

May 2022 Member Newsletter from:
Beresford/Hillsdale
Neighborhood Association
Box 6764 San Mateo CA 94403

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Beresford/Hillsdale Neighborhood Association

www.beresfordhillsdale.org

May 2022

Meet Candidates for SMC Board of Supervisors on May 24th

*Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87116385023?pwd=eS9RWnZEVIVHVXBHcDAvbUZudWZSZz09>

Meeting ID: 871 1638 5023 Passcode: 058261

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***Sign in a bit early in case the meeting maxes out! If you receive the newsletter via USPS and would like us to email you the Zoom link, please ask by May 20th at board@beresfordhillsdale.org.**

WHY IS OUR DISTRICT SEAT IMPORTANT? - While the BOS website states they 'make policy decisions' and 'consider other matters that affect SMC residents,' know the Board's budget is close to \$3.5 billion dollars and has more than 5,000 employees on its own payroll. The current BOS is seeking to increase our property taxes without stating what the extra funds would be used for. The Daily Post blasted this idea last month (<https://padailypost.com/2022/04/14/opinion-countywide-parcel-tax-is-a-bad-idea-for-many-reasons/>), yet the BOS has employed a consultant for about \$200k to see if we want more taxation. With two upcoming open seats, including our District, it will be important to see if candidates will have what it takes to advocate for us on this matter and more. Come meet those running for our District: *Cameron Rolfe, Charles Stone and Noelia Corzo*. We encourage you to check out their websites to best take advantage of this opportunity and ask hard questions. This is where the rubber meets the road with our tax dollars. The BOS website can't say it any better: "Citizen interest and participation play a critical role in good governance."

**BHNA MEMBER
ZOOM MEETING
San Mateo County
Board of Supervisors
Candidates Night!
Special Zoom
Meeting Date May 24th
7:30 – 9 p.m.**

Join/Renew - Stay Informed with the BHNA

Our informative website at www.beresfordhillsdale.org is just the beginning! For detailed member news and meetings, you can join or renew your membership online for just \$12 for the calendar year. If you prefer mail-in, send this form and your check, payable to "The BHNA" to: BHNA, P.O. Box 6764, San Mateo CA 94403.

BHNA 2022 MEMBERSHIP

Name(s) _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Send newsletter by () US Mail Only or () Email Only

GOT GAS APPLIANCES? YOUR POCKETBOOK COULD TAKE A HUGE HIT

With endeavors to 'go green' San Mateo currently requires specific *new building* construction be all electric. But now, some on the Sustainability & Infrastructure Commission are exploring a gas ban on appliances in existing buildings, too. Is this your home? It is if you have an oven, stovetop, furnace, hot water heater or air conditioner that relies on gas.

On April 15th the San Mateo Daily Journal (San Mateo Exploring Ban on Natural Gas) noted that Commissioner Adam Loraine "favored looking at end dates" for gas use and "preferred stringent electric reach codes for new and existing buildings." This desire to end gas for existing homes/buildings goes beyond codes set by the state, those of which were applied only after cost-effectiveness studies showed financial feasibility. Loraine, a renter, perhaps didn't fully understand the enormous expense involved, as renters won't be impacted.

While this proposed new gas ban wouldn't happen tomorrow, it could be as early as 2030, and has sparked serious concerns. We heard from a retired plumber/electrician resident, "That's a huge hit!" he expressed, sharing his expertise in what would be involved: It's not just a matter of buying electric replacements, it's also the upgrade and/or addition of electric circuit panels, finding space to install such panels, increasing electric service with PG&E (dealing with overhead/underground wiring replacements), rewiring a home for circuit placement and more. Depending on what gets replaced, an exterior heat pump coiling into the home could be necessary. "It gets involved and rather messy," said our resident expert, and that's assuming a home would be able to draw enough electric energy with a single costly pump. You could end up needing multiple exterior heat pumps or be prepared to wait hours to heat a home or your water to comfortable levels.

These proposed changes to our existing homes "set off a chain of dominoes and you're not quite sure where it will end" says the resident retiree. He notes most of us have gas furnaces and hot water heaters. Should your hot water heater go out, necessitating an all-electric replacement, doing so would mean no gas to the existing appliances for up to 3 weeks. Even a mere oven replacement could end with related costs for new counters or cabinetry to accommodate the new electric appliance. Adding an electrical panel could mean opening up walls, warranting replacement sheetrock and painting. These unknowns and additional expenses aren't apparent at the outset.

Regardless of possible resident rebates to go all electric, former BHNA President and current Sustainability Commissioner, Susan Rowinski, is against this forced change and remains worried about the burden of increased costs for the elderly and working class. Her own request for a rebate was denied citing her gas usage as essentially too low to be worthwhile for assistance. Residents lucky enough to get one would find its benefit miniscule considering the total bill, and that's only while rebates last.

As climate concerns loom ever larger, it's important to explore the best courses of action to reduce our carbon footprint. At the same time, it's key to attain sustainability in a sustainable, cost-effective manner. We hope to host the Climate Action Team in the near future to examine more options.

In the meantime, the S&I Commission will continue this discussion either 5/11 or 6/8. Check online for their meeting agendas: <https://www.cityofsanmateo.org/3971/Agendas-Minutes-Public-Meeting-Portal>. You may email the Commission at SandICommission@cityofsanmateo.org.

IMPORTANT - IN CASE YOU MISSED IT – We emailed this update April 24th: Given that a majority of BHNA members voted to support Measure Y height limits, we are sharing this **important news** with you. We already advised that our City Council would be reviewing 3 growth alternatives to apply all over San Mateo, determining our future development path. This review occurred on April 18th and resulted in the City Council applying **maximum growth options to every area of our city**, increasing building heights everywhere, with special consideration to Hillsdale Mall.

While residents made it clear with the passage of Measure Y that they wished for a future of reasonable and sustainable growth (underscored by recent survey results and many letters to Council), not once did Council apply the least impactful Alternative A. This alternative would have allowed for the housing required by the state, been compliant with Measure Y, and, by their own analysis, would have been fiscally beneficial for the City. (It's important to note that even as the smallest growth option, Alternative A would have resulted in a population growth rate of over 25% - more than triple our growth rate since 1960.) Instead, Council designated "high" growth zones in every study area, including upzoning the 17th Avenue Safeway property, setting the stage to increase San Mateo's population by over 50% in the next 20 years. All with NO mention of how services to sustain this growth can be provided. All not in compliance with Measure Y protections.

While these upzoned high growth study areas allow for 8-12 story building heights, residents should understand *this is only the starting point*. Due to new state laws, it's very easy to add two or three stories atop a new development - so 8 stories becomes 11, and so on. Also, most of the areas targeted for extreme high growth are approved as "mixed use" which does not require housing or affordable housing. It allows developers to choose the ratio of retail, office and residential that will be most profitable. Office development is far more profitable, so developers will likely opt against housing every time.

In the coming months the City will hold more "public hearings" to solidify their new growth policies. Over the next year they will ask for public comment as they draft an Environmental Impact Report. It's a long process, but **ultimately, Council cannot adopt a new General Plan that exceeds Measure Y unless they go back to the ballot box and get voter approval**. In the meantime, we will keep you informed and you can also check the Measure Y website for updates at <https://www.smartergrowthsm.com/>.

View the full Council Meeting video here, starting around Minute 25:00:00 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dgy9A8yQYg0>. Fair warning, it's long and difficult to follow.

MAY COMMUNITY MEETINGS FOR MALL? – For many months we've endeavored to have Hillsdale Mall representatives speak to our members about the redevelopment possibilities being considered for their property. Unfortunately, this is not to be. They did, however, say they would begin hosting community meetings this month, and pointed to May 23rd and 26th as kick-off dates. These meetings would happen at their Reimagine Hillsdale Mall space, but at this time of publishing, they've provided we have no information on how residents can get further details. Our best guess is to check their website at <https://hillsdale.com> or pay attention to media outlets as the dates approach. If we get more news, we'll post on our website and send an email blast.