



Memorandum

TO: THE PARKS AND
RECREATION COMMISSION

FROM: Nicolle Burnham

SUBJECT: PROPOSED DOWNTOWN WEST

DATE: September 14, 2020

Approved

Date

COUNCIL DISTRICT: #3

RECOMMENDATION

Accept the status report of the proposed Downtown West Development Project.

OUTCOME

Approval of the recommended action will document that the Parks and Recreation Commission was provided an overview of the open space strategy associated with the Downtown West Project, the Downtown West Design Standards and Guidelines and how they will function towards long-term implementation of the Project's strategies, and the Diridon Station Area Plan Amendments which will provide context to the Downtown West Project and its surrounding areas. The following memorandum will provide context necessary when the planning and implementation of the Project is further defined.

BACKGROUND

The City of San Jose's Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services in conjunction with the project applicant initiated the following memorandum. The Downtown West Project and the Downtown West Design Standards and Guidelines have not had previous Parks and Recreation Commission or City Council consideration or action. The Project is targeted for City Council consideration during Spring 2021.

This memorandum references documents and plans that are in development. These include:

Diridon Station Area Plan (DSAP): The DSAP was original adopted in 2014 to guide the planning of a 240 acres of land surrounding the Diridon Station.

The DSAP envisions the transformation of the station area—an area which is currently dominated by parking lots and old industrial buildings—into a dynamic mixed-use urban neighborhood anchored by a world-class transportation hub and the SAP Center. Since its adoption several key planning assumptions have changed, including: a major league baseball ballpark—a key anchor of the DSAP—is no longer planned, the City recently adopted a policy that will enable taller building height limits in the Diridon area, there is a new focus on environmental sustainability through Climate Smart San José, and the City adopted Downtown Design Guidelines and initiated a Downtown Transportation Plan. Therefore, the DSAP is currently being rewritten. All past outreach, including Spring 2020’s community meeting, can be viewed at www.diridonsj.org.

Downtown West Project (DTW): This is the name of the development proposed by Google that encompasses 80 acres within the DSAP Boundary. On October 2019, Google formally submitted the DTW project application, which proposes a Development Re-zoning and Planned Development Permit for the construction of approximately:

- 6,500,000 to 7,300,000 gross square feet (GSF) of office space;
- 3,000 to 5,900 units of new housing;
- 300,000 to 500,000 gross square feet of active uses, which may include retail, cultural, arts, etc.; and
- 100,000 gross square feet of event space, hotel use (up to 300 rooms), and limited-term corporate accommodations (up to 800 rooms).

Downtown West Design Standards and Guidelines (DWDSG): The DWDSG will define the vision, intent, use, character, and requirements for building and public realm design within the DTW project. The document will include chapters that provide design basis for roads and transit, buildings, open space, etc. within the DTW Project area. The DWDSG defines objective and performance based *standards* and *guidelines*. Development *standards* are requirements. Their compliance is mandatory with measurable design criteria. Development *guidelines* are typically more subjective and set forth design intent, design expectations, and encouraged or discouraged features.

Attachment 1 is a location map that outlines the DTW and DSAP boundaries.

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Related Studies and Projects

The Diridon Area is the subject of a number of studies that, while not directly related to parks and community center facilities, will influence the future development and use of the area. These include:

- **The Diridon Integrated Station Concept Plan** – This plan will primarily address the station’s functionality to optimize transit and passenger needs, while supporting future development potential and balancing city and neighborhood impacts.
- **The Downtown Transportation Plan** – This plan will provide a clear direction to improve access, mobility, circulation, navigability, streetscapes, and public life in Downtown.
- **The Anti-Displacement Strategy (Residential and Business)** – Both plans explore how to prevent, mitigate, and decrease displacement through producing, preserving, and protecting affordable housing and small businesses. The Anti-Displacement Strategy (Residential) was presented for City Council consideration on September 1, 2020.
- **Commercial Linkage Fee Study** – This study analyzes new commercial developments and their employees’ demand for affordable housing in nexus and a feasibility study of offsetting the affordable housing need through a fee. The Commercial Linkage Fee Study was presented for City Council consideration on September 1, 2020.
- **Urban Confluence Silicon Valley** - This privately funded project will, if City Council authorizes future work, provide an iconic artwork or structure in the Arena Green area of Guadalupe River Park. The project is in development, just entering into Phase 2 of their design process with more details anticipated in Spring 2021.

ANALYSIS

The Downtown West plan proposes approximately 15 acres of open space throughout the 80-acre site. The project calls for a network of connected spaces with distinct character zones. The open spaces range from urban plazas to parks to natural trails to riparian areas. The areas closest to Diridon Station will serve as high volume plaza spaces that welcome visitors and tourists. Moving further away from Diridon Station the spaces will become hubs of social activity and, moving close to the Los Gatos Creek Corridor, spaces for quiet contemplation. Attachment 2 depicts the location of the proposed resources. It is critical to note that these spaces are preliminary and are subject to change until such time as the development plan is approved by the City Council.

The open spaces will be comprised of:

- Primary Open Space, which is the main publicly accessible open space areas,
- Los Gatos Creek Riparian Setback, which is the Los Gatos Creek Riparian Corridor within the Project.
- Los Gatos Creek Multi-Use Trail, which is an extension of the existing Los Gatos Creek within the DTW,
- Mid-block Passages, which allow for finer pedestrian circulation in the public realm, and

- Semi-Public Open Space, which are privately-owned or controlled outdoor space accessible to limited subsets of the public.

The project will implement trail improvements to the Los Gatos Creek Trail network (Reach 5) which extends from Auzerai Avenue to the Confluence Point area of the Guadalupe River Park at West Santa Clara Street. Wherever possible, the project will create Class I off-street recreation trail and provide an important link from Willow Glen to areas in north San José.

As construction of the 80-acre development progresses in phases, City of San José staff will evaluate design plans (for public and private spaces) for consistency with the DWDSG standards and guidelines. The DWDSG are separate from Downtown Design Standards and Guidelines developed for Downtown San José and the DSAP area. In case of conflict between the two standards and guidelines, the DWDSG be followed. The Draft DWDSG is currently in development and is expected to be released Fall 2020.

The DSAP will provide additional park space to complete the overall open space network outside of the Downtown West Project areas. PRNS's main priorities for the Diridon Station Area include: completing the Los Gatos Creek Trail as paved off-road corridor, providing community programming spaces, creating new parks and open space, enhancing connectivity through small, interconnected spaces, and maintaining and activating trails and parks.

The network of smaller parks throughout the Diridon Station Area will create focal points of recreational opportunities within the different neighborhoods, anchored by transit and trail connectivity. Many are centered on significant intersections of commercial and civic spaces that could become memorable places for public life. They serve as nodes for public life and gathering. The DSAP amendments will identify specific sites for future neighborhood parks, as shown in Attachment 3.

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CONCLUSION

The memorandum provides information DTW and its open space strategy, the DWDSG and how they function towards long-term implementation of the project's strategies, and the DSAP Amendments to provide context to the DTW and its surrounding areas.

EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP

The DTW Project is continually undergoing evaluation within PRNS and the other departments in the City. PRNS is working with the applicant to identify the next steps for engaging the public about the long term open space planning and future Parks and Recreation Commission hearing

dates. The Project is targeting Planning Commission and City Council hearings during Spring 2021.

CLIMATE SMART SAN JOSE

The information in this memo has no effect on Climate Smart San José energy, water, or mobility goals.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

The memorandum will be presented at the City of San Jose's Parks and Recreation Commission, which is a public meeting. As a result, the information in this memorandum will be discussed and allow public comment. Long term outreach for the DTW is managed by the City Manager's Office and the project applicant.

COORDINATION

The memorandum was developed by the City of San Jose's Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Department without additional departmental coordination.

COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION/INPUT

The commission is recommended to accept the DTW and DWDSG open space progress presented by the Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services.

CEQA

Not a Project, File No. PP17-008, General Procedure & Policy Making results in no changes to the physical environment.

/s/

Nicolle Burnham
Deputy Director of Parks,
Recreation and Neighborhood Services

For questions, please contact Nicolle Burnham, Deputy Director, at (408) 793-5514.

PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

September 14, 2020

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Attachment 1 – DTW and DSAP Boundaries

Attachment 2 – DTW Proposed Open Space Framework

Attachment 3 – DSAP Open Space Vision