

From: [Mathew Reed](#)
To: [Ramos, Christina M](#)
Subject: DSAP and related
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Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[SVH DSAP Ammendments Comments 1 11.pdf](#)
[SVH AHIP Comments 1 11.pdf](#)

[External Email]

Hello.

Not sure if any of the folks I reached out to were able to tune in last night. Hope so.

I really appreciate the position y'all are in as the representatives of this area. Some very strong voices, and yet a real diversity of interests.

Two things I wanted to share.

1. Attached is the comment letter we filed on the DSAP amendments. The airport issue may have turned much of this on its head. I cannot get details from staff yet. As our letter says, we really do feel like staff has been accommodating. We haven't agreed with some of the decisions, but they have worked hard to balance the range of interests. Further reductions in heights could have a huge/disproportionate impact on where and how much housing can be built.
2. A while back we had a little conflict about the ELI targets for the station area. At the time I/we assumed that the majority of the affordable units (15% or 25%) would be provided through an on-site inclusionary requirement. It is really difficult to get a lot of the lowest income units through this approach, because you can't leverage public subsidies. The plan that the Housing Department has released on implementing the 25% affordable requirement for the plan area, is much more aggressive on building stand-alone affordable homes. This will not be easy, the plan is lacking in concrete planning on what it will actually take implement, but with this approach it will be far more realistic to make 45% of the affordable units accessible to ELI households (maybe we lacked imagination). This would be great, and we are committed to making it viable. Thank you and the councilmember for pushing this.

I have attached our comment on the affordable housing implementation plan as well.

Look forward to sharing and working together in the months ahead.

Best,
Mathew

PS. Please share hopes of speedy recovery with the Councilmember. Everything is scary these days, but he looked better tonight.

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TRANSMITTED VIA EMAIL

January 11, 2021

Jacky Morales-Ferrand

Director

Department of Housing

City of San Jose

Re: Draft Diridon Affordable Housing Implementation Plan

Director Morales-Ferrand.

On behalf of Silicon Valley at Home we write today to provide comments on the draft Diridon Affordable Housing Implementation Plan prepared by Strategic Economics. We submitted initial comments on the plan in a broader letter dated November 15th, 2020, which also addressed the proposed DSAP amendments, ahead of a study session at the City Council. These comments are attached here, and we appreciate this opportunity to comment directly on the Affordable Housing Implementation Plan.

We support staffs significant work with Strategic Economics in developing an assessment of the challenges that lie ahead for both reaching the target of 25% affordable within the Station Area, and responding to the council and community mandate to address the risks of displacement in adjacent communities. We believe that the extension of the City's current 3ps approach to the local housing crisis is the right frame to craft a response to these challenges, and support the comprehensive range of policy proposals and recommendations for pro-active administrative efforts presented in the plan. We are also supportive of the development of socio economic metrics against which to measure the efforts' success. We believe the successful economic and racial integration of the Station Area, and surrounding neighborhoods, will be a gauge for generations of San Joseans in assessing the collective commitment to equitable growth in the city.

In that light, we believe that the content of the current Draft Plan is necessary to the implementation of the outlined goals, but is not sufficient to ensure success. We would recommend that a reasonably short timeline be established to hold additional discussions with community and industry stakeholders and develop final staff recommendations, which should return for approval by the City Council. Topics which we believe require additional attention should include, but not be limited to the following:

- A timeline for adoption and implementation of the various policy changes/additions outlined in the plan.
- Articulation of the administrative procedures necessary to support both site acquisition and funding goals.

January 11, 2021

Re: Diridon Affordable Housing Implementation Plan

Page 2 of 2

- Calculation of the increase in local funding necessary to make the development of high-rise affordable housing development feasible, and the level of explicit city commitment necessary now to allow affordable developers to pursue these projects.
- Strategies for contingency approaches to financing in the event that critical funding sources, such as county Measure A funds, or Housing Authority project-based vouchers are not available in the future.
- Additional development streamlining or cost-reduction strategies that could provide additional tools in ensuring the feasibility of the implementation plan.
- Final decision on whether neighborhood preservation efforts will proactively target troubled properties or use the TOPA/COPA process under development to identify sites.
- Calculation of the funding necessary for the housing preservation strategy outlined in the plan and more explicit plans for generating these resources.
- Processes for regular assessment of the status and incremental success of the implementation plan in meeting the established goals.

The challenges to producing affordable homes, preserving existing affordable opportunities in the private market, and protecting current residents from displacement are significant. The needs throughout the city and region are already well beyond the existing available resources. The draft Affordable Housing Implementation Plan offers an outline of necessary steps to meet the shared expectations for affordable and stable housing in the Station Area. We commend the efforts thus far, and believe that the collective commitment to this effort is both clear and sincere. We look forward to participating in further discussions as the plan's details are flushed out.

Sincerely,

Mathew Reed

Policy Manager



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TRANSMITTED VIA EMAIL

January 11, 2021

Rosalynn Hughey
Director
Planning Department
City of San Jose

Re: Comments on proposed DSAP amendments

Director Hughey.

On behalf of Silicon Valley at Home we write today to provide comments on the draft amendments to the Diridon Station Area Plan. We submitted initial comments on November 15th, 2020, ahead of a study session at the City Council. These comments are attached here, and while our general position has not changed, we appreciate this opportunity to comment directly to the staff of the Planning Department and to address a number of specific recommendations we have regarding the current draft of the proposed DSAP amendments.

SV@Home is a member of Station Area Advisory Group, and has been deeply engaged through this body and throughout the long period of engagement in the Diridon Station planning process. From the very beginning we have advocated for a vibrant, mixed-use city center that is connected to the largest transit hub in the region and accessible to people of all incomes, backgrounds, and abilities. There is broad, and sustained, recognition that fully integrating housing, and affordable housing, into the area will be essential to addressing the housing needs generated by new jobs and will enhance commercial and cultural vibrancy. We believe that realizing the full potential of the Station Area requires a bold vision supported by a planning framework that enables rather than constrains this potential.

While we have some recommendations outlined below, we believe that the city has done tremendous work towards this end in the following ways:

- Significantly expanding the height limitations posed by the area's proximity to the airport by enacting policies that address the core issues of OEI regulations.
- Overcoming initial skepticism to develop a housing-rich Station Area Plan that, along with the Downtown West project, includes the potential for at least 13,000 new homes, which adds to the roughly 2,000 units recently constructed or entitled to reach the goal of up to 15,000 homes, at least 25% of them affordable.
- Working closely with local neighborhood organizations to find balanced solutions to their concerns about the planned development's interface with existing residential uses, while acknowledging that the Station Area is an extension of downtown and must serve the shared interests of the entire city.
- Doing the nuanced work of analyzing the costs, and potential benefits, of making adjustments to the earlier drafts of the land-use plan that looked at ways to optimize specific opportunity sites while being accommodating of neighborhood concerns.

We understand that there are outstanding issues that have the potential to undermine this work to date, and significantly constrain the opportunities to realize the shared vision for the station area. The first is the ongoing efforts to impose additional height and design constraints that have the potential to further reduce the area's capacity for new homes by hundreds and perhaps thousands of units. While these efforts appear focused on small portions of the plan area, our analysis shows a potentially quite significant impact on the actual residential "opportunity sites." Changes made to the plan in response to the neighbors' concerns between March and November of last year were substantial. The plan must not be adjusted beyond the accommodations that have already been made.

The second is the action by the ALUC to find both the Downtown West Plan and the DSAP updates out of compliance with the County's CLUP. While it isn't clear to us why these issues were not resolved as part of the process to address the OEI regulations, they must not be allowed to derail the long term potential of the Station Area. We urge city staff to ensure that the full housing potential of the current plan be maintained as this conflict is resolved, and that the City Council provide their full support should this become necessary.

While we believe that the current proposed amendments to the DSAP are both bold and responsive to many community concerns, we recommend consideration of the following specific adjustments as plan is finalized.

We believe a more creative approach should be considered for the area between Park Avenue on the south and Los Gatos Creek and the Lakehouse Historic District on the north (Area D in discussion versions of the land use map). In order to provide a better interface with the Lakehouse neighborhood, the allowable heights for the area have been significantly reduced from 285' to 65'. While it is understandable to be conscious of neighborhood transitions, most of the area (some 1.6 acres) front only the Creek and the significant planned buffer along the bank. The proposed reduction in height would reduce the carrying capacity of this sub-Area by over 1,225 units. At 65' even the midrise, 5 over two, residential development type which is standard with today's construction technology would be non-conforming. Developing transition guidelines to the full allowable heights, would resolve multiple constraints and increase flexibility and potential. Optimizing capacity in this zone is particularly important because it is one of the limited number of housing opportunity sites that scores well for competitive affordable housing programs due to its proximity to the rail station.

Similarly, in the area between Stockton Avenue and the western boundary of the Station Area (Area A in discussion versions of the land use map) height limits have been reduced since March from 195', 180' and 90', to a maximum of 90' for the full area. In fact, our analysis shows that the only properties left in this area with real redevelopment potential are some 1.5 acres between West Julian Street where the original height limit proposal was 195'. Reducing the limit to 90' would mean the reduction in carrying capacity of this site by about 590 units. Optimizing capacity in this zone is particularly important because it is one of the limited number of housing opportunity sites that scores well for competitive affordable housing programs due to its location in a relatively low-poverty area.

Finally, we are concerned that the VTA parcel in front of the Station has not been explicitly planned in the DSAP amendments as residential at maximum heights. We believe strongly that this site, along

with the adjacent Cal Train parcels originally zoned commercial, will be critical to both ensuring housing goals are attainable, and anchoring the mixed use nature of the station area. Clearly defining this expectation for residential development should be included in the DSAP amendments. Optimizing capacity in this zone is particularly important because it is one of the limited number of housing opportunity sites that scores well for competitive affordable housing programs due to its proximity to the rail station.

Area plans like the DSAP do not determine exactly what gets built, where, and when. They do however define the environment within which development decisions are made in the future, and they must balance operationalizing the realities of today with the potential of the future. Long term success for the area will necessarily require that the City plan for flexibility and potential, while maintaining flexibility in converting commercial parcels or shifting designations in ways that maintain the broader goals and capacity targets, but that are responsive to the market and the Station Area as it is built out.

We appreciate the work done to date and look forward to continued engagement as the proposed amendment is finalized and the DSAP moves to council for approval.

Sincerely,

Mathew Reed
Policy Manager

