Appendix Y:
Methodology

Where possible, we relied on city-level data sources to provide information specific to the City of San Mateo. These sources include the Census Transportation Planning Package (2006-2010) and the Census Longitudinal Household-Employer Dynamics (2009-2013). While these data sources offer some insights about the characteristics of the City's workforce overall—including age, sex, educational attainment, and industry—they do not include wage levels.

To estimate the characteristics of low-wage workers (defined as those making less than $15 per hour) we used Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) data from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey (2009-2013). PUMS gives detailed information for individuals and households. When reviewing the results of the PUMS analysis, the results must be interpreted carefully for the following reasons:

- Due to limitations in the number of surveys the Census Bureau is able to conduct, the margins of error for some estimates are relatively large.[1] While we used five years of data to reduce margins of error, the results are nonetheless relatively imprecise, especially for groups with small numbers of workers.
- The analysis was conducted using the most recent available data (2009-2013), which means that it is expected that there have been some change in workforce demographics between the time data was collected and now. Because the data collection period included both the recent recession and following economic growth, it may not accurately reflect current conditions.
- PUMS does not provide workplace geography below the county level, so we are limited to county-level estimates.

We utilized a modified version of the methodology developed by researchers at UC Berkeley's Center for Labor Research and Education,[2] with a few departures. While the Berkeley researchers calculated directly impacted workers as well as those making slightly more than the new minimum wage, we focus only on directly impacted workers making less than $15 an hour. Also, because estimates for 2014 and 2015 are not yet available, UC Berkeley projected current and future employment conditions; we did not make these same projections, because city staff asked us to evaluate only existing conditions. Furthermore, we considered a larger set of workers, including seasonal workers, elderly workers, all government employees, and high-wage workers to be more inclusive of the full workforce. Finally, the Berkeley methodology estimated city-level characteristics by assuming that cities exhibit the same characteristics as their overall county. While the City of San Mateo shows fairly similar worker characteristics as the County, we chose not to make this assumption, because it would introduce a level of analytic imprecision that we were not comfortable with due to its assumptions and the limited numbers in the sample size.

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[1] Margins of error available upon request
[2] Available at: http://irle.berkeley.edu/cwed/briefs/2015-02-data-and-methods.pdf