

**From:** [Severino, Lori](#)  
**To:** [Downtown West Project](#)  
**Cc:** [Eidlin, Eric](#); [Mendez, Zacharias](#); [Sanderfer, Larissa](#); [Ruano, Jose](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Please Add My Thoughts on Google's Downtown West Mixed-Use Plan  
**Date:** Thursday, August 20, 2020 2:26:42 PM  
**Attachments:** [Comments on Downtown West Mixed-Use Plan.docx](#)

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**From:** Richard Baiardo [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, December 13, 2019 1:46 PM  
**To:** Severino, Lori <Lori.Severino@sanjoseca.gov>; ricardobenavidez@google.com  
**Subject:** Please Add My Thoughts on Google's Downtown West Mixed-Use Plan

[External Email]

I was a pleasure to meet you both last Saturday. I did not leave comments at either meeting but took home handouts and other materials made available to digest. Attached are my inputs to be added to those collected on December 7.

Let me know if I can be of help in a volunteer basis.

Richard Baiardo

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## Comments on *Downtown West* Mixed-Use Plan

I attended both the morning community presentation and the afternoon workshop held on Dec 7<sup>th</sup>.

As I reflected on Google's conceptual plans, two thoughts arose in my mind:

1. The primary civic plaza should have something that accents the space, something that rises as a landmark, a draw unto itself, and serves as a magnet for travelers to experience it.
2. Street corners designed in such a way as to showcase a café culture. This can be accomplished in several ways.

### #1 Rationale:

Centers of high civilization characterized by a concentration of wealth and genius usually have recognizable civic monuments to that fact. Examples:

- Renaissance Florence held a competition for someone who could design and build a dome on its 100 year old unfinished cathedral, The Domo as well as a design competition for the bronze Baptistery doors. Michelangelo's *David* was itself a civic commission offered to numerous sculptors including da Vinci, who were willing to tackle the single large block of Carrara marble.
- Athens has its Acropolis, Chicago has its Picasso, NYC has its Empire State Building & Statue of Liberty, and Paris the Eiffel Tower.

Silicon Valley is the center of the third great revolution in human history following the agricultural and industrial revolutions and enjoys the highest concentration of wealth on the planet.

### What does Silicon Valley have as a landmark to its greatness?

I propose a bold signature landmark, perhaps a sculpture, of some significance and renown located in the central plaza, *Civic Heart*, developed by a civic sponsored competition in much the same way Renaissance Florence held competitions for civic projects. This monument may not be limited to the plaza but encompass much of Google's *Downtown West*. Surely something can be envisioned that would speak to the greatness of Silicon Valley and serve a point of profound civic pride.

### #2 Rationale:

European cities such as Paris were laid out to encourage a strolling or walking culture. *Downtown West* should be designed so that people want to be there, as a destination, a place to just be. Open air corner cafes contribute to that atmosphere and environment. Slightly fewer grids with slightly more angular streets would create opportunities for corner cafes and add visual interest to the area.

Respectfully,

Richard Baiardo  
1313 Curtiss Avenue, San Jose

