

From: [Hill, Shannon](#)
To: [Downtown West Project](#)
Subject: FW: News
Date: Tuesday, October 13, 2020 10:20:54 PM
Attachments: [Google EIR-Plans Merc 2020-1007.pdf](#)
[Google EIR-Plans Spotlight 2020-1007.pdf](#)
[Google EIR-Plans SVBJ 2020-1007.pdf](#)

From: Karl Heisler <KHeisler@esassoc.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 7, 2020 3:45 PM
To: Keyon, David <david.keyon@sanjoseca.gov>; Hill, Shannon <Shannon.Hill@sanjoseca.gov>
Subject: News

Local coverage attached, FYI.

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Google unveils dramatic vision for downtown San Jose village

Downtown West neighborhood is being crafted by Google to blend with adjacent communities



Google LLC

Gateway Plaza section of Google's Downtown West transit village in downtown San Jose, showing public and open spaces near the historic San Jose Water Co. building along West Santa Clara Street, concept. Google unveiled on Wednesday its most detailed vision to date for a transit-oriented neighborhood in downtown San Jose, a game-changing development that bids to reshape the west edges of the city's urban core yet at the same time mix in with adjacent communities.

By **GEORGE AVALOS** | gavalos@bayareanewsgroup.com | Bay Area News Group

PUBLISHED: October 7, 2020 at 3:03 p.m. | UPDATED: October 7, 2020 at 3:33 p.m.



SAN JOSE — Google unveiled on Wednesday its most detailed vision yet for a transit-oriented neighborhood in downtown San Jose, a game-changing development that bids to reshape the west edges of the city's urban core while still blending in with adjacent communities.

Downtown West, Google's village, would add new offices, homes, and amenities in downtown San Jose near the Diridon train hub, and pave the way for a big increase in affordable housing and green development, documents the search giant filed Wednesday with the city show.

"We're excited about this next step in our project, which incorporates feedback from thousands of people over the last two years and provides another opportunity for community input," said Alexa Arena, Google's development director for San Jose.

The mile-long project would be a city within a city. It would include 7.3 million square feet of offices, 4,000 residential units, shops, restaurants, a hotel, 10 parks, cultural and entertainment hubs, and immersive and interactive educational elements. Google could employ up to 25,000 on the site.

"This is the next level of development for San Jose," said Scott Knies, executive director of the San Jose Downtown Association. "You have the housing, the affordable housing, and certainly the offices are there. But you also have the extraordinary combination of open spaces and cultural uses that makes it really unique."

Google said it would work with city leaders to ensure that 25% of the homes would be affordable in the Diridon Station area, which contains the Downtown West footprint.

"We continue to hear that housing and preserving affordability is a priority for San Jose and our proposal offers more affordable housing, job pathways, and community spaces for San Joseans," Arena said.

The 4,000 residences that Google aims to develop in the project will be made affordable to people at all income levels, Google said.

Google filed two major documents with the city Wednesday. One is a 1,350-page draft environmental impact report that sketches out the project's effects. The other details design guidelines and how buildings would be massed.



The document filings kick off an intensive review and approval process that will include public hearings and formal votes.

“The pandemic has made the biggest concerns from the community about this project — preventing displacement, adding affordable housing, and ensuring quality jobs for working families and communities of color — even more critical,” said Maria Noel Fernandez, campaign director with Silicon Valley Rising, a community group that’s critical of Downtown West.

Downtown West’s footprint is 80 acres, of which 55 acres can be developed. Of the 55 acres, about 30 acres will be set aside for housing and public spaces.

Google says the project will not create any net additions in greenhouse gases.

The tech titan intends for the new buildings to be nearly completely electric. About 65 percent of the site’s trips would occur via mass transit, bicycling, and walking. Just 35 percent would be people driving alone. Plus, Downtown West would generate 7.8 megawatts of on-site solar energy and feature a local microgrid. Google also will buy carbon offsets.

“At a time when so much in our world is on pause due to COVID, it’s heartening to know that San Jose’s most significant long-term urban development project is on track and hitting a key milestone” with the filings, Deputy City Manager Kim Walesh said. “Google is moving forward with Downtown West, its extraordinary project and investment in San Jose.”

Google aims for a development that doesn’t present a walled-off look and feel.

“Downtown West is designed to be a true part of the city, the opposite of a traditional corporate campus,” said Laura Crescimano, founder of SITELAB urban studio, the project’s lead urban designer. “The draft design standards and guidelines published today set out the roadmap for a resilient and connected Downtown West.”

Historic buildings and natural features such as the Guadalupe River and Los Gatos Creek will be incorporated.

“Our team worked with Google to draw on the uniqueness of the location to propose a place where urban life and nature can coexist,” Crescimano said. “We’ve brought together new and historic buildings, opportunities for arts and culture, playful spaces, and moments of respite along the Creek.”

Building heights will range from 40 feet to 290 feet, a Google spokesperson said.



"This is an important milestone for the development of San Jose, for the city's future economic stability, and its growth as a major U.S. city," said land-use expert and consultant Bob Staedler.

Google believes the project can transition smoothly into bordering neighborhoods and different parts of the village.

One example released by Google is a concept of the project's Gateway Plaza section along West Santa Clara Street near the San Jose Water building, which will remain as part of the development.

The concept depicts a mix of office buildings, homes, gathering areas, educational sites, an ecology learning station, and active and immersive features to engage residents, workers, neighbors, and visitors.

"This is like a city within the city," Knies said. "Downtown West will not be a forest of high buildings. It's darn impressive."



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Google unveils portrait of massive downtown San Jose campus



by Adam F. Hutton

🕒 OCTOBER 7, 2020



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A rendering of Google's proposed Downtown West development, which would span more than 80 acres of land around San Jose's Diridon Station. Image courtesy of Google.

San Jose revealed scads of new details about Google's plans to build a sprawling downtown campus with 7.3 million square feet of office space and 4,000 housing units spread out over more than 80 acres with improvements to public amenities, including 10 parks and the trails that will eventually connect them all.

San Jose Downtown Association Executive Director Scott Knies said the project represents a "higher level of design development than the city has ever seen before."

Development expert Bob Staedler, principal executive at Silicon Valley Synergy and a columnist for this news organization, praised Google's pledge to make 1,000 of the project's housing units affordable.

"They will be good stewards and work toward the 25 percent affordable goal," he said.

As part of a public comment process, the city released hundreds of pages in two documents on Oct. 7. The first, [an environmental impact report \(EIR\)](#), examines the effects the project will have on air and water quality, energy use, greenhouse gas emissions and other environmental concerns.

The second document, [Downtown West Design Standards and Guidelines \(DWDSG\)](#), which is more than 470 pages long, contains a wide array of design specifications and illustrations that paint a vivid portrait of what the tech giant has planned for the future of downtown.

Trying to parse the details of the 1,350-page EIR, which was posted on the city's website, is like "drinking from a fire hose," Staedler said.

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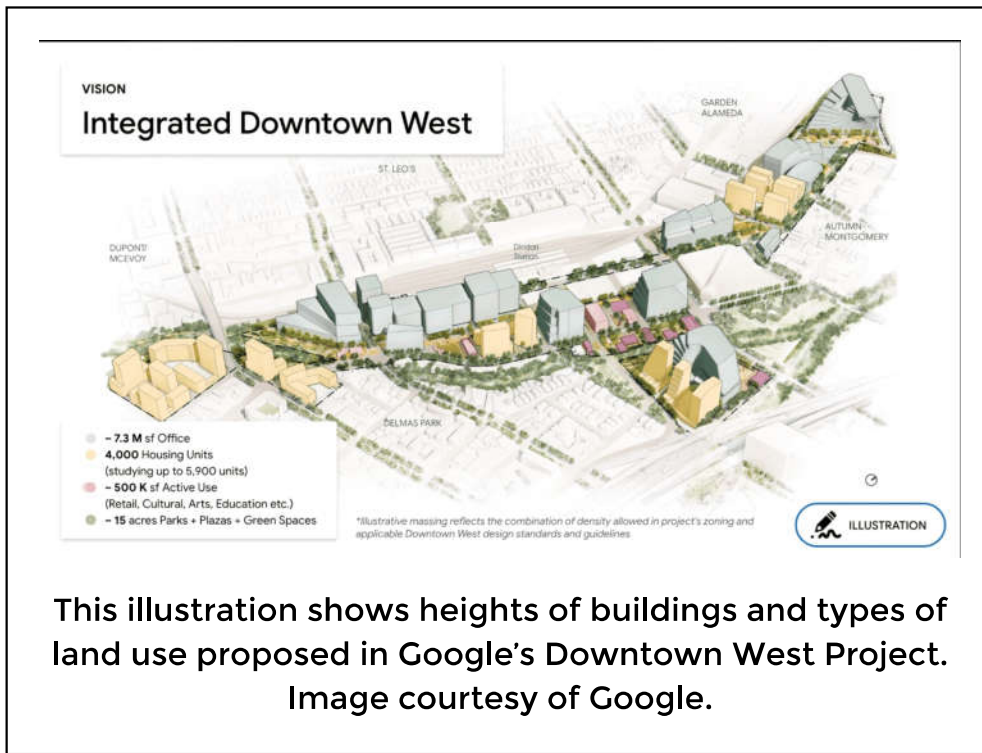
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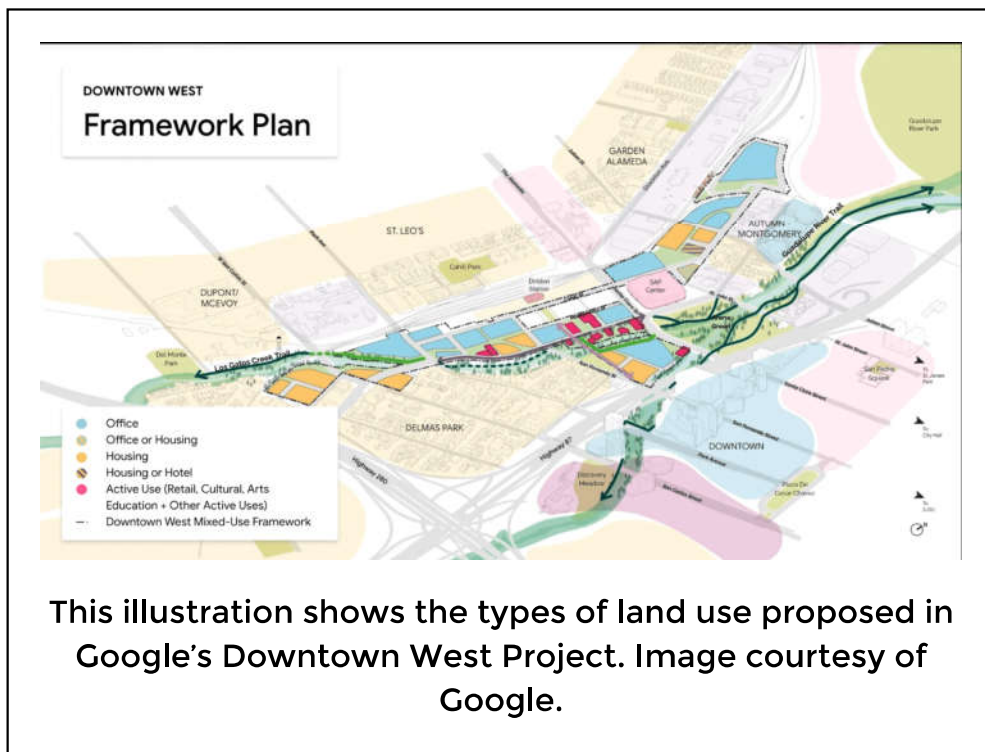
Nevertheless, Staedler told San José Spotlight the start of the public comment process on the document was an important step forward for the project.

"This is the beginning of a myriad of Google items that will go to the council between now and the end of the year," Staedler said, noting a handful of committees will meet and take public comment on the project before the council is asked to approve it in 2021.

"Google listens to community input and they actually want to be partners with the community," he added.

The company echoed that sentiment. Indeed, the draft EIR is the product of a long process of public engagement.

"We're excited about this next step in our project, which incorporates feedback from thousands of people over the last two years and provides another opportunity for community input," Alexa Arena, Google's development director for San Jose, said. "We continue to hear that housing and preserving affordability is a priority for San Jose and our proposal offers more affordable housing, job pathways, and community spaces for San Joseans."



This illustration shows the types of land use proposed in Google's Downtown West Project. Image courtesy of Google.

Knies noted Google is planning a development that belongs in San Jose's downtown.

"This is an integrated, mixed-use development that fits in its community," Knies said. "It's a city within a city."

And that's just what its designers intended.

"Downtown West is designed to be a true part of the city – the opposite of a traditional corporate campus," said Laura Crescimano, founder SITELAB urban studio, the project's designer.

"Our team worked with Google to draw on the uniqueness of the location to propose a place where urban life and nature can coexist. We've brought together new and historic buildings, opportunities for arts and culture, playful spaces and moments of respite along the creek," Crescimano said. "The draft design standards and guidelines published today set out the roadmap for a resilient and connected Downtown West."

At the same time, Knies said the Google campus sets a new

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there and spread to other parts of the city.

“People are going to be really excited about this project and about what it can do in terms of raising the bar for development in San Jose and in terms of knitting together the downtown core with downtown west,” Knies said.

The public review period for the EIR ends Nov. 23 at 5:00 p.m. The city asks for comments in one of the following ways:

- Send e-mails to Shannon Hill, the Environmental Project Manager, at shannon.hill@sanjoseca.gov
- Send letters to Shannon Hill, Planner III, Department of Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement, 200 E. Santa Clara Street, T-3, San Jose, CA. 95113.

Contact Adam F. Hutton
at afhutton.sjspotlight@gmail.com or follow [@adamfhutton](https://twitter.com/adamfhutton) on Twitter.

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From the Silicon Valley Business Journal:

<https://www.bizjournals.com/sanjose/news/2020/10/07/environmental-documents-application-google-sj.html>

Inside the new documents for Google's massive San Jose project

Oct 7, 2020, 3:07pm PDT **Updated: Oct 7, 2020, 3:24pm PDT**

Members of the public can now view Google LLC's resubmitted application and new environmental documents for the search giant's proposed mixed-use development spanning about 80 acres along downtown San Jose's western edge.

The city of San Jose made both documents available for public review on Wednesday as part of the entitlement process for Google's "Downtown West" project. The Mountain View-based search giant is proposing a massive development that includes up to 7.3 million square feet of gross commercial office space, up to 5,900 residential units, and up to 500,000 square feet of active uses.

The new environmental documents, which are in the form of a 1,350-page draft environmental impact report (EIR), can now be viewed online [through this link](#). Google's resubmitted application, which now includes new design standards and guidelines, can be accessed [by clicking here](#).

"We're excited about this next step in our project, which incorporates feedback from thousands of people over the last two years and provides another opportunity for community input," [Alexa Arena](#), Google's development director for San Jose, said in a statement. "We continue to hear that housing and preserving affordability



GOOGLE LLC

An artist's conception of a public open space along West Santa Clara Street in downtown San Jose, around the historic San Jose Water Company building at 374 W. Santa Clara St. The open space is planned to focus on interactive and immersive learning.

is a priority for San Jose, and our proposal offers more affordable housing, job pathways, and community spaces for San Joseans.”

Both the draft environmental impact report and Google's resubmitted Downtown West plans come almost exactly one year after the company submitted its initial formal application for the project. Since that time, the city of San Jose pushed back the target date for City Council consideration of Downtown West from the end of 2020 to early 2021, due in part to the city focusing on its response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

City officials and Google are also determining how to respond to a setback stemming from the failure of Senate Bill 995, which would have given Downtown West a four-year extension to qualify for a state program that streamlines the judicial review process under the California Environmental Quality Act for large development projects in California.

San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo last month called for the California Legislature to convene a special session to get SB 995 passed, a proposal that's also supported by the Diridon Area Neighborhood Group, a coalition of three neighborhood associations located around Diridon Station, which bounds the site of Google's planned village to the west. As of Wednesday, no special session has been scheduled.

All that said, both Downtown West's draft EIR and resubmitted application represent a milestone for Google and the city of San Jose in terms of moving the project forward, and also represent a significant opportunity for members of the public to weigh in on its scope, timeline and vision.

Google spokesperson Michael Appel said in a Tuesday email that the company's resubmitted application incorporated 3,000 points of feedback from the community. Out of the approximately 80 acres of land that make up the Downtown West project site, about 55 acres are developable and 30 acres would be allocated for residential and public use, Appel said.

The Downtown West design standards and guidelines that are part of Google's resubmitted application describe the project's vision and provide requirements and recommendations for development within the site, encompassing more than

30 buildings, three miles of street improvements, and 10 different parks over more than 10 years of construction.

Google is aiming for Downtown West to create no new greenhouse gases, a feat it's looking to accomplish through measures such as constructing all-electric buildings and creating a microgrid and an onsite water reuse facility, among other tactics. It's targeting LEED for Neighborhood Development Gold for the project as a whole, and LEED Gold for all office buildings.

"Downtown West is designed to be a true part of the city — the opposite of a traditional corporate campus," said [Laura Crescimano](#), co-founder and principal of design firm SITELAB Urban Studio, the lead urban designer for Downtown West, in an email statement. "Our team worked with Google to draw on the uniqueness of the location to propose a place where urban life and nature can coexist ... The draft design standards and guidelines published today set out the roadmap for a resilient and connected Downtown West."

Although Google is Downtown West's project sponsor, real estate and investment group Lendlease is the project's development manager. Nearly two dozen firms including SITELAB Urban Studio make up Downtown West's design and consultant team.

The city of San Jose is slated to host a development application community meeting for Google's downtown project on Oct. 19, kicking off a series of public meetings intended for the city and Google to receive feedback on the project. The San Jose City Council is expected to consider the Downtown West application for approval next spring.

Matthew Niksa

Commercial real estate reporter
Silicon Valley Business Journal

