wasn't too, uh, critical. Uh, mostly the small things. Mm-hmm. <affirmative> and um, also even the first draft, it wasn't, it wasn't bad mm-hmm. <affirmative>, but, you know, most of the sites made sense in terms of sites for redevelopment. Uh, there was some decent programs in there. And actually, uh, in response to HTD feedback, they added a ton of more programs, uh, under this housing mobility goal that I think are really interesting and progressive. So, um, I'm pretty excited to see that.

Speaker 1:

What is the housing mobility goal?

Speaker 2:

Well, it was, it's like how do we make it possible for low income families to live in Millbury?

Speaker 1:

Oh wow.

Speaker 2:

It's like, that's cool. Okay. Like, uh, additional, like there's a goal in there to study granting additional density bonuses, uh, in order to, uh, if developers come with more lower income units. Um, I believe there was a program in there for mortgage assistance for staff. I think there was a program in there for like, trying to figure out how to implement SB nine in a way that like, you know, these more, uh, desirable neighborhoods could become accessible to lower income people. Uh Oh, that's cool. Those are those sorts of things that I saw.

Speaker 1:

Oh, wow. Yeah. So that sounds more pro-housing than a lot of areas.

Speaker 2:

Uh, yeah, I mean, I mean the devil's into details and

Speaker 1:

I mean, I've just seen a lot of San Mateos, so that's why <laugh>.

Speaker 2:

Ah, fair enough. Yes. Well, you

Speaker 1:

Know, I heard of San Mateos from my mom

Speaker 2:

On everything. I haven't read San Mateo's housing element, but based on what I hear Yeah. And what I've read in re's housing element, I feel like Mill's housing element element is probably better than set

Speaker 1:

Mateo's. Yeah. Yeah. And Millbrae seems has put more effort in building multifamily, if I'm not mistaken. There's a decent amount of new multifamily.

Speaker 2:

Yes. It's, it's about, it's like, it was like, uh, you know, it was pretty quiet for a long time. Yeah. And then all of a sudden there was like a flood. Right. So, yeah, like, you know, once the Gateway project got entitled, then Anton Development Corporation came with their development plan or the, uh, old El Rancho Hotel.

Speaker 1:

Oh yeah. I knew about that one. Um,

Speaker 2:

And then Trammell Crow came with the proposal to redevelop this old Office Depot store. Oh, wow. Yeah, there's just been a bunch of stuff. And supposedly those are breaking ground sometime later this year. Uh mm-hmm. <affirmative>, but we'll see. And then there's like some other small things, like there was a, maybe like a 10 to 20 unit, um, multi-family, uh, building like, uh, just across the street from Safeway. So, so yeah. Stuff is happening.

Speaker 1:

And it seems like mostly along, like your transportation, your El Camino corridor, right?

Speaker 2:

Yeah. Yeah. It's all along the El Camino corridor. I don't think there's any, anything big happening off the corridor. Yeah.

Speaker 1:

So, oh, so more transit or oriented.

Speaker 2:

Yes.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. So that's good. Yeah. And has, um, cuz some of, is, is that area, will that area be impacted sea level rise or

Speaker 2:

What? Yeah, so I was actually looking at um,

Speaker 1:

Um, cause some places it's, it's is only east of Welc 1 0 1, but I know because like you have the airport and then right after Yeah,

Speaker 2:

Yeah. The map, the map of sea level rise in re is actually kind of weird. So like, yeah. So I'm looking at like the, uh, adapting to rising Tides explorer right now

Speaker 1:

Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. Yeah, I've looked at that one.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. And like, yeah, it's pretty much like the train track east of the train tracks is where you get sea level rise. You get flooding up to 66 inches and you know, it looks like there's one single family neighborhood that won't be impacted. You know, the gateway project will be impacted. Um, yeah. And then, but then oddly I guess there's like one neighborhood that's kind of in some kind of hot east of the train tracks that I guess is on some kind of high ground or something because most of it isn't, isn't gonna be blended. So, but yeah, like roughly speaking east of the train tracks is what gets impacted in uh, re

Speaker 1:

And when approving projects. Do you ever, when did the planning commission take that into consideration or for, or like mitigation measures or, I know you weren't there when they did Gateway.

Speaker 2:

Yeah, so I mean, I read in the e l r that those areas would be impacted. And there was some stuff in there about the things that the developers were gonna do to mitigate it that by raising things and I mean, if you look at the configuration of the project itself, right? Like there's ground floor retail and there's parking on the bo on the ground floor, but there isn't really, like, there aren't any residential units down there. Yeah. Um, so yeah, I think, uh, so there's that I guess. And then, you know, one sort of frustrating thing is at there is no map. Like, like, like the general plan had an, an environmental impact report. Yeah. And it had this hydro dissection on hydrology and in that hydrology section, they did not have a map like what adapting to rising tides has. Yeah. And I found that pretty frustrating. You know, it kind of, I think I remember in the text they kind of describe like these areas of the, that we're planning for growth will be impacted. But it's one thing to like describe it in a very high level and in other to actually show it.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. And

Speaker 2:

See, and like there were maps, they were mostly storm showing like storm water flooding risks. Uh, so like Millbrae has some area of the city that routinely flood. And so there's like, you know, when there's atmospheric rivers and stuff like

Speaker 1:

That. So like in January, so

Speaker 2:

Yeah. Yeah. So they, so they had those maps, but yeah, no sea level rise maps.

Speaker 1:

Interesting. Yeah. It seems like not people expect it in like 50, 60 years, so they don't have the maps yet A lot. Um,

Speaker 2:



I I, well that doesn't, I don't think that's

Speaker 1:

True. Right. I don't think that's true. But yeah, so much

Speaker 2:

You, you have so many agencies, right? Like you have one shortline

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

You have BBC dc you have Adaptive Rising Tide, there's like a bay adapt, there's like lot. And then, you know, um, I saw that Climate Central had a map also, so like, it's not like, you know,

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

There are many of these maps available, but for whatever reason they don't make it in the environmental impact reports.

Speaker 1:

Well at least it's in there text wise.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. But like to, to not, not in enough detail.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Because is it in your housing element at all? Because, um, as like a environmental impact on the housing element?

Speaker 2:

Uh, it was not, yeah. I don't remember it being a bear.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

It, it's kind of hard because like, you know, we did the housing element update and the general plan update

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Together.

Speaker 2:

So like, I'm having a hard time

Speaker 1:

Oh no, I understand. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

What, what was, what aspects of the e I R applied to the housing element versus the general plat update?

Speaker 1:

So, yeah. Yeah. And are there other, like climate mitigations that are considered in like in your, in the decision making? Um, or in the elements at all? Like in your dec when you're deciding, um, like approving or policy decisions?

Speaker 2:

Uh, so Millbrae does have a reach code. So I have asked about all electric construction, um, and no gas. Uh, there is some of that that has, uh, been discussed. Um, they, the, the, they talk about tdm like transportation to demand management mm-hmm. <affirmative>, but in a very hand wavy way. They're just like, we will do tdm. Which is like the thing.

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Great. Like why don't you then, you know, I, I mean I've actually been very skeptical of tdm, uh, cuz I was just like, you know, it's just, you're just putting this acronym in there. I have heard that. Like there are good TDM programs in, in, in certain places in San Mateo County and Sanford mm-hmm. <affirmative> like, okay, so there's some TDM that's like actually does the thing that people want it to do. Um, but you know, I, I haven't studied those TDM plans at all. Right. So I don't really know what a good TDM plan is. Yeah. And yeah, right now I'm kind of like, is there a plan for how like when people are like, you know, uh, we are gonna mitigate traffic and car usage. I'm kind of like, okay, show me how you're gonna, I I'm, I I'm left wanting a little bit more.

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Uh, and then what else? Uh, those I think are the main

Speaker 1:

Ones. Yeah. Cause you guys aren't having multifamily up in the hills where there's the fire risks,

Speaker 2:

Right? Yeah. Yeah. So we did have a fire map. Yeah. But it is, it only shows the risk of fire outside of the city. They, for whatever reason they didn't

Speaker 1:

Interesting.

Speaker 2:

Put a, they like, like basically the fire map that had a map of mill gray and then they drew, they shaded in the areas outside of the boundaries that were like moderate fire risk. Uh, which is, you know, where you would expect. Right. It's uh, you know, crystal Springs Trail basically. Yeah. With the Perera park. Right. So it's sort of like, okay. Like that, that was kind of obvious. Um, the, in the text of the EIRs, they do talk about areas of re that are moderate risk and it's like there's a canyon, uh, there where there's a bunch of houses that's like adjacent to re avenue. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, that's kind of where they said

Speaker 1:

This is. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

But all of it is like moderate or high or like all of it is like on the lower end. Oh, okay. Like I remember like, cuz I remember for our recent SB nine ordinance update, you know, SB nine has this thing where it says like, like SB nine doesn't apply in areas of higher, very high.

Speaker 1:

Oh. Oh yeah. Cause when I was working in Oakland, we had like, half our city couldn't because of all areas from the Oakland fire.

Speaker 2:

Right. Yeah. So, but so like, it didn't, like I remember talking to staff about that and there was no part of the city that would not be subject to SP nine because of that.

Speaker 1:

That's good. We love SP nine. Um, <laugh> anything to get more housing because is there a massive, I mean, I know the whole Bay Area has it, but is there specifically a ma like a jobs housing imbalance in Millbrae? Um, there

Speaker 2:

Is not, but it's coming.

Speaker 1:

Oh, okay.

Speaker 2:

So like the, uh, so you know, historically Millbrae has been a bedroom community. There's some, the largest employers are like the San the Public U the S F P U C has a large facility, uh, in the city and you know, Safeway and all that. Um, but most of the like, oh, sorry. And then of course the school district. Yeah. Um, but there are, other than those, there isn't, there aren't big employers, but, uh, we are developing at least two major biotech campuses Oh wow. Next to the Barton Station. So, and there's an estimate of maybe like a thousand or so people are gonna live there and they have a tenant. Right. So one of the things is that, that's happening right now is that the gateway project was both office and housing mm-hmm. <affirmative> and the office right now is sitting empty and it, it's a little concerning. Yeah. Whether they'll ever be able to lease that out. Uh, I mean, I'm sure they're working on it and at some point they'll make an announcement. But like the, like I can see the develop the, the biotech thing going up right now and it's like, yeah, that's a good, it's a good, it's probably gonna be a good eight to 10 stories when it's done. Yeah. Um, and so like, you know, once that opens, you know, those people, the people working there are probably gonna look for housing in VRE or in North Roth Mullin. Thank, thankfully they're really like housing going up in the area, but like, yeah, I think they're, we there will be more jobs, housing displacement pressure going forward than the we've experienced historically.

Speaker 1:

How interesting that you guys haven't had that yet? I compared to other,

Speaker 2:

I I mean I'm, I mean, we're not

Speaker 1:

Insulated. No. Yeah. I mean everything, there's no real borders. Yeah. Um, yeah. I'm just thinking of what, and then cuz is, has uh, the affordability also gone, gone worse as well? I would assume. I,

Speaker 2:

I think so. So when we were looking in Millbrae when we first moved here, so we moved in probably into probably what was one of the, the, uh, when we were looking, you know, we probably moved into one of the few, uh, apartments in, that was leasing in Millbrae for under 3000. We rented a a one bedroom for 2,700. I think there was actually a 3000, uh, rentable one bedroom in the building we live in now. And that was a reach for us at the time. Yeah. Um, and you know, we, I ended up not getting it because I guess we didn't say we could move in

immediately. Like it was a bit, it was available like a month earlier than we needed it to be available. And so I guess they picked someone who could move in right away. But the cheapest apartments being rented in Gateway right now are like 3000 to 3,500 right now.

Oh. I be so like, it's, it's not cheap. No. Um, and then, I mean, and yeah, like we are also kind of looking around at homes in the, in the city and Yeah. I mean all of them are like, like I saw, I saw a place today yester this, this today that, or yesterday that was, sorry, two days ago. It was being, they were asking for, for, for one bath. It has only one and a half bathrooms and it's bedrooms have doors that opened out onto the street. So I was just like, this is kind of a weird house. Yeah. Uh, so, and like it's more typical to see like a house where just like, okay, this is like a nice house. It's like easily over two and a half. Yeah.

Speaker 1:

Over three. Oh yeah. So I know we saw, it was like when we sold, like it was in San Francisco when we sold my grandma's How insane stuff is. Yeah. And is there any like, prop programs they're trying to do in Millbury to like bring down affordability? I mean, I know like always the demand cost, uh, you know, more you build hopefully Costco down. But other than like building more.

Speaker 2:

So unfortunately, I think we have council members who are convinced who've either genuinely or politically have decided that the way to accomplish affordability is through higher and higher included every, uh, requirements.

Speaker 1:

Oh. So

Speaker 2:

Like, like, you know, one of my council member, like their council members. So we just within the last year and a half, Millbrae didn't have an inclusionary ordinance that was citywide. We had one for the specific planner, the staging area mm-hmm. <affirmative>, but citywide, we have a 15% requirement that also council members are talking about raising that to 20%. And they are, you know, when they, when when they talk about why they don't like certain projects that are coming into the city, like either through SB 35 or SB three 30, they're like, oh, these people are only offering like ha a handful of affordable units. We really wish we could have asked them to offer more. And then the SB nine are SP nine implementation ordinance. If we have, um, if you add a third unit that the, that unit has to be restricted for 55

Speaker 1:

Years. Oh wow. So,

Speaker 2:

So it's like, yeah, there's, there's, you know, there they are thinking about programs that will bring more affordable units online. If you ask me, those are not the right programs we should be

Speaker 1:

Pursuing. I don't think so either because that's,

Speaker 2:

That's just

Speaker 1:

My develop person's only gonna build what they can. But if they can, you know, make a profit.

Speaker 2:

Yeah,

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. And, and our, our city manager likes to complain about how the state took away redevelopment money and so, you know, really wishes that we could bring in redevelopment back. Another council member mentioned how like there was actually a pretty nice senior housing development at the north end of downtown. Oh yeah. And she was saying like, oh yeah, that, that building was built with redevelopment money. So like, you know, it seems like in the past, Millbrae has used at least some of its state funds funding for the purposes of actually building affordable units. Um,

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

So yeah. Who's to say like, if that funding came back, maybe, you know, yeah, it would be, uh,

Speaker 1:

It said your brown took it away. Offer.

Speaker 2:

Yeah.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Okay. Yeah, that was, yeah, that was very useful. Thank you.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. Well, can you tell me more about what this.

Speaker 1:

Basically my thesis is on like the relationship between housing civil rise, but I'm also talking about like housing affordability and everything, and how there's two big crises that are affecting coastal communities, but I'm using the Bay Area and more specifically San Mateo County, just because it's easier to get people to know people, um, and how, whether or not they, it's taken into account basically.

Speaker 2:

I mean, I think the, the answer is you, that you have, I think for me it's like really hard to get, it feels like it's really hard to get good information about Yeah. How seriously to take seal will rise. Right. Because like some of redacted and MA's colleagues within the Sierra Club, sometimes when they talk about sea level rise, I'm sort of like, are you just using sea level rise to come up with a reason to oppose this development? Like, is it like, is this really a thing that we should be worried? Like Yeah. Like is this specific concern like aspect of fuel rise, something that we should really be thinking, like really be thinking about? Right. Because it's like, it's like this, it's like this, uh, it could very easily be wielded as they just like, you know, a boogie boogiemer.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. I know at some of my other interviews they've talked about how they're afraid of like talking about too much cuz of also NIMBYs, um, <laugh> using it as an, um, excuse to not have housing.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. So, so, so yeah. I think it's the, what we, I feel like what we desperately, desperately need at this point is we need a and I think like the, the, uh, each individual jurisdiction does not have the expertise to handle this. Yeah. Right. Like some members of the planning commission know about the issue. Like I do, some members of the planning staff know, but does everyone know? Probably not. Right? And like, no, we could each look at our own maps. We could each set our own target levels of what, uh, what the flood, what the, how many feet we think is reasonable. And we could each come up with reasons why, Hey, I don't think I, I don't want this development to be forward because I think that like this, uh, because I don't think you've adequately mitigated this risk. Right. And then there's also like a mitigation thing, right? Is it like, you know, is it acceptable for a building to be built but just raised to a certain level? Or is that just like, you know what, the parking garage is just not gonna be accessible, so just don't build anything at all, period. Just like retreat.

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

And I think like, it would be nice if we had like Bay area wide agency that could say like, or, or even the state, right. It'd be nice to have like a higher level of jurisdiction

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

With more resources and un potentially understanding of this issue. Set some of the boundaries. Set some of the, the boundaries here.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Right.

Speaker 2:

Because otherwise some jurisdictions are gonna approve sea level developments that don't account for sea level rise, or they'll ask for more mitigation than necessary, et cetera, et cetera. Right. So

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Cause has Millbrae considered the guidelines that like, um, there's like the new overlay district thing that, um, one jawline has come up with for like sea level rise?

Speaker 2:

I haven't heard of

Speaker 1:

It. Oh, okay. So, okay. So they, in their, they have like new planning guidelines and one of 'em is like an overlay district with like a few require like, just like, kind of like other overlay districts where there's just like a few extra like, oh, zoning. I know some cities have considered it from one shoreline. Like they're thinking,

Speaker 2:

I think that they, this, this sounds vaguely familiar, but obviously it hasn't come in front of the planning

Speaker 1:

Commission. Yeah. I mean it's, they've only, when I talked to 'em, I think it was pretty new when I talked to one shoreline. Yeah. Okay. But that was one solution there're coming up or one idea

that they had for like zoning, I guess in terms of, um, sea level rise. And I know low is less, I mean has less areas that are affected than other cities. Yeah. Like Foster City or we're not, yeah. We're,

Speaker 2:

We're not Foster City or Redwood City or anything, like, any of those places. I mean, we do have like, issues with the airport.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. So

Speaker 2:

Like the airport, I, I don't know if you know what they're proposing for their shoreline barrier.

Speaker 1:

I do not, but it's

Speaker 2:

Not, it's, it's, well, so it's basically, you know, they're just, they're gonna build a concrete barrier and do some, uh, put some fill into the bay in order to protect the, the airport from sea level rise. But like one of the things that they have in there, they said like, if we cannot not get cooperation from the neighboring jurisdictions to complete the barrier, we're gonna build a barrier on the 1 0 1 side. And I was just like, what? Like, are you serious? And so did Cal, like Caltran said the same thing also.

Speaker 1:

Geez.

Speaker 2:

Uh, so it's just like, it's kind and it's probably in there because it's e i r and they brought, and yeah. I just want to be like, you know, it's like c y but like <laugh>, I was just like, I just just like, whoa. Seriously. Like

Speaker 1:

Anyway. Yeah. Cuz that the airport really needs to consider since they're all, all the runways are Yeah. Yeah. That's crazy that they're just gonna block off <laugh>.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. I mean, like I said, I don't know how seriously they're leading it, you

Speaker 1:

Know? Yeah. I mean

Speaker 2:

They did talk about it in the, in their presentation before the planning commission in sf. So it was a big enough deal that they

Speaker 1:

Oh

Speaker 2:

Wow. Called it out in their oral presentation. But

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Cuz Yeah. Cause most of your shoreline is blocked by the airport, so then

Speaker 2:

Yes.

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

And actually the airport is kind of the, like the main for demand for Millbrae Like, uh, like a lot of the flooding that happened in Millbrae mm-hmm. <affirmative>, because the right behind is the neighborhood that always floods. There's a canal that the airport is supposed to maintain. And the city kept pointing the finger at the airport and saying like, you know, the residents would complain to the city and the city would point the finger at the airport and say like, the airport needs to go clean up the canal.

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Uh, and it's not us. And this year actually the airport did clean it up the canal and that neighborhood for probably the first time in five years did not have a major flooding issue.

Speaker 1:

Well, considering this year being how bad the floods were this year. Right. Everywhere. Right.

Speaker 2:

So it seems like, it's like, okay, I guess there was some truth to the idea that like the airport was responsible because once they finally cleaned out the canal, there was no issue.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. So

Speaker 2:

Yeah. Yeah. I mean, like, there's no love loss between millbrae and the airport

Speaker 1:

<laugh>. I can imagine why the pollutants and the noise.

Speaker 2:

Oh, among other things. Yeah.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. And like development. Yeah. And how crazy they do development. My mom worked for them when I was a child, years and years ago. Yeah. Okay. Well this was very useful. Thank you.

Speaker 2:

All right, sounds good. Thanks for.

Interview 9

Speaker 1:

Um, so to start off with, um, what are your positions in terms of like volunteer positions, in terms of housing, and what are your roles just for background?

Speaker 2:

So, um, I am currently a commissioner on the San Bruno Planning Commission, um, which is, you know, an, an appointed role volunteer, no pay. Um, I also am a member of Peninsula for Everyone and YM b Action. So I, I'm, I'm a donor. Like, I don't, I don't have any sort of authority with them. Yeah. But I do, um, I, I am friendly with various organizers and, um, uh, and also Urban Environmentalists, which is a group that is specifically focused on the intersection of how smart urbanism affects our environmental footprint. Um, and especially climate change with



vehicle miles traveled and so on. Yeah. So, you know, having, having dense, walkable communities where people don't have to get in cars all the time, even as we move to electric cars, um, there's real value in terms of reducing, you know, how much renewable energy we have to build out, how much transmission we have to build out. Yeah. Um, and also significant improvements to health by reducing particulate matter if, if you just have a lot less driving. Um, so, and we've <laugh> we've been seeing the impacts of particulate matter with those clouds of smoke drifting down from Canada with the fires this last week. Um,

Speaker 1:

Have they have Oh yeah. Have they come down to California or, I know

Speaker 2:

That that was on the East coast. Yeah. But of course, California's had similar things the last few years with its own fires, so,

Speaker 1:

I mean, I wouldn't be surprised with how I think they've moved to Norway or something. Um, yeah. What, yeah.

Speaker 2:

Well, and it's, and of course there's the attribution problem. It's like, well, can you really blame this specific fire on climate change? But definitely we know, um, the conditions to have fires are going to be more common. Yes. Um, and so, you know what used to seem like a, oh my God, this happens once a century will instead be every five years, and that's not so great.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Oh yeah. Um,

Speaker 2:

So, um, and yeah, I, I mean my background, like, I, I am an engineer. Um, I'm mostly a networks and software guy. Uh, that's kind of my, um, my undergrad was computer science. I actually also studied linguistics. I had a whole first career in computational linguistics. Wow. Along the way taught myself statistical finance, which turns out to be pretty similar to Statistical Linguistics. And then I was employee number two of a startup in that field for about six-ish years. Um, in theory, owned a good chunk of the company, but like 15% of \$0 isn't very much money <laugh>. And eventually, uh, that, that did not pan out. And, um, and then along the way as the hobby, I had taught myself, uh, wilderness networking in order to like go to weird places like the middle of nowhere in the Hoover wilderness and set up a satellite link in an order to do, uh, the Game Ingress, which is the original location based game before Pokemon Go.

Uh, and I took those network skills and got myself hired doing interesting network things for Tesla Energy, uh, formerly Solar City. Um, I was hired at Solar City before the merger and it was, um, uh, Hey, can we figure out how to set up like a parabolic antenna to connect this, uh, battery system that we want to install on this hydroelectric dam that's way out in the middle of nowhere where cell service doesn't exist yet. Um, so yeah. So I, I am, you know, like I think in terms of complex systems very easily, like that's kind of like, I, I think in terms of feedback loops, you know, reinforcing and damping loops, um, and, uh, you know, sort of the, I am by no means an expert on climate change and environment, but I, I sort of look at those problems and like, yeah, that seems big and important. You know, like the, the sort potential, the potential for things to go very badly for us is very clear. And so it's something I've always,

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Uh, I was influenced by, there was a documentary called After the Warming that aired in the nineties when I was in, you know, in high school mm-hmm. <affirmative>. So it always has been like a subject where I'm like, yeah, humanity should probably do something about that.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. I remember first hearing about it in high school too. Um,

Speaker 2:

Yeah. So, um, I'm sorry. My printer has decided to run a cleaning cycle, I think, but

Speaker 1:

I can't hear it. Very good. Um, yeah. And so, so in your like, roles, does sea level rise like ever come up in terms of like when you guys are making decisions on housing? So, or in the other,

Speaker 2:

San Bruno does not have any direct coast. We are inland. Like we're, we're next to the airport.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Oh yes. You're similar to inland. Um, yeah.

Speaker 2:

And the east side of town is in the FEMA flood zone. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. Um, so, and that, that has been a subject of, of some, some citizen anger over the last few years. Cuz that FEMA map was published, I don't know, two years ago-ish, something like that. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, but it was finalized maybe three. Yeah. It's since I joined the planning commission. Definitely. I've been on the planning commission for, it'll be four years this fall.

Speaker 1:

Okay. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Um, I was appointed to fill a partial term and then I was reappointed. Um,

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

And when I moved into the area about six years ago, it would've been early May, six years ago to a little over six, um, the, there was not an official flood designation. Like everybody kind of knew, at least if you had any kind of common sense at all that the east side of town is, um,

Speaker 1:

Cause is it east of 101 or east of El Camino?

Speaker 2:

Uh, so ultimately the map found only areas east of, of, um, the Caltrain tracks. So the, there's, there's no residences east of 101.

Speaker 1:

Oh, yeah. Yeah. That's all like airport

Speaker 2:

In, in, in the south end. What's east of 101 is the airport and in the north end, um, what's east of 101 is South San Francisco. Oh, yeah. Um, that kind of a, a, a tongue of south San Francisco kind of comes down and cuts us off from the Bay shore.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. And then there's like a few airport

Speaker 2:

Related Yeah. There's like a, there's like a executive, you know, private jet facility that's over there. There's

Speaker 1:

The United Maintenance base.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. And there's

Speaker 1:

Also, oddly enough,

Speaker 2:

That one, um, there, there's a, a homeless shelter. There's like a, uh, I forget the

Speaker 1:

Name of it. Oh, they did that, like Redwood City.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. I, I, that's a whole nother thing that it can Well,

Speaker 1:

Redwood City has one too that's in a place that's, um, I remember volunteering that's under a flood. Um, not mm-hmm. <affirmative>, it's right next to one of one and it floods

Speaker 2:

And, and they're just building another one. Like there was, I forget if it was Redwood City, they're

Speaker 1:

Building a lot on the

Speaker 2:

East side County Old Land where Yeah. They, they, and this was the Sierra Club wanted them to designate that for like green space to, to sort of do wetlands restoration and have it as like a park similar to the wetlands park that's off the east side of Palo Alto.

Speaker 1:

Yeah, that's

Speaker 2:

Good. And, and do the shelter somewhere else. And I, I mean, like I'm glad that we can get these built at all. Yes. But it is stupid to like a put them out where they can be flooded where, you know, like green space would be a better choice to, to put directly along the shore. And b like if you want to do supportive services for people who might wanna be transitioning back into sort of having a job in a home, in a normal sort of participation society, like you should put it near transit

Speaker 1:

Also just near other residences. I feel like it's probably also very isolating to the residents.

Speaker 2:

Oh. I mean, it, it's really

Speaker 1:

Industrial area.

Speaker 2:

If you want to tell the poor people we hate you and we don't want you near us, it would be hard to do better than this.

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Ugh. You know, I, I have the Catholic workers, uh, oh God, what is that? Um, hospitality house, Catholic Workers, hospitality house. It's literally across the street from me. Yeah. And it's fine. Like, I just, I don't understand why people are like, oh my God, low income housing, you know, shelters, like, it'll bring crime. It'll, she's like, shut up. Like it's fine. It's fine. Like, I didn't even know they were the first year I was here,

Speaker 1:

I, I heard it all when I was working before I got to school. So Yeah. Back to school.

Speaker 2:

So, yeah. Yeah. Um, but yes, that is one of the things that's like, I mean, like literally it's directly on the shore, like Yeah. And it would be the, the first thing that floods. Um,

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

So,

Speaker 1:

Yeah. And so the east side, is there, like, where it's considered flood, is there a lot of development or is it mostly just like, of the, like housing? So is it mostly single family or

Speaker 2:

It's, it's most single family with a few small multifamily buildings mixed in from before they banned that. Um, so

Speaker 1:

Like older.

Speaker 2:

Oh, oh yeah. There's the odd, the odd duplex. There's a couple actual apartment buildings where it's like, you know, three floors with three units or so on each floor, that sort of thing.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. So like small plexes.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. So, yeah. Well, I mean, they're beyond Plexus, right? Yeah. They're where you're talking like 8, 9, 8, 9, 10 units. So it is like actual apartments. It's, it's like small, small

Speaker 1:

Apartments. Yeah. Small scale multifamily. Yeah,

Speaker 2:

Exactly.

Speaker 1:

And is there any, like, there's no big proposals in those areas cuz they're all designated Well,

Speaker 2:

Family, no. We, so we are, we are zoned our, I think, uh, are we R one or are we R two? I'd have to look now. I think it is R one through the entire east side. If you go down south enough in San Bruno, like, um mm-hmm. <affirmative>, there's the stuff that, so if you look at a map, um, should I screen share? Would that be helpful?

Speaker 1:

I can get a map up really fast.

Speaker 2:

Okay. So if you look at a map, there is the neighborhood I'm in, which is called Bell Air, which is the numbered avenues, which is like directly west of the airport. Yeah. Um, and then if you look north, like there's the industrial neighborhood with the FedEx as well as this little Bayshore Circle neighborhood next to Tan Fran. So basically the, the Bellaire neighborhood is where the, the flood risk is.

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Um, and then further south you get, there's the Mita Park area with San Selmo Avenue and all the various streets named after Saints. That's like R two or R three. Like it is still in theory legal to build kind of small plexes and stuff in that. And there's definitely a lot. Yeah.

Speaker 1:

And then do you guys already have an SP nine ordinance, or is SP nine? Because that's also allowing, uh,

Speaker 2:

I mean, I, I don't think we have adopted our SP nine ordinance, although what that means is that we just would be subject to whatever the, the minimums are Yeah. In the, in the law. Um, so people could do the up to four units per single family parcel regardless.

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

So the second weirdness with our city is that that east side area that's subject to the flood risk is also under the SFO flight path.

Speaker 1:

Oh yeah.

Speaker 2:

And due to this is basically, as far as I knows, only affects mostly San Bruno and a little bit south San Francisco. And Millbury. Um, back in the seventies, the airport agreed like, Hey, our number of flights has gone way up. The size of jets has gone way up. Um, cities, if you agree not to sue us, we will fund programs to help people affected by the airport noise. Um, do noise mitigation, like put in better windows, put in insulation. Um,

Speaker 1:

Oh, okay. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Uh, but also you can't build any new housing in the areas affected by this.

Speaker 1:

Oh, wow.

Speaker 2:

So that deal with the airport still stands today, 50 years later. Geez. And it is unclear whether people in the Eastern most chunk of San Bruno can invoke the various state housing laws because the airport, uh, land uses, uh, commission, they have a certain amount of federal authority and federal law would trump state law.

Speaker 1:

Oh, wow. Yeah. So

Speaker 2:

Like nobody has litigated whether this deal with the airport, Trump state law state.

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

And there's a whole thing going on where like there was an exception made for a building on, uh, Newark Avenue. It's the, where the old movie theater was that's been defunct for many years across the border into South San Francisco, just north of San Fran.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Um, Tamran, they're redeveloping.

Speaker 2:

Pardon?

Speaker 1:

They're redeveloping tamran into housing and that's,

Speaker 2:

Uh, yes. So that, and that's actually that they're putting the housing in Tamran, like in a corner of it that in theory is I believe just outside of the 75 decibel, uh, contour. Oh,

Speaker 1:

Ok. Yeah. Cause I was wondering if my dealer did a huge redevelop, or I don't know how far along it is, but I heard

Speaker 2:

Yeah. That that's a whole nother conversation. But in any case, the the newer avenue, um, they, they specifically got an exception from the airport where they were like, yes, we know the airport's there. We'll put like a, a covenant on the land that says you can't sue over the noise. We'll build to these higher standards for noise. It'll all be fine. And I'm just like, why are you making that the exception and not the new rule?

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

And, uh, I have been bugging our city staff. I've been talking to electeds from all three cities. Like I actually talked to redacted, my congressman the other day about this to say like, can you push this from the FAA side? Like this is stupid <laugh>.

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

So, um, that, so

Speaker 1:

That's a whole allow constraints on this allows a lot of new development I would think in the city.

Speaker 2:

I mean, you know, a lot like it's, it's what counts as a lot. Like, it's it's a lot relative to the scale of our relatively small city Yeah.

Speaker 1:

For like a small city. Yeah. Cuz you're not like a big city. Yeah. That's what I'm meaning. Yeah. I mean,

Speaker 2:

We're 44 K, so, I mean, we're not tiny, but we're not, we're not tiny, but not Yeah. You know, we're not SF or so.

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Um, so yeah, I mean, like, it, it definitely like, it unlocks like letting people in the east side adapt their properties to their family's needs. Like, um, as things turned out, like the home I am in is like two blocks south. I'm kind of towards the southwest corner of this neighborhood mm-hmm. <affirmative>. And so I'm, I'm just outside of the contour where I'd have to be concerned about the, the noise issue. Um, and I'm literally across the street from where the flood zone ends.

Speaker 1:

Oh wow.

Speaker 2:

So it, it has turned out very like that. So like I am in the process of building an accessory dwelling in it and my backyard from my 80 year old parents. Um, that's, yeah. And, uh, but yeah, it was like getting those, it was like, okay, like I very narrowly missed having these more complicated,

Speaker 1:

So in the flood zone they have more complicated rules as well. Um,

Speaker 2:

The main thing is just that the, um, the, I mean the insurance is very

Speaker 1:

Expensive. Oh, ok. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

And that, and that's, I mean, and like, you know, like, uh, it's so frustrating because, you know, I understand residents, uh, who are having, you know, that that face this expense are, are upset. And at the same time, you know, like given the probabilities, like either this insurance program would go bankrupt insuring you and cease to exist.

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Or like, we pay what it, we pay what it actually costs. You know, like, and like if, if, if that is an indicator of risk that like maybe you shouldn't be there, like maybe, maybe we should do managed retreat. Like

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Is there creeks also in that area too that like affect it? Cuz I know some of the areas closer, it's like the, um, groundwater innovation I've heard from other people. Like the,

Speaker 2:

If you look the south, if you look along the south side of the neighborhood, there's like an open chunk of land, which I think is owned by the airport.

Speaker 1:

Oh yeah, I see that.

Speaker 2:

Yes. It's undeveloped. So south of Lions Park and like there is an actual like creek bed, which I think is not just an artificial culvert, but like an actual creek that runs along there. Um, and then through the middle of the neighborhood just north of Pine, there is like a, a stormwater culvert.

Speaker 1:

Mm.

Speaker 2:

Um, and so yes, like if, if my house was going to flood, it would likely be stormwaters rising from that culvert at Pine.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. And then groundwater inundation as well.

Speaker 2:

Yes. Yeah. We definitely get some of that. Um,

Speaker 1:

Probably in January. You guys had it.

Speaker 2:

I have some pumps, but yeah, when it was really, really soaked it was, it was interesting.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. In January. I can imagine I've heard it from somebody. I mean I wasn't there, but, um, cuz I was here. But, uh, from so many people that's been the, you know, January wake up call, um, kind of to with how much rain, um, the barrier. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

I was honestly like sort of surprised that when they did the map they, they like, I don't know, like I look across the street and I'm like, I don't really think the ground level of that house is like an entire foot lower than mine, but Okay. I guess it must be a few inches. And it's like, it's just across the, I'm sort, I'm sort of skeptical that if they flooded we wouldn't, but

Speaker 1:

Yeah. I feel like they just have to have a, like a lot of them, they have to have a line. Yeah. And it might not be exact cause the exact science probably isn't a hundred percent there. We don't know.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. It's sort of a probabilities where it's like, oh, this one's 50% and this one's 49.9, but have to draw the line somewhere.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Um, so,

Speaker 2:



So yeah, it's definitely like, we're not the, you know, I mean we've done our housing element recently and like there's not really any appetite for trying to do any sort of up zoning through that east side mm-hmm. <affirmative> area other than just the, like there's a parcel directly across from the Cal train station that they, where I guess it's like, they want to say like this the like one block facing the Cal train station along First Avenue. Yeah. Or I guess it's San become San Mateo Avenue there. Um, they like that, they're like, okay, we want, we, we, we wanna put like, you know, apartments mixed use there, but pretty much other than that through the east side, like they don't want to add any new housing, um, because of these various concerns. And like, you know, like o obviously like the more land you unlock for housing, the more production you're likely to get. It isn't the biggest constraint. Like it's, it's, I don't know, like it's not great, but it's not the biggest constraint we have on housing production in the city.

Speaker 1:

What is the biggest constraint? Like, are you guys able to build a lot or?

Speaker 2:

Um, I mean the big thing is that we have a three stories at least, uh, an increase on that for the transit zone only. Um, which is basically the triangle of San Mateo Avenue, which is our downtown San Bruno Avenue, which is the artery between two 80 and 1 0 1 and El Camino. Yeah. Um, and then up Huntington to Tanin. So it's, it's basically like, it's the, the major arteries we designated and the downtown to, to allow for more development. Um, other than that, the entire city is still under the three story height limit that's

Speaker 1:

Very low.

Speaker 2:

Yeah, very. I mean, and like that, you know, like you can't, you can't build like it, it will not pencil out for the budget to do apartments anymore. At that scale. You really need to do at least five stories.

Speaker 1:

Um, yeah. Cause I thought similar tales was low if there was being five mm-hmm. <affirmative>.

Speaker 2:

Yes. We are even worse.

Speaker 1:

Um, so you haven't had as much like large, has there been a lot of large scale? I mean, I know,

Speaker 2:

Huh? Well, since, since 2014 when we adopted that, we've built one building. Okay. One. And, uh, in 2019 there was a building that had been getting workshopped, uh, between 2016 and 2019, um, which came to a vote. Two of our council members lived within the thousand foot limit where they were supposed to recuse. As a result, we needed all three other votes because state law, uh, for general law cities is stupid and says you need an affirmative majority. You, you count the abstentions as if they were nay. Uh, and one member listens to the 200 angry NIMBYs and voted no. Um, I believe there is an article in the San Francisco Chronicle. It was like San Bruno seeks housing then rejects it.

Speaker 1:

<laugh>. Oh, okay. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Um, and uh, subsequent to that two projects pulled out of our pipeline because they were like, what? Why do I want to go through years of, you know, workshops and citizen input only to get rejected at the last minute?

Speaker 1:

Yeah. I mean, they could threaten to sue too.

Speaker 2:

Well, well they did. No, I mean, like we got sued over it. <laugh>, we, we were sued.

Speaker 1:

Ok. I know Millbury had one where they got sued and then that project went through then.

Speaker 2:

Yes. Well that we were sued under the Housing Accountability Act. They also submitted an SB 35 project where they're like, Hey, so you don't like our beautiful modern five story thing that terraces down to the back and is only two stories against the neighborhood and the, you know, giving you a new public park. You don't, you don't like that. Well how about a seven story featureless concrete tower? Would you like that?

Speaker 1:

Well you guys have to approve for Sesse 35 or now. Exactly.

Speaker 2:

So they, they did draft that they ultimately, we approved the original project, but by then it was 2020. Of course covid and supply chain disruptions, the budget didn't work anymore.

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

So they've been sitting on that entitlement. Yeah. Um, I am skeptical that that building as designed will ever get built. Maybe that's kind of the best case. I think it's more likely that as interest rates start to come down, that they'll come back with the SB 35.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. And those are just so much easier to get approved. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. That, that, I mean they all, well they already have the entitlement for the original project, but I'm just, I don't know that the budget of that is ever going to work again. Like, I mean it for supply chains,

Speaker 1:

But lot of your guys' entitlements last for it. Cuz I know in previous cities I've worked for it's like only two years too. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

We, we did another two year extension though. Okay.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Recently

Speaker 2:

Series. Yeah. So, so yes. Like in, um, I think late 2022, they, they added another two years to it. So it is like, and I mean we, we presumably will keep in extending that indefinitely. Like, because we would much rather they build that than the, you know, like the, the, the, the angry NIMBYs are not going to be happier with the thing that they can build without permission.

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

So, um,

Speaker 1:

And is there,

Speaker 2:

It is like basically every, like, all of the projects in our pipeline, just like they, you know, they run into these problems with the process. Um, you know, there was another significant project, uh, on the west side of the Cal train mm-hmm. <affirmative>, um, at the corner of, um, San Bruno Ave and San Mateo Ave, uh mm-hmm. <affirmative> kind of, um, just north of like the American Legion building mm-hmm. <affirmative>, there's basically, there's a blighted strip mall and there was a bank that was right on the corner that's, that's been completely raised. That's a vacant lot.

Speaker 1:

Oh yeah. It's a good empty lot. Yeah. In Google. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

In theory the coastal furniture dead strip mall and, uh, the vacant lot were gonna merge together and be a new four story. Um, and that also was entitled. And then the two landowners of those two parcels got into some kind of squabble and, and scrapped the project. So yeah. So we, we definitely are not being super successful with production. Um, I really, you know, it was like, what can we as a city find the right carrots and sticks to move this forward? Uh, when the landowner for the strip mall came and wanted to get a use permit to change the use of that building to, to put a restaurant in, um, which did, I mean, it, it was a, it was a discretionary thing because they don't, I mean like I don't love parking minimums, but the issue was that they didn't have enough parking in the lot Yeah.

For what we say a restaurant would need. Oh yeah. Um, cuz people, you know, people come to restaurants for a longer period than they do to like a small, you know, a retail establishment where you're in and out. Yeah. So like, it's not, it's not crazy to say a restaurant needs more, uh, parking per, you know, um, yeah. And you know, my sort of feeling was like, should we consider saying like, no, how about you go back and build the thing that we already entitled that we like spent a year considering, you know, like get over whatever you're, you know, problem is. Um, but only two of us on the planning commission were willing to even consider that. So that did not go anywhere.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Is there a jobs housing imbalance in San Carla and in San Bruno's?

Speaker 2:

San Bruno? Not, I mean, not in our city per se currently, because historically we were not a major jobs center that we're more of a bedroom community to the job centers. So I think, you know, on the numbers currently we are pretty, pretty well balanced. But that said, we have, you know, YouTube, YouTube global headquarters is here. Oh yeah. The Walmart online headquarters is here. Um, and, uh, the Tanin redevelopment that you mentioned,

Speaker 1:

Uh, that's in biotech, right?

Speaker 2:

Yes. And the original Tanforan vision document that the, uh, city council published before they had any specifically dev specific developer in mind, um, it said, oh, our vision is that we'll do a thousand apartments, we'll keep some retail, we'll keep the target, uh, and the movie theater and some other small shops, and then we'll do a million square feet of biotech offices.

Speaker 1:

Wow.

Speaker 2:

So then they got Alexandria Real Estate, which does biotech offices came and, and has entered into a deal to, I don't know if it's, if formally they own the property or they just are in contract to transfer the deed. But in any case, Alexandria real Estate said, yeah, let's do a thousand apartments and we'll build a new building for the target over at the northwest corner. Um, and we'll, we'll keep the movie theater and we'll do the little retail village and 2 million square feet of biotech offices.

Speaker 1:

Geez.

Speaker 2:

So it literally doubled. It is hard to know exactly how many jobs that is because, um,

Speaker 1:

Lab spaces different. Yeah,

Speaker 2:

Yeah. It's, it's like labs depending on whether it's like labs or, you know, the marketing and support functions, it varies a lot. Yeah. But it is reasonable to say that's definitely more than 4,000 jobs and probably more like 8,000, maybe even 10. So it's, it is a very large number of jobs. Our Rena number for the next eight years is 3,600 between Tanforan and the expansion of YouTube that's about to open. We have already swamped that like the number of jobs is, like the number of jobs we're going to add the next eight years is more than 10,000, literally. Wow. And I feel fairly certain that YouTube engineers and um, biotech workers aren't necessarily gonna want to live three, four adults to an apartment.

Speaker 1:

No.

Speaker 2:

You know, they probably, and it's like, you could ask where are those people going to live, but we know where they're gonna live. They're gonna live in the homes of the people they displaced.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. So there will be, has has there, I mean, has there already been a lot of displacement or

Speaker 2:

Is there Oh, I mean, I, I'm a gentrifier, uh, like I bought my spouse and I, I work for Tesla. My spouse works for Google. We bought a home, we are the second owner. Uh, this house was owned for 60 years, 70 years by a guy who was in the construction team that built the neighborhood.

Speaker 1:

Oh wow. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

He was like the patriarch of a big family. You know, he died in the home in his nineties.

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

And so, you know, and like there's, there are still working class families through this neighborhood. Um, there's a lot of union guys, um, carpenters, electricians. Yeah. Um, but it's like, but they are gradually being squeezed out. Yeah.

Speaker 1:

And if they tried to

Speaker 2:

Like, and it's, it's very frustrating, you know, sort of do try counsel myself last fall and just trying to get people to, to see it's like look like we need, you know, if you build shiny new, like if we did four times as many apartments over at Tan Fran and less offices, then a lot of the people who are sort of, you know, younger to sort of like, you know, like, like early to mid-career engineers, like are gonna be perfectly happy to rent that instead of bidding up the price for your home.

Speaker 1:

Yeah, yeah. Makes sense. Yeah. And I think, yeah, a lot of, I mean even like the neighbor to my parents was, it was, they were more lower middle class, working class before, you know, but now you can't buy anything new if you're mm-hmm. <affirmative> you can't buy again. You can maybe keep your house cuz of prop 13. Um, yeah. That's a one positive, but

Speaker 2:

Yeah, as soon as you move, you're paying those property taxes it's com

Speaker 1:

Yeah. That's only positive.

Speaker 2:

I mean there's, and there's the Prop 19 thing where you, there's more basis portability, but Yeah, it's, it's all, I mean it's like there's various things that we're doing to nibble around the edges of the problem, but fundamentally the problem is that there, you know, it's, it's musical chairs. Like there aren't, there aren't as many homes as there are people that want to live here because there are good jobs here. And as a result people find a way to spend their money to, to get a unit.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. And cities don't build enough.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. And it, you know, you can be angry at the gentrify, but it's like they're just doing what they need to do for their family. Like they're not, you know, like they're not intentionally hurting you, like

Speaker 1:

Yeah, exactly. It's, they, they want to, they can't afford, you know, what they used to be able to afford.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. And so they move in so they're down, you know, moving down into the, the working class neighborhood. Yeah. I mean this, our, our house is a, I mean, when we bought it, it was a total

disaster. Like we have completely gutted the HVAC system, which was a carbon monoxide hazard. We've completely replaced the electrical system, which had knob and tube wiring, which, you know, so like, it, it's a miracle. The house never burned down, but like, anyway, but I mean, we probably spent our down payment over again on improvements. Yeah. You know, like, and I, we would've been much happier to buy like, you know, a, a brand new condo or something. Right. Like if, if anybody was building, you know, small plexes, like we lived in a duplex that was where it was a, it was a grandfathered in unit in San Mateo in an R one neighborhood. So that's a whole nother thing. It's like nobody ever noticed it. It wasn't a problem. So Yeah. Um, but we lived in half duplex. It was

Speaker 1:

Fine doing stuff. It's the only place I, when I worked in Oakland seemed like one of the few places that actually was trying a

Speaker 2:

Lot of it, it does hinge on the nature of local officials. So Oakland and Berkeley both have quite good councils in that regard, where Redwood City is very good, but then San Mateo is bad.

Speaker 1:

Yes. Right. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

And that, that's all about who happens to get elected to those positions. I mean then the, the current God San Mateo is such a

Speaker 1:

Clown show. I hear it from my mom when, when, you know, she rans to me when she calls sometimes when I

Speaker 2:

Call her. Yeah. redacted and redacted in, uh, in San Mateo Yeah. Are just total clowns. I mean, their latest is they want to make, they want to like do an apology letter from the city on because of how mean redacted was to redacted anyway. Oh

Speaker 1:

Yeah. I, oh yeah. Yeah. Cause has San Bruno passed their housing element, just speaking of that? Has their passed

Speaker 2:

Uh, so back in January we adopted a housing, well I mean we did a first draft in, I don't know, November, December, I forget exactly. That was re in immediately rejected basically mm-hmm. <affirmative>. And then there was some initial feedback. We, we adopted a second draft in January and I, you know, the planning commission gets to review it. Yeah. And in that conversation I talked through with the other commissioners and staff, like here is several areas where I, I am concerned H C D will reject this. We ultimately voted six zero to forward the council a recommendation that they not adopt the current draft and direct staff to make some improvements and come back next month. They adopted it anyways.

Speaker 1:

<laugh>

Speaker 2:

And, uh, yeah, about three-ish weeks ago now we got a letter from H C D and can you guess what it said?

Speaker 1:

Is it because it not meeting Rena requirements or what is the Well,

Speaker 2:

I mean it, so the biggest deficiency is in the inventory where it's the, the set of parcels that we say Yeah. Could be developed for housing and here's the, here's the realistic capacities of 'em. And um, they used like 15 to 20% of our inventory is sites that have current uses. And the HTD guidance says if a site is in use for some kind of business, you know, it's not, not either fully vacant or you know, it's a retail space that's unoccupied. Like it could be reoccupied, but there's no ongoing business there. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>. So that's the blighted, stripped malls. Right. Yeah. But if it has an active use, you need to explain why that use would cease.

Speaker 1:

Ah, and they didn't

Speaker 2:

And they just didn't for like most of these, there were a couple of them that they did. There's like the Chili's Grill there. They were like, this class of business is really struggling. We think that this is not gonna be a viable business in a few years. And but like for, for most of them they just didn't, they didn't even try. Oh. And it was like, guys like write a sentence.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. I was like, you can write like two or three sentences and be done. It's easy.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. And it's, you know, it's like 30 parcels or something, you know, like it's not like what are you doing? Yeah. And you didn't, you didn't do your homework and you're gonna get rejected. And indeed they did.

Speaker 1:

So they have to go back.

Speaker 2:

This is the whole thing where like city cities being like, oh, like this is too hard. We can't, we can't meet the, these state standards. It's un it's like no you didn't do your homework. Come on. Yeah. You didn't try.

Speaker 1:

Okay. Well I'm the Zoom is about to run out of time just cuz I only have the basic though. This was very useful. Thank you.

Speaker 2:

Yep. Happy to help. Um, you know, if you have any follow up questions, email me.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Thank you.

Speaker 2:

So Alrightyy, have a good one.

Speaker 1:

You too. I just, it was also a minute and I didn't wanna like end mid chat.

Speaker 2:

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Um, and, and tell your mom Hi <laugh>.

Speaker 1:

I'll. Yeah.

Speaker 2:  
Yep. Thank  
Speaker 1:  
You. Bye.

## Interview 10

Speaker 1:  
<affirmative>. Okay. Um, so to start off with, what is your like exact title and then what are your duties with one Shoreline,

Speaker 2:  
Just for background? Okay. Yeah. Um, so I am a project manager with One Shoreline, which is a pretty catchall role. Um, but I would say some of my main responsibilities, um, are first on the project side. So we work on built infrastructure projects to protect the county bay shoreline and then also the county Pacific Coast side. So we're on the peninsula. We have both, obviously as you know, working in St. Carlos. Um, growing

Speaker 1:  
Up there

Speaker 2:  
<laugh>, but yeah, and growing up in the area. Okay. Um, but yes, so uh, I work on the built project side. So for example, the main project I'm managing is along the Millbrae Burlingame shoreline. We're looking to do some project along that reach that would tie into San Francisco International Airports sea level rise project that they're currently designing. Mm-hmm.  
<affirmative>. So I'll work on like pretty standard design planning, um, ultimately construction, um, projects and managing those and seeing those through. Um, and then I also work on the planning side, which I find really interesting and I think this is where maybe there's some overlap with what you're looking at. Um, and how do we encourage and guide land use decision making on the Bay Shoreline specifically. That's our focus right now. Of course the coast side's the need of it as well, but it's a very different landscape.

So yeah. Right now we're looking at the Bay Shoreline and how do we encourage decision making that accounts for the way that the base line will change as climate changes. Right. So, um, I just wrapped up um, uh, something that we're terming the planning guidance policy. Um, we released it in mid-April for public comment. We'll look to incorporate that and finalize it in June. But the idea is that it's template general plan, specific plan and zoning language for cities and then the county as well. Any jurisdiction with land use authority on the Bay Shore line to incorporate sea level rise, future flooding conditions and groundwater rise into their planning. So yeah, working on the project side and then the planning side.

Speaker 1:  
Yeah. And for the planning side, um, cuz I've seen some, I've, I looked a little bit at your guidelines. Um, great. And it seems more focused cause a lot of currently what's right along the Bay Shore, if I'm understanding is a lot of commercial. Um, is there anything that's specifically like addressing housing concerns or

Speaker 2:



Yeah, yeah, it's definitely the way we got into this space was focused on com large commercial development. That's oftentimes where there's a lot more lucrative developers too. Yeah. Um, and so making these requirements is a little less controversial when we go into the affordable housing space. That becomes a bit messier. Yeah. Um, but the guidance does technically apply to large multi-family housing. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, we do have an exemption, um, for single family homes and duplexes and triplexes and that was something where Yeah. Trying to thread that needle of if someone wanted to add an ADU or something Oh yeah. To their single family home. And we do have like East Palo Alto for example. Yeah. East

Speaker 1:

Palo Alto pa,

Speaker 2:

Single family home zoned in the sea level rise floodplain versus Burlingame is all commercial industrial. So every city's slightly different.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. And that's, I was thinking like Burlingame some of the more northern ones, it's more commercial. Right. More southern.

Speaker 2:

Right. And that's where we had initially got engaged. But yeah, like you said, farther down the peninsula there's, there's more housing. Redwood City um, is a hot hotspot as well.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. And like Foster

Speaker 2:

City, foster City is a whole other category, <laugh>. Um, cause the entire city is in the floodplain. Um,

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

But anyways, yeah. So that's the way we're trying to thread the needle. So yeah, I think that's a good takeaway where it's um, it's generally, yeah. Where a lot of this came from was working with commercial developments, but we're hoping to capture large housing developments with this.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. So more of the larger ones and not the more future planning versus what's currently existing. Is there anything that you guys do in terms of like ensuring that like existing housing, like cuz there's, you know, there's all this single family um, that's existing there is protected.

Speaker 2:

That's where I would say the projects side of my work comes in. Right. So if we're building levy projects Yeah. And trying to elevate the shoreline, that's hoping, that's aiming of course to protect those developments, existing developments from sea level rising flooding then also alleviate the burden of flood insurance in a lot of those communities too. Yeah. Um, we're looking to build those pieces of, of infrastructure to FEMA standards. But yeah, the, that process takes a long time and so that's why we're trying like yeah, there's multiple time skills and ways you could approach it. And the project side I would say captures a lot of the existing, we have

not released guidance for existing. I think there's a lot of hesitancy to go into that area. Right. Where you're requiring retrofits to existing properties. That would be a very high cost burden.

Speaker 1:

That would be, yeah. I'm just thinking of like all the ones that, and like, cuz it seems like, um, cuz what it's predicted, like the sea level rise to be really a major issue in the bay in this am Mateo County like 50 years. What is the current prediction that it's Yeah,

Speaker 2:

The time skills are

Speaker 1:

Uh, hard to predict. I know.

Speaker 2:

Hard to predict but what we're, yeah. What the state is now recommending is playing for three and a half feet by 50, which is in 17 years, shit. Um, and then six feet by the end of the century. Oh wow.

Speaker 1:

That's a lot.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. The numbers range, you know, quite a bit. We're planning for, um, which you might have seen in the guidance, but um, our standard is a little bit adjacent to that. It's six feet above the FEMA based flood elevation, which is not the same as six feet of sea level rise. Which is kinda a confusing way to communicate, but I would say it captures anywhere from like three to nine feet of sea level rise depending on that's a lot where you are on the shoreline, how many waves you're dealing with too. Cuz waves can be dealing with a much higher

Speaker 1:

Yeah, they can be higher. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Anyways, but yes, three and a half feet by 2050 is state guidance, which is huge and would change a lot of

Speaker 1:

That's like most of the same. That's a lot of San Mateo County then.

Speaker 2:

Yes.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. So, okay. Yeah. So like a lot of proposed development would then fall under your guidelines then

Speaker 2:

In the future. Yeah, and the, our guidelines are even more forward looking where we're proposing that the overlay, like the geography that's subject to these requirements is the same overlay as what would be subject to flooding with six feet of sea level rise. So there's always different sea level rise numbers, but we're trying

Speaker 1:

To capture

Speaker 2:

Forward looking.

Speaker 1:

Yeah, yeah.

Speaker 2:

Okay. Just a lot, but yeah. Yeah. But that the overlay that we're proposing is a hundred year storm with six feet of sea level rise. Anywhere that falls in that floodplain should be subject to these requirements.

Speaker 1:

So that's like most of the <laugh>,

Speaker 2:

It's a lot of, it's pretty much up to the Caltrain tracks.

Speaker 1:

Oh wow. So yeah. Everything. Yeah. Cuz I've talked to a few people from like, a lot of people from San Mateo just cause um, and most of like when they say is their concern is like east of the um, 1 0 1

Speaker 2:

Right. As which they follow similar corridors. Yeah. Um, and 1 0 1 is actually where like the original Bay Shore line was. So it's kind of ironic to see like, oh no, we have this flood plane. It's like, oh actually that's where the bay was like about I don't know how many years ago, um, before we filled the bay. Um, but yes, I, Walnut Caltrain is just a little bit farther in unless

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Depending on there's similar, yeah.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. There is similar alignment.

Speaker 1:

Okay. Yeah. And it is like in the future are, um, like with one shoreline, um, um, are they thinking of more in terms of like, um, do get like, like in terms of housing or commercial, like is there like one that they would prioritize more? Um, or like making sure that it's like doing it in a, like protecting in like a just and equitable way. Cuz it seems like, you know, there is stuff with like a lot of the communities that currently are in the sea level rise are some of the more impoverished. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. I wouldn't say one's more important than the other. I would definitely say that the housing piece is an equity issue. Yeah. Um, especially, especially the affordable housing piece. So actually as part of this planning guidance, um, we haven't released it publicly. This is something that's, um, data that's from each city that we have obtained, but we've reviewed every city's housing element, you know, that everyone has submitted Yeah. Or continues to submit <laugh>. Um, it's like very

Speaker 1:

For however long they can until they pass. Yeah,

Speaker 2:

Exactly. Um, and so we took, uh, a lot of the proposed, uh, a lot of the proposed sites that they had and e and every city had their housing elements and we overlay the sea level rise flood point onto that and we developed some statistics of like, you know, what are they proposing, um, and where is it cited? Yeah. So we have actually packaged that up, the analysis up and we

are sending it to each city being like, Hey, you're working on this housing element, we've done this analysis, this is something we think you should consider. Definitely the message from this is not that you can't cite in the flood plain at all because, for example, some places that the entire city or the majority of the city and the, like you said, like you've had experience with, like you, they have to meet the arena numbers.

There's already existing pressures on housing and affordable housing. So we're not looking to, um, you know, make that prevent even more preventative to meet mm-hmm. <affirmative>, but we are saying, Hey, you should be thinking about where you cite and how to build such that those developments are resilient in future conditions. Um, okay. Yeah. So if you choose to cite there, which we totally get needs to, it's, it's impossible to not. Yeah. Um, then you need to have resiliency measures incorporated into your, the design of the building, which is possible in terms of engineering technical feasibility. So that's kind of the message we're trying to send to cities is just to think about these things and the, and the planning guidance is kind of the, the tools. So if they did adopt an overlay that would then put responsibility on these new developers to mm-hmm. <affirmative> incorporate some of those resiliency measures. Yeah. Um, so yeah, we we're, we are looking like we've done a specific analysis on housing with the current housing elements. Um, that's, that's something that Yeah. I think people could, it could be a bit sensitive and so we're trying to keep that like showing illustrating and educating cities and planning staff. Yeah. Um, not, not like making that a, a public like broadcasting thing. No, that makes sense. Yeah. At this point cities can opt to maybe choose to have that Yeah. Public or not. Um,

Speaker 1:

Yeah. So yeah. And like, is there a large percentage of the like, and they call it the sites that are within the, the overlay? Like not necessarily like East Palo Alto all will be, but like other cities that aren't a hundred percent

Speaker 2:

The total, the top line number. Um, I have my notes here, it's 43% of all units Wow. Are in the floodplain. And then 38%, um, of affordable housing units are in the floodplain, so over a third.

Speaker 1:

Wow. Yeah. That's a lot. Have like any of the, like once you've, since you've released like the planning guidelines of any of the cities like reached out about wanting to do an overlay district, I know Burlingame has something, but others

Speaker 2:

Yeah, I think a lot of cities are considering it. St. Carlos has been actually a very, um, active partner. They're looking even without a zoning update looking to require, like, in their ongoing negotiations with developers are now like weaving in like COAs, um, that are pulled from our guidelines. So San Carlos has been a great partner, but yeah. Um, Burlingame and South San Francisco have already passed overlays. Um, and those overlays informed the guidance. They they predated the guidance. Yeah. We worked with them. Okay. Um, but, uh, yeah, so that's, and I, I'm, we are also working with San Mateo, they're going through a general plan update right now and, um, yeah, they'll, they'll send those drafts documents to us and we're tracking changes and making

Speaker 1:

Suggestions. Yeah. I just talked to one their planning commissioners <laugh>, um

Speaker 2:

Oh, okay. Got it. Yeah. Yeah.

Speaker 1:

Um, yeah, because how long, cause I hadn't, before I was doing this, I hadn't really heard of one Shoreline. So how long has one Shoreline? Um, been around

Speaker 2:

Three years.

Speaker 1:

Okay. So it's pretty new. So it wasn't there when I was working in San Carlos. Okay.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. Yeah, yeah. We, um,

Speaker 1:

And is it like a sub of the county sustainability or how did it come to be?

Speaker 2:

Yeah, so, um, it is distinct from the county. Okay. But it has, but it's countywide jurisdiction, so it's, we are very, we work very closely with the county, um, because our jurisdiction follows the county boundary. Um, so it's, it's a similar authority. Um, but yeah, we are a distinct special district. Um, not really a J p a technically, I don't know all the government terms, but yeah. Just a distinct special district that is countywide jurisdiction. The way our founding legislation was written is that it actually, it took the San Mateo County Flood Control District, which is a department of the county mm-hmm. <affirmative> and it, um, retired like essentially retired it and expanded its jurisdiction and created one shoreline. So, okay. There was something called the San Mateo County Flood Control District, which was Department of the Public Works department in the county. Yeah. And that no longer exists. We now have, we have inherited all of, they managed some flood zones with property taxes. We've inherited all of those. Yeah.

Speaker 1:

And since it's only flood zones Yeah. We manage those areas Yeah. For them.

Speaker 2:

Right. Um, but yeah, the idea that flood control district was, um, did a lot of great work in the Comma Creek area. San Bruno Creek and then San F Creek. Mm-hmm. <affirmative>, um, those all funded by property taxes in those zones, but that was the limit of its jurisdiction. It couldn't Yeah. Which was very limited on the base line and nothing on the Pacific Coast side. And so winter line was created to, to broaden that jurisdiction and actually work across jurisdictional lines on sea level rise. That's what it's was created to do.

Speaker 1:

And had there been work on sea level rise before? Like, was the sustainability office doing it before one draw line?

Speaker 2:

Um, yes, definitely. Okay. Yeah. County Office of Sustainability had done a lot of really great work holding a lot of round tables and outreach. Um, in 2018 it released, you might already know this, but the, it released the sea level rise vulnerability assessment for the county. So it did a really robust study on that. So it teed up a lot of the, um, understanding of the county's vulnerabilities such that there was this push of like, redacted, we need an agency dedicated to

this. Um, so yeah, two of our board members are county board of supervisors, so there's just a very close relationship with the county and

Speaker 1:

Yeah. I'm assuming, what is redacted since he's the one who's su

Speaker 2:

Yes.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. <laugh>.

Speaker 2:

redacted is the chair of our board.

Speaker 1:

Oh yeah. Um, and is it one of the first counties to have like a C-level rise specific agency or

Speaker 2:

Yeah, I don't, um, what I, I haven't heard of it,

Speaker 1:

Heard anyone others?

Speaker 2:

Yeah. No, there's, I don't think there's anything equivalent. What we say is west of the Mississippi, I think New York City and Florida, there's a lot of states that face like hurricanes and

Yeah. Um, are really, I New York especially is really right and sea level rise. Um, so there are agencies dedicated to that. Um, a little bit more similar to one shoreline, but pretty much, yeah.

West of the west Mississippi to our knowledge, there is no other agency.

Speaker 1:

Wow. That's impressive.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. Pretty cool stuff. Yeah.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. I mean, I, before I was doing my research I hadn't like heard of it. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Speaker 2:

Well, yeah, there's only four of us right now. We're like a very small Yeah. Team right now. I think we're hoping eventually to grow, but, um mm-hmm. <affirmative>. Yeah. It's a, it's a small bomb mighty team.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. I mean, to get the whole guidelines. Um, yeah. Um, and have like other like counties within the Bay Area like reach out about like, like interested in like the way you guys are doing things or? Yeah,

Speaker 2:

Yeah. We've been engaged on with some adjacent counties. Um, I would say less than you would think on San Francisco. I think San Francisco is a lot of really interesting work, especially the Port of San Francisco on sea level rise. Um, but it is a little different approach the port, like a different entity than the city county government anyways. Mm-hmm. <affirmative> not to go into too many details, but yeah. I think there's a lot more opportunity there than we're currently leveraging to, to learn from and, and collaborate with San Francisco. Probably the most we've engaged with them is like through the airport cuz the airport is located and Yeah.

Speaker 1:

It's technically within the geography

Speaker 2:

Of the county, even though it's managed and owned by, um, San Francisco. Yeah. Um, uh, and I would say a lot of engagement. There's a lot of, um, concern about cross bay impacts and so we have been, um, I know redacted, my boss primarily has been, um, a part of those conversations with Alameda, for example, which yeah, there is <inaudible> issues

Speaker 1:

In the future.

Speaker 2:

Right. And, and just trying to understand how work that we do on ALINE would impact theirs. Um, yeah. What we've seen is that relative to what we're gonna experience with sea level rise mm-hmm. <affirmative>, um, it, it kind of is overshadowed by what sea level rise will do. Um, sea level rise is on the order of feet, the potential repercussions of building up one part of the shoreline and impacting another is maybe on the order of inches. Yeah. Which is also important and we, we should, you know, acknowledge that. Um, but yeah, that, those are the nature of the conversations that at least I've

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Heard of <laugh>. Um,

Speaker 1:

The major things currently that you guys are proposing to like, um, shore up the shoreline, um, is like walls and levees kind of right at the moment, right?

Speaker 2:

Or Yeah, I would say not, not walls at all, not walls, plastic, we can, yeah. Um, it's really hard cause it is a really urban shoreline, but, um, yeah, I think Len is, is really committed to trying to have a gradually sloped levy as much as possible. And unfortunately, yeah, levy is really one of the main tools we have in order to be accredited by fema. So speaking to like alleviating flood insurance burdens, in order for FEMA to recognize a structure, it has to be a dyke, a wall, or a levy. So having a project be fully a marsh and nothing but a marsh is not something that would be like, oh, you're not like, this means that we can take you out of the floodplain. Unfortunately, that's not the case at this time. I'm hoping that evolves, but what, what I would say is like, the typical way we think of shoreline infrastructure for what the work we do is a gradually sloped levy, like a horizontal levee that has some natural elements that can help attenuate waves, marsh elements, um, if possible. So yeah, I think we really like

Speaker 1:

Re wet landing a little bit. I know that sounds weird, but re like remaking 'em into like the wetlands that they were pre-development bit. Right,

Speaker 2:

Right. Um, yeah, and that helps the structure, right? If you have some of those, um, vegetated areas, it can help attenuate waves before they reach the structure. Yeah. Um, so yeah,

Speaker 1:

We had one, like Coyote Point had something they were, I saw it there.

Speaker 2:

Oh, like in a levy? Um, in San Mateo. Yeah. Okay. Yeah, I haven't, um, I'm not as familiar. I know San Mateo, yeah. Just finished their North shoreview levy upgrade. Um, but yeah, that would be a levee.

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Levy. Yeah. I have to do a walk, but, um, yeah, so I would say ideally not Walsh <laugh>.

Speaker 1:

Yeah, that makes sense. Yeah. Yeah. Um, yeah. And is it like, okay, that makes sense. So it's mostly preventing like projects and planning for the future. Yeah. Okay. Yeah. Well this was very useful. Um,

Speaker 2:

Um, I can just share, it's, it's hard because it's just a high level slide, but, um mm-hmm. <affirmative>, the one slide we have on this arena analysis, um, I can, I can just PDF it and share it with you. It has that 43% and 38% number. Oh yeah, that'd be

Speaker 1:

Perfect. Thank you.

Speaker 2:

Um, and yeah, I maybe actually can I share my screen real quick and just so that I, you can, I can explain it to you before I sign it.

Speaker 1:

Let me, where's the <laugh>? Where is the,

Speaker 2:

If you go to participants and then there's three dots next to my name, you can just make me co-host or make me host. Oh yeah. That's one way to do it, which is if you're willing to

Speaker 1:

Yeah, let's

Speaker 2:

Pass the baton. I hope it doesn't move the recording over though, so I'll make sure to give it back to you before I Yeah. Before we end the call.

Speaker 1:

I know there's a way you can, uh, that well, I'll just do that. Yeah. It works better. Yeah. <inaudible>, oh, it still has the recording on my end, so

Speaker 2:

Okay, great.

Speaker 1:

Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Perfect. Oh, I see you have an option to do the multiple people, um, share as well actually. So that could have been Oh, well

Speaker 1:

In the future I haven't

Speaker 2:



Used Zoom. Yes. Now we know, but I'll make sure to pass it back to you after. Yeah. Um,

Speaker 1:

Okay,

Speaker 2:

So this is the one I'll, I'll send to you and I would just focus on, well, first of all, kind of speaking to what I, just what we had talked about with land use being very different in different cities.

Yeah. This is the, the extent of the blue line is that six feet of sea level rise overlay mm-hmm.

<affirmative>. And so we did that for every city and look at their land use. And for example, like we just talked about, Berlingame, um, is really primarily commercial industrial zoned. Yeah. Um, and then East Palo Alto has a commercial corridor, um, but primarily single family home.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Oh, then this is the full,

Speaker 2:

Um, yeah. Oh, okay. And then this, this, this map in the middle that has the, um, dark background is, is the analysis. So all of the orange parcels or dots mm-hmm. <affirmative> are the proposed sites that jurisdictions have, um, outlined in the housing element as what, how they're going to meet the rental requirement. Oh wow. Um, so, and that's where these stats are pulled from. So 43% are in the flood zone, 38% of affordable housing units are in the flood zone. Yeah.

Speaker 1:

Um, oh, wow.

Speaker 2:

Yeah. And that applies to both, we did it for coast side and um, Bayside as

Speaker 1:

Well, and the coast side seems to be having, I mean it, their issues are a little different, aren't they? They're more like the, um, erosion and instead of

Speaker 2:

Exactly flooding. Exactly. Yeah. I mean they had a really, really rough winter, so flooding is definitely an issue, but yeah, like you can see the floodplain extent is very different. It's just a very different landscape. Um, where yeah, all of this pretty much corresponds to Bayville, um, on the Bay Shore line and then on the Pacific Coast side. Yeah. I think land retreat, um, is, is probably the biggest threat. And then sea level rise would only accelerate that land retreat.

Speaker 1:

Yeah. Like Pacific, we've already had houses, um Yep.

Speaker 2:

Fall. Yep. And the land use playing on the coast side, if you ever, um, look at are interested, I find it super interesting because, um, there's only two cities on, well, generally speaking two cities on the county coast side Pacifica and Half Moon Bay, and they have very different land use practices and as a result, very different outcomes and challenges that they're facing today. Yeah.

Speaker 1:

Why is unincorporated Right. And

Speaker 2:

The, and then a lot of unincorporated county. Um, but yeah, if you look at like the aerials of Pacifica versus Half Moon Bay, half Moon Bay pretty much like has a half mile green corridor

that like is all along its coast side and then developments Yeah. Is in a little bit, the exception is the Ritz Carlton, which was very controversial. Um, that and Pacifica Yeah. Has developed for the last many decades right. Up to the, to the coast. And that has

Speaker 1:

Been very, yeah, they've noticed that when I'm being there, but they actually, yeah. Cause they have more beaches too in P Bay and stuff that makes it a little less, but even the ones on the cliff side Yeah. Too. Yeah. Mm-hmm. <affirmative> Interesting. Yeah. The difference. Yeah. Cause they haven't had houses fall into the water, like Pap und bay hasn't, but Pacifica has, I think, fallen into the water.

Speaker 2:

Yes, yes. There was, um, some apartments apartment complex a couple years ago, but that's happened more than once. It's, it's, and that's not necessarily

Speaker 1:

That's seeing it whenever I was at home with my, when they had the paper, it'd be like on the cover Yeah. On the paper on the Chronicle. Yeah.

Speaker 2:

Wow. Yeah. Yeah. It's, uh, it's really interesting. Um, but yeah, I'll send that slide to you. Yeah,

Speaker 1:

That's, that'd be very useful for my thesis. Yeah. This has been very helpful. Okay. Thank you.

Speaker 2:

Yeah, no problem. Yeah. Um, good luck with your project and um, yeah, I think it's great that you're looking into this super interesting topic.

Speaker 1:

Yeah.