

From: [Keyon, David](#)
To: [Downtown West Project](#)
Cc: [Hill, Shannon](#)
Subject: Fw: If we build it the right way, people will come
Date: Tuesday, April 27, 2021 5:23:09 PM
Attachments: [sMNwe4IEHd26XRa1gg_-iiBR7qNIQ0ao22fJ_IYINmoR8HzyK3n1z_cfkpldUicfCWETV_--pPXo2HBUOPf6jFlbc2J240AUST1xSBleT-pxG7JH8obAM2wnRlftmHVY7DSHq_hv.png](#)

David Keyon

Principal Planner, Environmental Review
City of San Jose
(408) 535-7898 david.keyon@sanjoseca.gov

From: Alex Shoor <alex@CatalyzeSV.org>

Sent: Tuesday, April 27, 2021 5:13 PM

To: Planning Commission 4 <PlanningCom4@sanjoseca.gov>; Planning Commission 1 <PlanningCom1@sanjoseca.gov>; Planning Commission 2 <PlanningCom2@sanjoseca.gov>; Planning Commission 3 <PlanningCom3@sanjoseca.gov>; Planning Commission 5 <PlanningCom5@sanjoseca.gov>; Planning Commission 6 <PlanningCom6@sanjoseca.gov>; Planning Commission 7 <PlanningCom7@sanjoseca.gov>; Planning Commission AP <planningcommission@sunnyvale.ca.gov>; Hughey, Rosalynn <Rosalynn.Hughey@sanjoseca.gov>; Klein, Nanci <Nanci.Klein@sanjoseca.gov>

Cc: Kline, Kelly <Kelly.Kline@sanjoseca.gov>; Devalcourt, Joel <Joel.Devalcourt@sanjoseca.gov>; Brilliot, Michael <Michael.Brilliot@sanjoseca.gov>; Ferguson, Jerad <Jerad.Ferguson@sanjoseca.gov>; Ho, Nathan <Nathan.Ho@sanjoseca.gov>; Peralez, Raul <Raul.Peralez@sanjoseca.gov>; Ramos, Christina M <christina.m.ramos@sanjoseca.gov>; Tran, David <david.tran@sanjoseca.gov>; Davis, Dev <dev.davis@sanjoseca.gov>; Groen, Mary Anne <maryanne.groen@sanjoseca.gov>; Rood, Timothy <timothy.rood@sanjoseca.gov>; Severino, Lori <Lori.Severino@sanjoseca.gov>; Ruano, Jose <Jose.Ruano@sanjoseca.gov>; VanderVeen, Rachel <Rachel.VanderVeen@sanjoseca.gov>; Clements, Kristen <Kristen.Clements@sanjoseca.gov>; Zenk, Jessica <Jessica.Zenk@sanjoseca.gov>; Eidlin, Eric <eric.eidlin@sanjoseca.gov>; Burnham, Nicolle <nicolle.burnham@sanjoseca.gov>; O'malley solis, Jessie <Jessie.O'MalleySolis@vta.org>; ron.golem@vta.org <ron.golem@VTA.org>; benavidez@google.com <benavidez@google.com>; Javier Gonzalez <javiergonzalez@google.com>; wharton@google.com <wharton@google.com>; ava.bromberg@lendlease.com <ava.bromberg@lendlease.com>; whanson@sitelaburbanstudio.com <whanson@sitelaburbanstudio.com>; fromsonc@samtrans.com <fromsonc@samtrans.com>; murphys@samtrans.com <murphys@samtrans.com>; boris.lipkin@hsr.ca.gov <boris.lipkin@hsr.ca.gov>; Han, James <James.Han@sanjoseca.gov>; Mendez, Zacharias <Zacharias.Mendez@sanjoseca.gov>; jbecher@sjsharks.com <jbecher@sjsharks.com>; sheelajivan@google.com <sheelajivan@google.com>; Jessica Graham <jessgraham@google.com>; bethanywindlen@google.com <bethanywindlen@google.com>; weinsteinm@google.com <weinsteinm@google.com>; Hill, Shannon <Shannon.Hill@sanjoseca.gov>; Tu, John <john.tu@sanjoseca.gov>; Keyon, David <david.keyon@sanjoseca.gov>; Manford, Robert <Robert.Manford@sanjoseca.gov>; <Projects@catalyzesv.org> <Projects@catalyzesv.org>
Subject: If we build it the right way, people will come

CATALYZE SV

San Jose Planning Commissioners,

In October 2020, Catalyze SV members met to [evaluate](#) and [score](#) Google's Downtown West proposal based on its 2020 plan. With Google releasing last month an updated proposal, [next Monday, May 3, we invite our members to rescore the project](#). After that time, we'll release an updated position on the entire project.

In the meantime, we understand there are some discussions about transportation bubbling up leading into tomorrow night's meeting. And our members have some important perspectives about transportation on this proposal. So we'd like to reiterate them.

In [our scorecard](#), our members gave the project a 4 out of 5. We wrote:

"Downtown West includes pedestrian-first blocks, additional bike lanes & trails to accommodate biking & walking - all part of Catalyze SV's initial feedback. We are also glad Google is promoting sustainable transportation through TDM measures & encouraging its employees to use transit through transit passes. We also encourage transit passes for contractors, service workers, as well as enabling the residential buildings to buy discounted VTA Smart Passes in bulk to reduce driving. The shared street network & 20-minute city focused on cyclists & pedestrians is a great start, yet we believe there is still too much focus on driving. While a 35% drive-alone mode share improves existing conditions, 7,000 parking spaces (only 15% EV) at the region's transit hub isn't nearly forward-thinking enough. Especially next to a major transit center, Google needs to be more ambitious in planning for a transportation future; with less parking, additional transit use, & new solutions for people's transportation needs."

In [our corresponding letter](#) last fall, we highlighted 3 elements to improve, including a needed "Transportation Shift." We wrote:

"While we appreciate that a 35% drive-alone mode share and 7,000 parking spaces are an improvement to existing conditions, development at the region's transit hub should be more future-focused. We encourage Google to be more ambitious in planning for a transportation future where less parking (drive-alone trips) funds additional transit use & innovative solutions for people's transportation needs. While we're also glad Google is promoting sustainable transportation through TDM & providing transit passes to employees, we believe more could be done. We encourage Google to explore transit passes for contractors & service workers while having residential developments buy discounted VTA Smart Passes in bulk. This would increase transit use, allow for reduced parking, and improve the quality of the environment with fewer cars."

If Downtown West is approved & built, every day there will be tens of thousands of new residents, workers, shoppers, & other visitors to the area. That is anticipated to be *really* good for businesses in the area. And those folks will be far more likely to go to businesses like entertainment & restaurants on foot, by bike, and by public transit if they're already near or in Downtown.

Mayor Liccardo gave a quote in the news this week on this issue that started with “We’ve seen this movie before” This current transportation debate around Downtown West makes me think of a choice between 2 beloved movies. Groundhog Day versus Field of Dreams.

It’ll be Groundhog Day if San Jose continues to plan for more cars & more vast parking lots. It’s like when we widen packed highways, they quickly become jammed again. Transportation planners & economists know this as [induced demand](#) - provide more of a good to people, and they’ll use it. In this case, the result will be a Downtown filled with more cars, which means more traffic & more pollution. And that’ll feel like the same deflating day we’ve lived over and over again in San Jose without much hope for a better way.

Rather, like Field of Dreams, if we shape a new neighborhood for people walking, biking, & taking public transit, trust me, it will thrive. If we build it the right way, people will come.

Sincerely,
Alex

Alex Shoor
Executive Director
Catalyze SV
alex@CatalyzeSV.org

Engage: www.CatalyzeSV.org
Donate: www.CatalyzeSV.org/donate

This message is from outside the City email system. Do not open links or attachments from untrusted sources.