

From: [Javier González](#)
To: [Esparza, Maya](#)
Cc: [Kaspar, Nick](#); [Pearce, Michael](#)
Subject: City Council Item 10.2 - Downtown West Support Letters, Articles & Quotes
Date: Monday, May 24, 2021 8:07:41 PM
Attachments: [Guadalupe River Parks Conservancy.pdf](#)
[Diridon Area Neighborhood Group.pdf](#)
[Law Foundation of Silicon Valley.pdf](#)
[Latinos United for a New America.pdf](#)
[LifeMoves.pdf](#)
[San Jose Downtown Association.pdf](#)
[San Jose Parks Foundation.pdf](#)
[San Jose State University.pdf](#)
[Preservation Action Council of San Jose.pdf](#)
[Sierra Club, California Native Plant Society, Audubon Society, Green Foothills.pdf](#)
[Silicon Valley Leadership Group.pdf](#)
[SV@HOME.pdf](#)
[Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition.pdf](#)
[SPUR.pdf](#)
[SVRising, Working Partnerships, South Bay Labor Council, Building Trades.pdf](#)
[Google's Downtown West provides new urban vision for San Jose.pdf](#)
[New poll finds most San Joseans support massive Google campus.pdf](#)
[Google, San Jose Release Long-awaited Development Agreement for Downtown West Project.pdf](#)
[Google's downtown San Jose transit village project offers \\$200 million in community benefits.pdf](#)
[Google's San Jose megaproject offers \\$200 million in community benefits, 1,000 affordable homes.pdf](#)
[Downtown West Press Quotes.pdf](#)

[External Email]

Dear Councilmember Esparza,

The

[Downtown](#)

[West](#) project team is looking forward to tomorrow's City Council vote regarding

[Agenda](#)

[Item 10.2](#). We know you're very busy so we pulled together a summary package of all

the City Council letters that were shared with Google by organizations (i.e. SV Rising, Diridon Area Neighborhood Group, etc.) as well as links to recent articles and some press quotes. We hope these attachments are helpful to you.

Thank

you in advance for your consideration.

Best

regards,

Javier

List
of attachments:

-

15
Letters

- Diridon
Area Neighborhood Group
- Guadalupe
River Parks Conservancy
- Preservation
Action Council of San Jose
- Latinos
United for a New America
- Law
Foundation of Silicon Valley
- LifeMoves
- San
Jose Downtown Association
- San
Jose Parks Foundation
- San
Jose State University
- Sierra
Club, California Native Plant Society, Audubon Society, Green

Foothills

- Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition
- Silicon Valley Leadership Group
- SPUR
- SV@Home
- SVRising, Working Partnerships, South Bay Labor Council, Building Trades

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5

Articles

- [Google's Downtown West provides new urban vision for San Jose](#)
- [New poll finds most San Joseans support massive Google campus](#)
- [Google, San Jose Release Long-awaited Development Agreement for Downtown West Project](#)
- [Google's downtown San Jose transit village project offers \\$200 million in community benefits](#)

-

[Google's San Jose megaproject offers \\$200 million in community benefits, 1,000 affordable homes](#)

-

Downtown
West Press Quotes

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



March 22, 2021

San Jose City Council
200 E. Santa Clara Street
San Jose, CA 95113

Dear Mayor and Members of the City Council,

The Guadalupe River Park Conservancy (GRPC) is the City's non-profit partner providing community leadership for the active use and development of the Guadalupe River Park. We believe in and pursue the vision for the Guadalupe River Park and Gardens as identified in the San Jose Envision 2040 General Plan, Guadalupe River Park Master Plan, and Guadalupe Gardens Master Plan. It is with this lens that GRPC offers their support of the staff recommendations Google's Downtown West Project.

There are many key elements of the Project that align with the goals and values of GRPC. We particularly commend the investments in social equity, affordable housing, urban density and mixed-use neighborhoods, increase in urban tree canopy, new parks and public spaces, and highlighting the Los Gatos Creek. The Social Infrastructure Plan is also remarkable and needs to be part of standard consideration of all planning and civic development initiatives in our city.

As the Project progresses through the next phases of development, we look forward to engagement with the Google development team to continue to prioritize thriving ecosystems, stewardship of nearby public resources, fostering public life, and reinforcing connections between the Project and the community.

The Downtown West Mixed Use Project is sited adjacent to San Jose's major transit station, touches two waterways, and extends downtown westward. This Project is an opportunity to realize many city and community priorities, and be a standard in design, development, and public life. We support the Downtown West Project and encourage City Council's approval.

Regards,

Jason Su
Executive Director
Guadalupe River Park Conservancy



438 Coleman Avenue
San Jose, CA 95110
408-298-7657
guadalupeconservancy.org
EIN: 77-0166797

City of San Jose

Toni Taber, City Clerk

200 East Santa Clara Street

San Jose, CA 95113

RE: Google Downtown West Development

The Downtown West Project is the cornerstone to all development that will occur in the broader Diridon Station Area. Google has set the bar for community engagement, making the stakeholders and neighborhood voices heard. Through their collaboration with community members, Google has laid the groundwork to create a long-term positive working relationship with all area stakeholders.

The Diridon Area Neighborhood Group is pleased to see:

- New parks and open spaces with engaging experiences and programs
- Google's contribution to existing parks
- Year-round free programs that will benefit the broader community
- Opportunity for a vibrant new district that will complement existing neighborhoods
- Forward thinking infrastructure improvements for the 80-acre project with no public financing or subsidies
- The thoughtful and responsive Downtown West Design Standards and Guidelines, which should be the standard for projects large and small throughout this area.

The DANG would like to thank Google for their time and commitment to our neighborhoods. As construction begins and our neighborhoods begin to feel the everyday impacts, we know that there will be bumps in the road, but also know that Google has done absolutely everything it can to show us that we have a relationship based upon mutual respect. And that our neighborhood concerns are reasonable and thoughtful.

We expect staff to hold all other developments moving into the DSAP to this same standard.

Thank you, Google for restoring our faith in the public engagement process. We expect nothing less from the entire DSAP.

Sincerely,

Kathy Sutherland
Laura Winter
Edward Saum

Bert Weaver
Sarah Springer
Harvey Darnell



DANG

Diridon Area Neighborhood Group

Helen Chapman
Mary Pizzo
Kevin Christman

Bill Rankin
Norma Ruiz

cc: Mayor Sam Liccardo
Vice Mayor Chappie Jones
Councilmember Sergio Jimenez
Councilmember Raul Peralez
Councilmember David Cohen
Councilmember Magdalena Carrasco
Councilmember Dev Davis
Councilmember Maya Esparza
Councilmember Sylvia Arenas
Councilmember Pam Foley
Councilmember Matt Mahan
Dave Sykes
Rosalynn Hughey
Nanci Klein



Housing | Health | Children & Youth

May 24, 2021

Mayor Sam Liccardo and San Jose City Council
City of San Jose
Via e-mail

RE: Item 10.2 – SUPPORT - Downtown West Mixed Use Plan in San Jose, CA

Dear Mayor Liccardo and City Council:

The Law Foundation of Silicon Valley writes in strong support of the Downtown West Mixed Used Plan, specifically because of the Community Stabilization Fund as part of Development Agreement between the City of San Jose and Google. Since Google made its announcement to move to San Jose, the Law Foundation, standing alongside other community organizations and partners, advocated for strong community benefit to prevent displacement and ensure that all San Joseans benefit from the opportunity the impactful Downtown West project. We are proud to be a part of a coalition that for years has worked with the City and Google to develop the Community Stabilization Fund. We urge the City Council to support this groundbreaking fund as part of the Development Agreement.

The Community Stabilization Fund provides needed resources and added stability to those most at-risk of displacement from the massive Downtown West project, specifically Latinx and AAPI (Asian American and Pacific Islander) communities in East San Jose and Downtown San Jose. The Fund sets aside dollars to prevent displacement, as well as to support economic opportunity for all people in San Jose. We are especially proud that the Fund will be governed by community members, including those with lived experience from East San Jose and Downtown. This ensures that race equity will be central to how the Fund is managed. This Fund is a model for future development agreements. It should inspire companies to reconsider their social responsibility programs to prioritize anti-displacement measures that support communities of color's abilities to continue to live and thrive in Silicon Valley.

We urge you to pass Downtown West Plan and Community Stabilization Fund.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Nadia Aziz", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Nadia Aziz
Directing Attorney



LATINOS UNITED FOR A NEW AMERICA

May 24th, 2021

1692 Story Rd., Suite 225 San José, CA 95122 (408) 493-6486

Mayor Liccardo and Members of the City Council
City of San Jose
200 E. Santa Clara St.
San Jose, CA 95113

Re: Item 10.2, Downtown West Mixed-Use Plan

Dear Mayor Liccardo and Councilmembers:

Google and the City of San Jose have agreed to a Development Agreement for the Downtown West project that could put \$154.8 million into a community fund grounded in racial justice and governed by grassroots leaders. This is the biggest community benefits fund of its kind, and the first to empower communities of color with the authority to direct tens of millions towards preventing displacement and creating economic opportunity for local residents.

This comes in addition to commitments by Google creating a path for thousands of workers to good family-supporting union jobs building and running their proposed Downtown West campus and supporting thousands of affordable homes for San José families between the project and Google's existing Affordable Housing Fund to help offset tech's role in our housing crisis.

This agreement is the result of four years of organizing. It happened because residents came out to town hall meetings back in 2017 and shared their hopes and needs, signed onto our community vision for the project, marched with us through downtown and at Google's headquarters, emailed City leaders and testified at City Council meetings, and so much more. Together, we made clear that the project must not destabilize our communities.

Google's team and City leaders listened. They've worked with our coalition of housing advocates, community organizations, and labor groups to find solutions to the community's greatest concerns and to jointly design this grassroots-governed community fund to tackle the root causes of our displacement crisis and to give the most impacted power over decisions. We collaborated to devise a process to review community benefit funds across the country, to consider best practices, to work with community members to reflect on a governance model that would intentionally address a history of racial, economic and political inequality.

The process of working together, community leaders together with Google and City staff to address the impacts of development on our communities is one that the City and other developers should seek to emulate, ensuring that as the City considers financially valuable land use changes, we develop the necessary processes to capture more of this value for the public to address potential impacts on neighborhoods experiencing the greatest pressures of displacement.

The fund will be governed by a 13-member Community Committee that reflects the diversity of San José and will have the final say on funding solutions:

- At least five members must have personal lived experience with the root causes of displacement, including two from the eastside and one from downtown.
- The other eight will have expertise fighting racial injustice in areas like housing, workers' rights, education, and small business.

The fund will focus on undoing racial inequity in neighborhoods experiencing displacement on the top priorities identified by our community:

- Stable housing: Preserving affordable homes, funding legal aid and tenant organizing, and piloting new ownership models where our homes belong to our community rather than private corporations.
- Economic opportunity: Providing pathways to good jobs for local residents of all ages and backgrounds, from early childhood education to apprenticeships in careers like construction and IT, to help founding small businesses.

When we started on this journey, we said we wanted this project to be a new model for how the tech sector can develop without displacement. This agreement gives the communities most at risk real power over resources and together with the commitments creating a path to thousands of good union jobs and affordable housing, we're creating that new model. By listening to community and labor leaders, working together to design solutions to the community's biggest concerns, and giving power to those most impacted, Google's Downtown West project sets a new standard for future developments.

While it has been a long journey to get where we are, this only shows that when we come together and organize as a community, we win.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'MP', enclosed within a hand-drawn oval shape.

Mayra Pelagio
Executive Director,
Latinos United for a New America (LUNA)

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Aubrey Merriman

May 20, 2021

Honorable Mayor Liccardo and San Jose City Council
200 East Santa Clara Street
San Jose, CA 95113

Dear Honorable Mayor Liccardo and San Jose City Council,

LifeMoves is very happy to be writing a letter in support of the Google Downtown West project. We have been and continue to be a proud partner of Google and believe that that the Downtown West project will both energize the surrounding community and bring much needed affordable housing and supportive resources to those in need.

LifeMoves is a significant stakeholder in the Diridon Station area. Two of our largest supportive interim housing programs that serve thousands of unsheltered individuals, the majority of whom suffer from significant mental illness, are located in the heart of the Downtown West area. These facilities have provided intensive support for this vulnerable population for more than 30 years. This new development will provide many needed resources for LifeMoves and our clients. We are thankful to have been an active participant in the planning and development discussions for this ambitious project for several years.

The overarching goals of Downtown West offer significant new public benefits. In particular:

- Creating jobs near transit allowing more efficient and environmentally sustainable commuting
- Providing thousands of prevailing wage construction jobs that have a focus on hiring local workers and emphasize supplier diversity
- Building 4,000 new homes with 25% of the inventory earmarked for affordable housing
- Establishing a \$150M+ fund for community stabilization and support for opportunities rooted in social equity and inclusive community participation

These goals are compatible with and supportive of the LifeMoves mission and high impact work we do to help local unsheltered people return to stable housing and long-term self-sufficiency in their community. Along with Google, we strive to deliver all of our services and solutions through a lens of social

equity and inclusiveness. Together we will create a robust and self-sustaining community.

We appreciate this opportunity to add our voice in support of Downtown West and look forward to our continued work with Google, the City of San Jose and the county of Santa Clara throughout this process to bring a successful project outcome for all.

Sincerely,



Aubrey Merriman
Chief Executive Officer
LifeMoves



May 20, 2021

City of San Jose City, Council
200 East Santa Clara Street
San José, CA 95113-1905

RE: Support for Downtown West zoning, environmental and General Plan amendments

Dear Mayor Liccardo and City Council members,

Onwards -- and with the heights and densities in Downtown West -- definitely upwards.

While the project's 7.3 million square feet of office space, 4,000 housing units (25 percent affordable) and 15 acres of parks and open spaces have grabbed most of the attention, the San Jose Downtown Association would like to highlight how the Downtown West plan will strengthen neighborhoods by directly investing in initiatives co-created by community members during a two year public outreach process. For example, the Community Stabilization and Opportunity Pathways Fund (\$154.8 million) and the Community Benefits (\$45 million) will be crucial to the initial and on-going investment to our community as these funds will be released in timely tranches.

One such initiative will focus on small business resiliency, entrepreneurship and ways to help small businesses make Downtown West a home. Google will work directly with businesses on the ground floor design of Downtown West to ensure their proximity is central to the project's new open spaces. Half of the developable parts of the site will go to non-office uses – housing mostly – but 500,000 square feet is planned for “active” spaces. Those spaces include food, drink, retail, cultural, arts and education uses.

Downtown West will strive to create a “15-minute city” where work, home, shopping, entertainment and recreational uses are all situated within a 15-minute walk. The project also will invest in a greener future in terms of net-zero emissions, ecology and mobility infrastructure – in essence, the equivalent of removing 4,100 cars from traffic and powering 1,500 homes using solar energy.

The necessary land use updates, certifications and approvals before you are a critical milestone as we embrace a new vision for San Jose that integrates neighborhoods, nature, equity and economic growth.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Scott Knies".

Scott Knies
Executive Director



San Jose Parks Foundation

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Partners & Projects

- Partners & Projects
- Abronzino Field House
- Almaden Winery Park
- Buena Vista Park
- Butcher Dog Park
- Community Mural Pocket Park
- Downtown Enrichment
- Erickson Park
- Farmworker Caravan
- Feed the Frontline SCCounty
- Five Wounds Trail
- Guadalupe Oak Grove Park
- Guardian Art/Saga
- Hamann Park Mural
- Japanese Friendship Garden
- Keep Coyote Creek Beautiful
- La Colina Park
- Martin-Fontana Parks Assoc.
- Miner Park
- Pueblo Play Playground
- Roosevelt Park Roller Hockey Rink
- San Jose Family Camp
- San Jose Parks Advocates
- Santa Teresa Bernal NA
- Save Our Trails
- Seven Trees - Project Kultoor
- Sherman Oaks Playground
- Sons Of San Jose Memorial
- South Bay Clean Creeks Coalition
- St. James Park
- Theodore Lenzen Park
- Thousand Oaks Park
- United Veterans Council of SCC
- Viva CalleSJ

James P. Reber
Founding Executive Director

Diana Dunckelmann
Finance

May 18, 2021

Mayor Liccardo and San Jose City Council
200 East Santa Clara Street
San Jose, California 95113

Dear Mayor Liccardo and City Councilmembers:

Once again I write to you as the Executive Director of San Jose Parks Foundation, a community-based nonprofit organization that has benefited substantially from the support of Google employees and Google, as a corporate donor.

I am also a member of the SPUR San Jose Policy Board and am familiar with the developments in the downtown core area that includes Google's plans for development; planning which includes substantial commitment of funding for the nonprofit sector.

Google has been very generous in its support of San Jose's parks and trails and the programs within them as a faithful participant in support of San Jose Parks Foundation.

Groups of Google employees regularly engage in volunteer clean-up of parks and trails, providing the kind of exemplary volunteer support that benefits all San Jose Residents. Additionally, Google matches each hour spent by volunteer employees with funding support for San Jose Parks Foundation. In this volunteer support of parks and trails, Google is the leading corporate participant and donor.

Google has also provided annual funding support for San Jose Parks Foundation, helping the foundation to reach more people, especially those in underse3rved areas.

Google has been a great partner to San Jose Parks Foundation, a truly generous corporate supporter of our parks, trails and programs. I hope the city will consider this in making a decision to work with Google to lift up our entire community.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

James P. Reber
Executive Director



Administration and Finance
Vice President/CFO

San José State University
One Washington Square
San José, CA 95192-0006

TEL: 408-924-1500
FAX: 408-924-1515
adminfinance@sjsu.edu

May 24, 2021

Mayor Liccardo and San Jose City Council
City of San Jose
200 E. Santa Clara Street
San Jose, CA 95113

Re: Item 10.2 on the 5/26/21 Agenda

Dear Mayor and Councilmembers,

As the most transformative university in the nation, San José State University is committed to being an essential partner in the economic, cultural and social development of San José and California. We provide a comprehensive university education, granting bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees in 250 areas of study. Because SJSU has more than 36,000 students, nearly 4,300 employees, and occupies 19 acres in the heart of downtown, the future of San José is important to current and future Spartans. That is why we support Item 10.2 on the 5/26/21 Agenda.

The economic power and impact of a major development such as Downtown West is an important opportunity and milestone for the future of downtown San José. We appreciate the shared vision for focusing on building community and aiding in economic recovery for all. The Community Stabilization and Opportunity Pathways Fund will increase access to higher education for first-generation students, thereby transforming their lives. Google has been a strong partner to the College of Engineering and many others on campus. We look forward to growing that partnership in the years to come.

SJSU supports Google and the City of San José's efforts in transforming the west side of downtown and the Diridon Station area. San José State University is committed to being a key partner to the city and contributor to the future of downtown San José. If you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

AS467319C3F8409...

Charlie Faas
VP / CFO Administration & Finance



**PRESERVATION ACTION
COUNCIL OF SAN JOSE**
History Park
1650 Senter Road
San Jose, CA 95112
Phone: 408-998-8105
www.preservation.org

May 24, 2021

VIA EMAIL (city.clerk@sanjoseca.gov)

San José City Council
200 E. Santa Clara Street
San Jose, CA 95113

**RE: DOWNTOWN WEST (GOOGLE) DRAFT EIR FIRST AMENDMENT
GP19-009, PDC19-039, PD19-029**

Dear Mayor Liccardo and Esteemed Councilmembers,

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on Google's revised Downtown West Mixed Use Plan and the project's Draft EIR First Amendment. PAC* SJ would like to commend both the Google project team and Planning Division staff for their comprehensive and constructive responses to PAC* SJ's concerns about project's potential impacts to historic resources within and adjacent to the project site. As outlined in Section 1.2.2 (pp. 1-4 through 1-6) of the First Amendment, Google has made significant positive changes to their proposed scope of work since the release of the first Draft EIR, including new commitments to preserve and rehabilitate numerous historic resources originally proposed for demolition. These and other welcome changes are a direct result of Google's commitment to robust, good-faith engagement with PAC* SJ and other community stakeholders and a testament to the benefits of open dialogue and collaboration. PAC* SJ looks forward to continued collaboration with the City and the Google project team to implement this ambitious and exciting preservation effort.

While not all of PAC* SJ's comments and recommendations have been incorporated into the revised Downtown West project, we are generally satisfied that our input was given fair consideration and helped contribute to an improved overall plan that better meets the project's stated objectives to *"incorporate high-quality urban design, architecture, and open spaces with varied form, scale, and design character to enliven San José's downtown"* and to *"preserve and adapt landmark historic resources and assets where feasible to foster a place authentic to San José, and foster contemporary relations to San José's history."*

PAC* SJ BOARD

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PRESERVATION ACTION
COUNCIL OF SAN JOSE
History Park
1650 Senter Road
San Jose, CA 95112
Phone: 408-998-8105
www.preservation.org

We recognize that a strong commitment to historic preservation represents just one of many public interests served by a project of this magnitude, and that Google's equally commendable commitments to affordable housing, open space, and other community benefits have played a significant role in shaping the historic preservation scope of the Downtown West plan as proposed. In this light, PAC*sj remains committed to advocating for the preservation and adaptive reuse of historic resources within and adjacent to the project area in the event that the Downtown West plan is altered or amended in the future. While we commend Google for their substantial investment in preserving and reactivating numerous historic resources within the Downtown West plan area, we would also be remiss not to acknowledge the threatened loss of other important sites and structures, including but not limited to the National Register-eligible Democracy Hall (580 Lorraine Avenue) and the HRI-listed Patty's Inn (102 S. Montgomery St.). As development plans for these parcels are further refined, we encourage Google and the City of San José to revisit the adaptive reuse and/or relocation potential of these resources. We will also continue to advocate for an appropriate adaptive reuse strategy for significant elements of the National Register-eligible Sunlite Baking Company Building (145 S. Montgomery Street) within the project area.

In summary, PAC*sj supports the revised project as presented and encourages its approval by City Council. We thank the Google project team for their sincere engagement with PAC*sj and other community stakeholders and for their commitment to incorporating historic resources into their vision for Downtown West.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ben Leech', with a stylized, cursive script.

Ben Leech
Executive Director
Preservation Action Council of San Jose



SIERRA CLUB
LOMA PRIETA CHAPTER



Santa Clara Valley Chapter
CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

May 17, 2021

To: Mayor Liccardo and members of the San Jose City Council

Re: Support for Item 10.2 on the May 25 Agenda: Google Downtown West Plan

The Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter, the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, the California Native Plant Society, Santa Clara Valley Chapter and Green Foothills write in support of the Google Downtown West Plan and its associated Development Agreement between Google and the City of San Jose.

For decades, our organizations have advocated for the preservation of the open landscapes of Santa Clara County and our native flora and fauna. At the same time, we promoted good urban planning that focuses on density in the urban core, prevents displacement, protects riparian ecosystems, integrates native trees and shrubs into urban design, and promotes sustainability. More recently, we have been advocating for climate action and resilience, adaptation to sea level rise, and transit-focused mixed-use development. Google's Downtown West Plan accomplishes many of these elements. We are pleased to see the long-term vision of incorporating nature into the public urban environment and the building of a vibrant, walkable, planned community coming to life in the City of San Jose.

The Google team reached out to our groups early in the design process and has been responsive to many of our suggestions and requests regarding riparian setbacks, protecting and enhancing nature and habitat along the creeks, and embracing a California native plant palette that includes locally native trees such as oaks and sycamores. Downtown West has been designed to stay consistent with policies and guidelines around Los Gatos Creek and Guadalupe River, and to allow people to enjoy nature along the creeks. Our suggestions for bird safety measures, avoiding light pollution and minimizing the impacts of artificial light at night were incorporated into the plan.

The project is a downtown-focused and transit-focused mixed-use development — the right thing for San José, as the creation of jobs and housing downtown contributes to climate action and resilience, and allows for the protection of open space, as in Coyote Valley.

Respectfully,

David W. Poeschel
Open Space Committee Chair
Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter

Matthew Dodder
Executive Director
Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

Linda Ruthruff
Conservation Chair
California Native Plant Society
Santa Clara Valley Chapter

Alice Kaufman
Legislative Advocacy Director
Green Foothills

Cc: James Eggers
Executive Director
Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter



SILICON VALLEY
LEADERSHIP GROUP

2001 Gateway Place, Suite 101E
San Jose, California 95110

Est. in 1978 by
David Packard

(408) 501-7864

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Raquel Gonzalez
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Community College District

Rao Mulpuri
View

Kim Polese
CrowdSmart

Ryan Popple
Proterra

Sharon Ryan
Bay Area News Group

Tom Werner
SunPower

May 20, 2021

Mayor and Council
City of San José
200 E. Santa Clara St.
San José, CA 95113

RE: Item 10.2 - Downtown West Mixed-Use Plan

Dear Mayor Liccardo, Vice Mayor Jones, Councilmembers Jimenez, Peralez, Cohen, Carrasco, Davis, Esparza, Arena, Foley, and Mahan.

On behalf of the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, we express our support for the Downtown West Mixed-Use Plan. This transformative proposal by Google will bring 7.3 million square feet of office space, over 5,700 prevailing wage construction jobs, 4,000 new homes (1,000 of them affordable), and 15 acres of parks, in addition to an unprecedented \$200 million community benefits package to San José.

The Silicon Valley Leadership Group, founded in 1978 by David Packard of Hewlett-Packard, represents hundreds of Silicon Valley's most respected employers. We focus on issues, programs, and campaigns that affect the economic quality of life in Silicon Valley. Collectively, Leadership Group members provide nearly one out of every three private sector jobs in Silicon Valley and contribute more than \$3 trillion to the global economy.

The Downtown West Mixed-Use plan before you is the successful outcome of years of thoughtful community engagement with over 100 impactful community meetings, including neighborhood walks and over 3,000 in person touch points. This has resulted in careful land use planning and collaboration that will bring economic and other public benefits to San José residents.

Community benefits resulting from this outreach are designed to start early and continue well into the future. These benefits include a first-of-its-kind \$154.8 million Community Stabilization and Opportunity Pathways fund that will be community-led and expertly managed; resulting in affordable housing, education, job training, and much more.

This project will support a number of popular benefits for residents and businesses. That is why in a recent SVLG poll 70% of San José voters from every part of the city support this project. When asked about the proposal's components 87% of residents were in favor of the 25,000 new jobs that will be created, 80% in favor of investments in transportation infrastructure, and 82% supported the 15 acres of parks and open space this project will create.

As a member of the Diridon Station Area Advisory Group we advocated alongside local residents for the core tenets of good planning to be implemented in this plan. We spoke about how building jobs and housing near transit is essential for our communities, our climate, and for stronger, more vibrant downtowns. Having listened to stakeholders Google ensured Downtown West leverages the proximity to Diridon Station to create the "15-minute city" San José residents deserve, with bikeways and trail segments to bring benefits for the environment and workers in a way that will reduce traffic and greenhouse gas emissions and enhance overall health and quality of life.

With Diridon Station, envisioned as the future “Grand Central Station of the West,” this development will be located near an almost unparalleled multi-modal transit hub, including high-quality public transit services such as Caltrain, VTA, High-Speed Rail, BART, and more. This will allow those who work and live at Downtown West transit access to the entire Bay Area and beyond, and bring visitors in an efficient and environmentally friendly way.

This proposal is transformative for San José, including what San José staff have calculated as \$1 billion of value in voluntary project features, in addition to \$200 million in negotiated community benefits. From creating a model of community and stakeholder engagement to incorporating environmental sustainability, innovative development, housing affordability, and transit-friendly design, it hits all the marks for a proposal that is truly in its own league.

For these reasons, the Leadership Group is proud to support the Downtown West Mixed-Use plan before you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vince Rocha". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Vince" and last name "Rocha" clearly distinguishable.

Vince Rocha
Senior Director, Housing and Community Development
Silicon Valley Leadership Group

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STAFF

Leslye Corsiglia
Executive Director

TRANSMITTED VIA EMAIL

May 20th, 2021

City Council
City of San José
200 E. Santa Clara St.
San José, CA 95113

Dear Mayor Liccardo, Vice Mayor Jones, and Councilmembers Arenas, Cohen, Davis, Carrasco, Esparza, Foley, Jimenez, Mahan, and Peralez:

RE: Downtown West Proposal and Development Agreement

On behalf of Silicon Valley at Home and our members, we are writing to express our support for Google's Downtown West proposal for Diridon Station. As a member of the Station Area Advisory Group (SAAG), SV@Home has been actively involved in all community engagement and policy development efforts around Diridon from the very beginning. We believe that the Google Team has remained committed to this engagement throughout this process, and deserves credit for the broad support they will receive. We would like to especially thank San José city staff for all of their hard work to make the Downtown West Development Agreement possible as well as all of the members of the community who have shaped this project.

SV@Home is especially excited about the residential components of Google's proposal, which will bring 4,000 new homes alongside new office space, neighborhood-serving retail, open space, and bike-ped infrastructure, creating the vibrant district we all want to see at Diridon. Of the 4,000 new homes, 25% of them will be deed-restricted affordable to lower and moderate income families. We are supportive of Google's approach to achieving these 1,000 affordable homes through a combination of land dedication and some on-site inclusionary. As the City Council knows well, land is always one of the most challenging pieces of the development puzzle for affordable housing developers, and by dedicating land developers can access more funding and create more affordable homes.

We want to highlight Google's commitment to front-loading key pieces of the affordable housing development, including the dedication of their first affordable housing parcel soon after overall project approval. This first parcel dedication would be an important opportunity for San José to partner with Santa Clara County to leverage Measure A funds to reach the deepest levels of affordability and help our neediest neighbors. Making this a reality, however, will require that the San José City Council and Staff make it a priority. While we appreciate, and support Google's recommendation to ensuring there will be funding in place to support these standalone affordable developments through the allocation of Commercial Linkage Fees, this and other policy decisions will require City action and commitment to meeting ambitious timelines and goals for affordable development in the Station Area. Early resources for the development of the Autumn Street site should be a high priority.

Additionally, we are excited to support Google's commitment to provide a total of \$200 million in funding to the community, including \$154.8 million for the new Community Stabilization and Opportunity Pathway Fund. This Fund will provide real resources for affordable housing production, preservation, and housing stability/tenant protection in addition to addressing other community needs. This is a critical step towards an inclusive partnership with the people of San José, and a realization of the consensus that this project offers an opportunity to respond to the breadth of needs facing the city as it continues to grow. The fact that the community will have a say in how the funds will be used over time is an important and innovative component of this Fund. However, realizing the broadly shared goal of mitigating displacement has become an immediate and pressing need as the city works through the impact of the pandemic. Targeted early resources should prioritize these needs. That is why we are supportive of the recent progress staff has made on allocating some of these early resources for COVID response legal assistance and initial support for a community land trust.

Google's Downtown West proposal will catalyze additional much-needed residential development throughout the Station Area and we urge the City Council to move it forward. However, it is important to note that the proposal is just a part of the entire Station Area and the concomitant approval of the amendments to the Diridon Station Area Plan (DSAP) will lay out the ground rules for development across the entire 240-acre area, including overall development capacity, heights, and the Affordable Housing Implementation Plan. We have included more comments about the greater DSAP plan in an accompanying letter.

Sincerely,



Leslye Corsiglia
Executive Director



May 25, 2021

Mayor and Members of the City Council
200 E. Santa Clara
San Jose, CA



Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition
www.bikesiliconvalley.org
96 N. Third St, Suite 375
San Jose, CA 95112
408-287-7259

Dear Mayor and Members of the City Council,

On behalf of Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition, (SVBC), a nonprofit organization improving the community, economy and environment through the everyday use of the bicycle, I am writing to support the staff recommendation regarding the Downtown West Mixed Use Project.

As a member of the Station Area Advisory Group and a stakeholder in San Jose, SVBC has been closely following the redevelopment of the Diridon Area. SVBC is thrilled that the community, City, and Google have put together a plan that will help ensure that as the area redevelops, important city-wide needs will be addressed, and community assets will be bolstered.

As an organization, SVBC is focused on helping those who already ride or would like to ride for everyday use. We also understand that safe bike infrastructure alone is not nearly enough to encourage people to choose the bicycle. Housing, jobs, parks, densely built along with safe bike infrastructure will create the conditions under which people will be compelled to ride, walk, and take public transit. That's what this plan is about.

SVBC re-proved this lesson recently through the first ever [public opinion research](#) into Santa Clara County attitudes towards transportation. In partnership with the Mineta Transportation Institute the research showed clear differences between walking, biking and transit ridership within urban areas as opposed to suburban. In essence, if we are to create a transportation ecosystem that is resilient, affordable, sustainable, healthy and fun, meaning, walking, biking and public transit, we must build for that system in the ways outlined in this plan.

To do that we know that making biking infrastructure fantastic is not enough to change longstanding auto-centric habits. **That is why, at the same time, the City must constrain single occupancy driving.** People will default to driving unless bikes, transit, and walking are made awesome AND limits on single occupancy vehicles are put in place. This is baked into the City's General Plan in the form of mode shift goals that reduce SOVs to 40% and increase walking and biking to 15%. The prospect of this Plan offers one of the most significant opportunities to achieve those goals.

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Shiloh Ballard


*SVBC is a 501(c)(3)
non-profit organization*

It is also important to note that the Diridon Area and Downtown must be even more aggressive than the rest of the City in achieving these mode shift goals. Downtown must exceed these targets in order to carry those areas of the City where walking, biking, and public transit are less possible. Downtown is where high mode shift is realistic and this is where we must double down on all methods of reducing San Jose's car-centric, outdated, prehistoric thinking.

SVBC would also like to highlight the work of professional staff in the Department of Transportation. These committed public servants have worked thoughtfully with stakeholders to put appropriate transportation improvements in place. And while SVBC doesn't agree that the Plan needs as much parking and capacity for cars as is outlined, we also understand why the Plan is as it is. **That said, we want to emphasize that less parking and street space for cars, not more, is warranted given the reasoning outlined above.** Neighboring businesses ought to view their role as that of a City partner working to achieve the General Plan's vision, a vision where one is not required to own a car in order to achieve economic mobility.

Thank you to the City for working so hard to move this plan forward. We encourage the City Council's support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shiloh Ballard". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Shiloh Ballard
Executive Director
Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition



SPUR

San Francisco | San Jose | Oakland

May 21, 2021

San José City Council
City of San José
200 E. Santa Clara Street
San José CA 95113

Subject: Item 10.2 - Downtown West Mixed Use Development

Dear Mayor Liccardo, Vice Mayor Jones and Councilmembers:

SPUR believes strongly in San José and embraces a dynamic, forward-looking vision for the city that reinforces downtown as its economic and social hub. Downtown development is not only an opportunity to grow San José's jobs base and housing supply, but also to build a great city that provides economic opportunity, cultural amenities and open spaces and recreational areas that directly benefit all residents and improve our quality of life.

To that end, we have supported the partnership between the City of San José and Google from its inception. The project that has emerged is a critical step in bringing to fruition the City's vision of a large, world-class, fully integrated and transit-oriented mixed-use development in our city center.

The Downtown West Mixed-Use Plan, accompanying Design Standards and Guidelines, and Community Benefits Agreement include many of the policy recommendations SPUR has made and embody the dreams and aspirations expressed by the community over the past nearly three years and we support them.

The commitment to bring 4,000 homes and up to 30,000 jobs, along with a firm commitment to provide affordable housing, protect against displacement, and provide new public spaces, recognize the special importance of this place in our city and in the region and represents a leading commitment to equitable and sustainable growth.

Parking

While parking is often a point of contention, San Jose is already one of the most overparked cities in California. In our view, the Diridon Station Area must maximize access for people, not cars. Additionally, we have to do everything we can to ensure the success of these transit investments in downtown, not undercut them. Building on

precedents like LA Live, Sacramento's Golden 1 Center and Brooklyn's Barclays Center, the home of the Sharks could embrace its urban context as a value proposition, emphasizing public transit and its location next to Diridon Station.

It's absolutely possible for a mixed-use downtown environment and the SAP Center to coexist - and not just coexist, but thrive. Other Bay Area stadiums have embraced their local context and have leveraged the public transit and mobility options urban areas offer, providing free transit passes with ticket purchases, bike valet, smart parking, and innovative stadium apps. The question is whether the SAP Center wants to urbanize and lean into new revenue and operating models like other forward-looking sports venues and cities, i.e. Chase Center in San Francisco. With that said, the SAP center must be allowed to urbanize and modernize, and we trust the city will work with stakeholders to ensure this arena continues to be a catalyst for San Jose well into the future.

Environmental Sustainability

In our view, the proposed development reflects in its physical form, layout and design, a real commitment to environmental sustainability. These sustainable design standards and features should be extended throughout the station area and beyond.

We are also highly supportive of the use of recycled water for the project. As we mentioned in our March 24 letter to the Council, we encourage the city to carefully consider whether to ask Google to pay at least in part for an extension of the municipal recycled water main to their property, even if they make use of decentralized district recycled water on their property. There could be future occupants of the property who will not have the technical capacity to operate their own district recycled water system; having a connection to municipal recycled water will ensure that the property will have a long-term supply of recycled water. In addition, expanding the city's distribution system for recycled water is expensive, and the city should look to public-private partnerships as a key strategy to fund the expansion of the system. A more extensive distribution system for recycled water will allow other nearby property owners to connect to recycled water in addition to Google.

Community Benefits Plan

Having a development partner that has committed to making direct investments in sustainable and resilient infrastructure, transit- and downtown-supporting jobs, thousands of housing units - 25% of which will be affordable - complete streets, and inviting public spaces is too important to not put our full weight behind.

The work done by City staff and Google over the past three years has kept in view at all times the long-term social and fiscal health of San José and its people. As we grapple with housing affordability problems and displacement of low-income households and the need for greater racial equity and inclusion in our city, the proposed development serves

as a model for human-centered design and policies that elevate and reinforce San José's history, economy, culture and diversity and lead us toward a more equitable model of shared prosperity.

We fully support the Council's and Google's commitment to a Community Benefits Plan and creation of a Community Stabilization and Opportunities Pathways Fund that includes funding for affordable housing, displacement prevention and community stabilization programs, educational opportunities and job training.

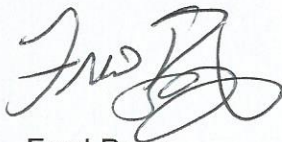
Equitable and Sustainable Urbanism

While Silicon Valley is world-renowned for great innovation breakthroughs, such innovation has, unfortunately, yet to translate into the urban landscape and physical design of our buildings, surrounding public realm and associated public benefits. The Downtown West Mixed-Use Plan represents not only an opportunity to grow San José's jobs base and increase the supply of housing, but also to build a world-class city by delivering more equitable and sustainable development that includes ample green and open spaces, parks and plazas.

Great urbanism does not just fall into place but is created through policies that set a high bar and development partners who are willing to meet the challenge. We called on the Council to be diligent in holding Google as well as all future development within the Diridon Station Area to the most ambitious principles of equity, smart growth and great urban design.

The Downtown West Mixed-Use Plan and Design Standards and Guidelines meet and surpass our expectations and the community can be proud of the project that is being proposed. It is responsive to community input, needs, priorities and visions and represents exactly the kind of development proposal we had hoped to see.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fred Buzo", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Fred Buzo
San José Director
SPUR



WORKING PARTNERSHIPS USA



Building
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5/21/2021

Mayor Liccardo and Members of the City Council
City of San Jose
200 E. Santa Clara St.
San Jose, CA 95113

Re: Item 10.2, Downtown West Mixed-Use Plan

Dear Mayor Liccardo and Councilmembers:

On behalf of Silicon Valley Rising, the South Bay AFL-CIO Labor Council and Working Partnerships USA, we would like to strongly endorse Google's Downtown West Project. Google and the City of San Jose have agreed to a Development Agreement for the Downtown West project that could put \$154.8 million into a community fund grounded in racial justice, and governed by grassroots leaders. This is the biggest community benefits fund of its kind, and the first to empower communities of color with the authority to direct tens of millions towards preventing displacement and creating economic opportunity for local residents.

This comes in addition to commitments by Google creating a path for thousands of workers to good family-supporting union jobs building and running their proposed Downtown West campus and supporting thousands of affordable homes for San José families between the project and Google's existing Affordable Housing Fund to help offset tech's role in our housing crisis.

This agreement is the result of four years of organizing. It happened because residents came out to town hall meetings back in 2017 and shared their hopes and needs, signed onto our community vision for the project, marched with us through downtown and at Google's headquarters, emailed City leaders and testified at City Council meetings, and so much more. Together, we made clear that the project must not destabilize our communities. Together with UNITE HERE Local 19, SEIU USWW, Teamsters, Latinos United for a New America, PACT, Sacred Heart Community Services, Law Foundation of Silicon Valley, Affordable Housing Network, SOMOS Mayfair and the Fight for \$15, we organized to ensure this project would address the communities greatest concerns and needs.

Google's team and City leaders listened. They've worked with our coalition of housing advocates, community organizations, and labor groups to find solutions to the community's greatest concerns and to jointly design this grassroots-governed community fund to tackle the root causes of our displacement crisis and to give the most impacted power over decisions. We collaborated to devise a process to review community benefit funds across the country, to consider best practices, to work with community members to reflect on a governance model that would intentionally address a history of racial, economic and political inequality.

The process of working together, community leaders together with Google and City staff to address the impacts of development on our communities is one that the City and other developers should seek to emulate, ensuring that as the City considers financially valuable land use changes which could have direct and indirect impacts on working families, we develop the necessary processes to capture more of this value for the public to address the potential impacts on neighborhoods experiencing the greatest pressures of displacement.

The fund will be governed by a 13-member Community Committee that reflects the diversity of San José and will have the final say on funding solutions:

- At least five members must have personal lived experience with the root causes of displacement, including two from the eastside and one from downtown.
- The other eight will have expertise fighting racial injustice in areas like housing, workers' rights, education, and small business.

The fund will focus on undoing racial inequity in neighborhoods experiencing displacement on the top priorities identified by our community:

- Stable housing: Preserving affordable homes, funding legal aid and tenant organizing, and piloting new ownership models where our homes belong to our community rather than private corporations.
- Economic opportunity: Providing pathways to good jobs for local residents of all ages and backgrounds, from early childhood education, to apprenticeships in careers like construction and IT, to help founding small businesses.

When we started on this journey, we said we wanted this project to be a new model for how the tech sector can develop without displacement. This agreement gives the communities most at risk real power over resources and together with the commitments creating a path to thousands of good union jobs and affordable housing, we're creating that new model. By listening to community and labor leaders, working together to design solutions to the community's biggest concerns, and giving power to those most impacted, Google's Downtown West project sets a new standard for future developments in San Jose.

While it has been a long journey to get where we are, this only shows that when we come together and organize as a community, we win.

Regards,

Jean Cohen

Executive Officer, South Bay AFL-CIO Labor Council

Maria Noel Fernandez

Campaign Director, Silicon Valley Rising

Derecka Mehrens

Executive Director, Working Partnerships USA

David Bini

Executive Officer, Santa Clara & San Benito Counties Building & Construction Trades Council

Opinion: Google's Downtown West provides new urban vision for San Jose

One question that will come to define the cities of tomorrow: Do you want to be there, or do you have to be there?



Concept drawing of gateway area of Google's Downtown West development in San Jose.

By [AHMAD THOMAS](#) |

PUBLISHED: May 22, 2021 at 5:00 a.m. | UPDATED: May 23, 2021 at 5:15 a.m.

With the unanimous approval of the San Jose Planning Commission last month, Google's Downtown West development took a major step forward. This week, with [the signing of Senate Bill 7](#), helping to speed along projects like this, Gov. Gavin Newsom moved the project's prospects along — both further and faster. Now, this Tuesday, at the vote by the City Council, we stand at the precipice of possibility and potential.





Ahmad Thomas is CEO of the Silicon Valley Leadership Group. (Dai Sugano/Bay Area News Group)

In another time, the council approving a proposal for thoughtful development to bring an estimated 25,000 jobs would simply be a smart decision. Especially given a recent poll, commissioned by the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, that found 87% of San Jose voters support the jobs provided by the development, and 7 out of 10 voters support the project overall. But right now, it's more than just a smart move.

As we prepare for life post-COVID-19, it's a critical one.

The world of cities and urban infrastructure is evolving quickly. Even faster are the priorities for what matters in our lives — both on a public level and on a personal one. In an environment with the proven portability of remote work for more Americans than ever before, increasingly people are considering how — and if — the places they live make their lives better.

Which means we're also evolving away from the old definitions and delineations for the future of cities. There's now just one operative question that will come to define the cities of tomorrow: Do you *want* to be there, or do you *have* to be there?

We read about the impending death of our great American cities in ever-expanding think pieces. But here's my counter: Cities that people *want* to live and work in will not only survive but thrive post-COVID-19 like never before. And the cities that don't make the effort at true placemaking, well, they may eventually become just a stopover. They'll become somewhere just along the way ... to a place you *want* to go.

Luckily, Downtown West is an extraordinary plan for somewhere people do want to be. It's an open, inclusive vision for an urban San Jose that people will want to come to — for work and for play — and to proudly call their home. It builds on all the elements and diverse cultures that make our home great, and it gives it an even bigger canvas — one with more room for arts, nightlife and recreation.

Created through a process of engagement and innovative design, Google has presented something unique. It goes further than anything ever tried in San Jose. The company has proposed thoughtful, transit-oriented development grounded in equity and backed up with investments to generate shared value. It has committed to San Jose during an unprecedented pandemic. It has managed to establish a new infrastructure development framework that catalyzes construction into community. Put simply: Google did the work.

Now it's time for us to do ours.

The City Council should approve this extraordinary investment in our city and let the revitalization of our downtown begin. In truth, no one can say for sure what our common post-COVID-19 world will look like. What we can say for certain is that today's world offers many people more workable choices about where they can call home. Let's support a plan that says we're a place where that next great thing can happen — where we expand the opportunity, equity and livability of what San Jose can be.

Let's choose to create a place where people choose San Jose.

Ahmad Thomas is CEO of the Silicon Valley Leadership Group.



Exclusive: New poll finds most San Joseans support massive Google campus

by Lloyd Alaban MAY 21, 2021



Diridon Station in downtown San Jose is at the center of massive redevelopment plans, which includes Google's proposed megacampus. File photo.

Days before San Jose lawmakers are expected to approve Google's plan to build a massive campus downtown, a new poll shows a majority of San Joseans support it.

A poll sponsored by the [Silicon Valley Leadership Group](#), a prominent tech-driven trade association, shows 70% of voters surveyed support the project overall. When asked about specific aspects of the project—the largest development in San Jose's history—respondents most strongly supported that it will bring 25,000 new jobs to the city, provide 15 acres of parks and open space, and invest \$30 million in downtown transportation improvements.

The poll was conducted by Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz and Associates and surveyed 819 randomly-selected voters. They were contacted via phone and online surveys from May 11 to May 16. The survey, which included interviews in English, Spanish and Vietnamese, has a 3.5% margin of error.

Google is a member company of Silicon Valley Leadership Group.

In 2019, Google first [proposed a draft](#) of the plan that would eventually become the [Google Downtown West project](#), the tech giant's expansion into downtown San Jose. The project spans 80 acres near Diridon Station downtown and features 7.3 million square feet of office space, 4,000 housing units, 15 acres of parks and a 30,000-50,000-square foot community center. It also boasts 500,000 square feet for retail, cultural, education and arts uses. A quarter of the housing units in the area will be affordable.

On Tuesday, San Jose lawmakers are expected approve the project's development agreement and mixed-use plan.

Figure 1: Voter Familiarity with Downtown West

First, how familiar are you with the proposed Google development in downtown San José?

Familiarity	Percent of Voters
Total Familiar	60%
Very Familiar	19%
Somewhat Familiar	41%
Not Familiar	37%

Survey results courtesy FM3 Research.

The poll also found many San Joseans are keeping tabs on the project. It shows 60% of those surveyed are familiar with the project, including 19% who said they're "very familiar." The results show 41% are "somewhat familiar" and 37% of those surveyed are not familiar with Google's plans.

"I think people are excited about the revitalization of a city they already love and a downtown they're rooting for," said Jason Baker, senior vice president of transportation, health and housing at the Silicon Valley Leadership Group. "They see the potential in this area and, right now, we all feel like we're living in a time where change for the better is possible."

Pollsters also asked San Joseans what specific components of the massive project they support. Every element received 75% or more support with options ranging from the new affordable housing units to 25,000 new jobs, transportation improvements and a fund to curb displacement.

"In a way, it's all part of the fact that this won't feel like a big tech campus dropped in the middle of the city," Baker said. "It will feel like a thriving, interesting, community-focused downtown that happens to be where people work."

Next, Google and the City of San José recently announced a proposed development agreement for this project. I am going to read you some specific elements of the proposed development agreement. After hearing each one, please tell me if you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose that element of the project.

Project Element	Total Support	Total Oppose
Providing 25,000 new jobs in San José	87%	9%
Providing 15 acres of parks and open space	82%	13%
Providing \$30 million for transportation improvements in the downtown area	80%	14%
Investing \$180 million in affordable housing in San José	78%	15%
Supporting 4,000 new housing units, including affordable housing	77%	16%
Empowering community members to make decisions about specifically how the 150-million-dollar community fund would be invested	75%	17%
Creating a community fund of over \$150 million that would be focused on <u>minimizing</u> displacement of existing residents due to rising costs, and <u>maximizing</u> economic opportunities for local youth and adults	75%	18%

Survey results courtesy FM3 research.

Some land use experts are not surprised by the poll's favorable results more than three years after the tech giant first set its sights on San Jose.

"Google is a Silicon Valley-based international brand that has long ties to the Bay Area," said Bob Staedler, principal at the consultancy Silicon Valley Synergy and columnist for San José Spotlight. "Google is coming in as a neighbor, as a corporate citizen to San Jose."

Over the past year, the project has faced concerns about gentrification and high rents in the area. In response, Google launched a \$200 million community benefits fund to provide grants for programs serving low-income residents, address the causes of displacement and help preserve affordable housing in the area.

Google Downtown West has already cleared several hurdles, including a unanimous recommendation from the city's Planning Commission.

"Google didn't just listen and nod their head and get paid," Staedler said of the community benefits plan. "They actually made changes to the plan. ... It's a win-win."



A look at Google's proposed land uses for its massive development in downtown San Jose. Photo courtesy of Google.

Still, one of the most **vocal opponents** of the project is the San Jose Sharks, whose home arena, the SAP Center, is just a few hundred feet away from Google Downtown West. The Sharks claim the project could force them **out of San Jose** because of traffic, street closures and a shortage of parking caused by development. Team officials are demanding the city nearly **double the parking spots** in the plan to 4,800. The Santa Clara County Airport Land Use Commission is also opposed, **citing concerns about building heights** in the airport's path.

The City Council needs a two-thirds majority vote in favor of the plan Tuesday to override the airport commission's rejection.

State and local officials at a **news conference** Thursday said the new Google development is expected to bring 5,700 prevailing wage construction jobs. Gov. Gavin Newsom joined San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo and other elected officials to announce the signing of Senate Bill 7, which will expedite any housing development's environmental review process.

"I'm really grateful that Google stepped in right away, working with the mayor and the City Council and asking, 'What are you going to bring to the table if we say yes to you coming into our community?'" Assemblymember Ash Kalra said early Thursday. "They (Google) not only responded to the community, but they responded to the community in a way no other company has in the history of this county."

Baker said the city and Google have listened to each other's demands and included voices from business owners, labor leaders and nearby residents. It's the reason why he said 7 out of 10 people support the project.

"It's hard to get 70% of folks to agree on anything, let alone to proactively support something," Baker said. "If other companies follow this lead, San Jose will be ready for even more great projects to come."

Contact Lloyd Alaban at lloyd@sanjosespotlight.com or follow [@lloydalaban](https://twitter.com/lloydalaban) on Twitter.

BUSINESS

Google, San Jose Release Long-awaited Development Agreement for Downtown West Project

By *Janice Bitters* @janicebitters/ April 6, 2021

19



GOOGLE ME Mountain View tech giant Google will know next month whether it can build a new mixed-use campus in San Jose as council members weigh the costs versus the tempting benefits. (Courtesy of Google)

Google and San Jose on Tuesday released a long-awaited [proposed development agreement](#) for a massive, mixed-use office campus that could rise around Diridon Station.

The **agreement outlines** the campus, called Downtown West, that Google wants to build in the 10th largest city in the country, but also the \$200 million community benefits package and about \$1 billion in other “features” it’s willing to offer up in exchange for the green light to construct the new campus.

The multinational tech giant aims to build about 6.5 million square feet of offices—though it is studying the impacts of building up to 7.3 million square feet of office space in its proposal.

Those offices, some of which could reach about 290 feet high, would be surrounded by 4,000 new homes, a spate of hotel rooms and 500,000 square feet of retail. All of that would sit within about 80 acres around the city’s transit hub that officials hope will eventually become one of the busiest transit stations on the West Coast where light rail, Caltrain, BART and high-speed rail would intersect, carrying 100,000 daily passengers.

“I’m proud that together with the City of San Jose, community, and local organizations we developed a project agreement with community benefits that focus on social equity and will help San José come back stronger from the pandemic’s impacts,” said Alexa Arena, Google’s San Jose development director. “Downtown West is a great example of a new way to approach development, where community is placed front and center.”

If completed, the mega-campus could employ around 25,000 people, according to Google. Those jobs, along with the tax dollars and the community benefit money the company has promised would offer a life-line to San Jose as it—and cities across the country—recover from the Covid-19 pandemic, Mayor Sam Liccardo said.

“This makes San Jose a national model for how we can rebuild equitably after this pandemic as cities throughout the country will be struggling mightily to address epic levels of unemployment and dislocation in their communities,” he told San Jose Inside. “San Jose is finding the path through this partnership and one that will pay benefits to our surrounding community for many years to come.”



A rendering of Google's Downtown West development along San Fernando. (Courtesy of Google)

Community Benefits

Part of that path includes about \$200 million in community benefits promised by Google, including a \$150 million nest egg called the Community Stabilization and Opportunity Pathways Fund. Google will contribute money to the new fund as it builds its project, contributing about \$21.2 million for every 1 million square feet of office space completed, according to city data.

The project will likely take more than a decade to build, but some money would be approved up-front if Google gets the final approval on the development from the city's elected officials, according to Google and city data.

As money comes into the fund, a third-party would manage it while a committee made up of residents would advise how the money should be spent, focusing on things like historically underrepresented communities, affordable housing, homelessness prevention or services and small business assistance.

The development agreement also comes with a promise to use local and diverse businesses to construct the project. Google also says it will gift the city nearly an acre of land ripe for affordable housing and build about 1,000 affordable homes in its own residential buildings.

"We are excited that Google's announcement today includes a big commitment to housing in the Downtown West proposal," Leslye Corsiglia, executive director for nonprofit Silicon Valley @ Home said. "As housing advocates, we hope this action serves as a catalyst for housing development in the ... Diridon Station Area, which has the capacity to add up to 15,000 new homes."

The tech giant has promised to host field trips, career days, and computer science workshops for students that come from underserved communities to promote STEM careers to students.

The development agreement is the result of years of negotiations, not only with the city, but also with community groups that emerged in recent years to tell Google what they wanted from a campus rising on the west end of the city's downtown.

A key request was around parks, public art and retaining some buildings of historical significance. About 15 acres of parks, plazas and trails would weave throughout the 80-acre development, according to the development agreement. The Diridon Area Neighborhood Group [DANG], a community led collective is happy about that.

"DANG appreciates Google's willingness to work with neighbors now," said Bob Staedler, a spokesperson for the group. "They've laid the groundwork to create a long-term positive working relationship with all area stakeholders. DANG also appreciates Google's contribution to new and existing parks and the programs that will benefit the broader community."



*Artist conceptual rendering, subject to change



A rendering of Google's Downtown West development. (Courtesy of Google)

A Long Way

It's been nearly four years since San Jose officials gathered in a parking lot near the iconic Stephen's Meats "dancing pig" sign to announce that the rumors were true: Google was considering a massive, mixed-use corporate campus in the city's Diridon Station area—possibly up to 6 million square feet—and it could replace or reinvent the industrial-looking backdrop they stood before that day.

The project, if it came to fruition, would be a boon for San Jose, promised Mayor Sam Liccardo and other city council members standing side-by-side behind a portable podium. But first, they'd kick off negotiations with the tech giant to come up with a series of agreements about the potential development. Nothing was for-sure, city officials repeated.

Even so, the buzz, excitement and—for some wary residents—dread the June 6, 2017 announcement set off hasn't let up, even in the middle of a global pandemic.

Since then, the project has grown steadily. Today, the office space alone that Google proposes would surpass the 6 million square feet the company reportedly envisioned for the overall development in 2017.

Now the question is whether it will be approved after almost four years of negotiations and an overhaul of the zoning guidelines and boundaries for the 262 acres around Diridon Station [that will also be up for a vote this spring](#).

San Jose council members are tentatively expecting to vote on the development agreement May 25.

Before then, residents will have several chances to hear the details. The agreement will be presented on April 14 to the Station Area Advisory Group (SAAG), the committee tasked with recommending changes to the zoning and design guidelines around Diridon Station.

After that, an April 17 community meeting will precede an April 28 Planning Commission meeting to go over the details of the agreement.

Read the development agreement on the [city of San Jose website](#).



A rendering of Google's Downtown West development along Autumn Street. (Courtesy of Google)

Janice Bitters is managing editor for Metro Silicon Valley. Email tips to jbitters@weeklys.com. Follow her on Twitter at [@janicebitters](https://twitter.com/janicebitters).

Google's downtown San Jose transit village project offers \$200 million in community benefits

Google Downtown West plan includes \$200 million fund for community benefits



SITELAB urban studio, Google

Autumn Street section of the Downtown West neighborhood in downtown San Jose proposed by Google, showing future buildings near the Diridon train station, concept. In a bid to get San Jose's final blessings on its broad downtown vision, Google has offered to pony up \$200 million in community benefits as part of its plans to build a transit-oriented village where as many as 20,000 people could work.

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SAN JOSE — In a bid to get San Jose's final blessings on its broad downtown vision, Google has offered to pony up \$200 million in community benefits as part of its plans to build a transit-oriented village where as many as 20,000 people could work.



The proposal includes money for anti-displacement efforts and affordable housing, two urgent concerns that have galvanized the community. Some previous critics of the project said the new proposal is a significant step forward.

“While working in collaboration with the city and our community to transform our western downtown into a vibrant urban village, Google has also crafted a new national model for transforming the relationship between tech and the surrounding community,” San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo said in an interview.

Google has proposed the development of a transit-oriented neighborhood near the Diridon train station and SAP Center that would include office buildings, homes, shops, restaurants, activity hubs, cultural centers, hotel facilities, and open spaces.



Gateway section near Water Company Building within Google's Downtown West transit-oriented neighborhood in downtown San Jose, concept. // SITELAB urban studio, Google

The details released Tuesday mark the first time the Mountain View-based search giant has outlined specific efforts it will undertake for the community, after months of closed-door negotiations with the city, including:

- 1,000 affordable homes that Google would pay to build on company-owned land within the San Jose project. Additional affordable homes would be funded through special fees paid by the search giant or by [Google providing the land for housing development](#) at sites near the transit village.
- A \$150 million community fund that would include programs to preserve affordable housing and fight homelessness. Also included are homeless services, education initiatives, workforce development and programs for small-business resilience and entrepreneurship.
- A 30% local hire goal for on-site construction, and a commitment to paying state prevailing wages to all on-site construction workers.
- Onsite field trips, career days and computer science workshops for students from underserved communities who have an interest in technology and technology-based careers. These would be offered once Downtown West is opened.



The remaining \$50 million in the fund would be spread throughout these other efforts, including local hiring, career exploration, and awarding design and construction contracts for the office buildings to local, small and diverse businesses.



Downtown West site plan, showing general locations for offices, housing, active uses, and open spaces. Office buildings are grey, housing is sand or brown, activity sites (retail, restaurants, entertainment, cultural, education) are purple. // Google

The funding package is “a major component for the city and for the community” to address concerns about the project’s causing displacement and exacerbating the housing crisis, San Jose Councilmember Raul Peralez said.

The city will turn to community leaders for help in distributing the funding.

“By putting \$150 million and real decision-making power in the hands of grassroots leaders in neighborhoods at risk of displacement, this project sets a new model for how tech development can keep families housed and lift the quality of blue-collar jobs,” said Maria Noel Fernandez, campaign director with Silicon Valley Rising, an umbrella organization of community groups.





San Fernando Street area of Google's proposed Downtown West transit-oriented neighborhood in downtown San Jose, showing buildings in the project near a light rail line and existing building, concept. // SITELAB urban studio, Google

"City staff and Google did a really great job at trying to balance our immediate needs with our future needs," City Councilmember Dev Davis said.

The community benefits package is in addition to \$250 million in public benefits such as park fees and transportation improvements that the city mandates, Liccardo said.

Separate from the community benefits package, Google estimates the value to the city of other features in the project will be at least \$1 billion. Among these benefits are a more walkable, connected city with multiple modes of transportation and transit, cutting-edge infrastructure upgrades, 15 acres of new parks and open spaces, onsite solar generation in Downtown West, no increases in greenhouse emissions, and widescale use of recycled water.

"The Downtown West project is the cornerstone to all development that will occur in the broader Diridon Station Area," said Bob Staedler, principal executive with Silicon Valley Synergy, and a representative of the Diridon Area Neighborhood Group, or DANG. "DANG appreciates Google's willingness to work with neighbors."

Google also will preserve several historically significant buildings and structures, including the historic San Jose Water Co. building, the century-old Kearney Pattern Works and Foundry building, and the "dancing pig" sign that is part of the former Stephen's Meat Products site.

"Every major US city would flip and subsidize heavily to get a jobs-housing generating development like this," said Mark Ritchie, president of Ritchie Commercial, a real estate firm.

"We are very lucky to have a generous Google in our midst. Everyone should walk that neighborhood to see how underutilized it currently is."



The tech titan says that it hopes to break ground on the first new buildings in 2023 and that it is aiming to launch construction of streets and other crucial infrastructure in 2022 if the city approves a project that will reshape a wide section of downtown.



Creek bridge and nature areas near Diridon train station in Google's Downtown West project in downtown San Jose, concept. SITELAB urban studio, Google

The San Jose City Council is expected to make a final decision on the development agreement by late May.

“Right now, what you have in that area is the Shark Tank, the train station, a collection of old industrial buildings, some businesses, and homes,” said Scott Knies, executive director with the San Jose Downtown Association.

“Downtown West is going to be a new community,” Knies said. “It will not be a walled-off spaceship. It will be part of the streets, it will provide open space, housing, transit, nature areas. This is the way a city is supposed to work.”

Yet even beyond the game-changing development aspects, city officials suggested that the community benefits are of the type that hasn't been seen in connection with a project in San Jose.

“Google's commitment to build thousands of units of housing and to ensure a quarter of them will be rent-restricted to enable real affordability is as concrete of a commitment as we have ever seen from a major employer wishing to expand its footprint in a city,” Liccardo said.



BIZ & TECH

Google's San Jose megaproject offers \$200 million in community benefits, 1,000 affordable homes

Roland Li

April 6, 2021 Updated: April 6, 2021 6:10 p.m.





An artist's rendering of Google's proposed megaproject next to Diridon Station in San Jose. Google /

Google plans to provide \$200 million in community benefits and 25% affordable housing at its San Jose megaproject near Diridon Station, a key step as it moves toward potential final approval next month.

The company is proposing one of the biggest projects in Silicon Valley history, with 7.3 million square feet of office space — more than 2 ½ times as large as Apple's new headquarters. The project, branded as Downtown West, also calls for up to 4,000 homes and 500,000 square feet of additional retail and other community space.

The project is on top of the Mountain View company's \$1 billion-plus investment plan for California real estate this year and a testament that remote work isn't halting the growth of some tech giants.

"I'm proud that together with the City of San Jose, community, and local organizations we developed a project agreement with community benefits that focus on social equity and will help San Jose come back stronger from the pandemic's impacts," Alexa Arena, Google's San Jose development director, said in a statement.

The community benefits fund will be shaped by the City Council's priorities and includes money for job training, homeless aid and small business support. Funding will be paid out during the construction of the project, which is expected to take over a decade.

San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo supports the project, which he said can be a crucial economic engine after the pandemic has weakened the local economy. The project is expected to provide \$74 million in one-time local taxes and fees and more than \$100 million in new annual tax revenue.

"The benefits to our community come in many different forms," Liccardo said. "They've committed in a concrete way to address our community needs."

He said Google's approach was a major contrast to approaches by other companies that have sought tax breaks and public subsidies for development projects, such as Amazon's second headquarters search. The Google project will also inject vitality into San Jose's downtown, he said.

"We're trying to build a downtown worthy of America's 10th-largest city," Liccardo said. "We have been a suburban community for decades. Google is giving us an opportunity to realize ... a city built for people rather than a city built for cars."

The project spans more than 80 acres near Diridon Station, where connections to BART and high-speed rail are planned.

The BART extension to Diridon Station along with Sunnyvale suffered a setback when funding was removed from the \$1.9 trillion federal stimulus. Liccardo said officials plan to apply for Department of Transportation funding this summer.

Silicon Valley Rising, a coalition of labor, faith and community groups, said the project will provide major benefits to the area.

"Google and the City listened to our four years of organizing, coming together and really collaborating with the community to develop a different kind of project by committing to the most affordable units in San Jose's history, good jobs for the people serving the industry, the largest community benefits fund our region has ever seen and a community governance structure," Maria Noel Fernandez, the group's campaign director, said in a statement.

The project has critics, including some neighbors who said in 2018 that it would increase nearby housing costs, leading to protests at a public hearing.

In December, the Santa Clara County Airport Land Use Commission voted against the project, citing the height of its tall buildings near the city's airport. The City Council and Planning Commission can overrule that vote with a two-thirds majority.

The San Jose Sharks said last year that while they support development, they are concerned with traffic and transit access. The hockey team wants the city to preserve or replace 4,850 parking spaces within a third of the mile of SAP Center.

A final City Council vote is expected in late May.

Roland Li is a San Francisco Chronicle staff writer. Email: roland.li@sfchronicle.com Twitter: [@rolandlif](https://twitter.com/rolandlif)

“Created through a process of engagement and innovative design, Google has presented something unique. It goes further than anything ever tried in San Jose. The company has proposed thoughtful, transit-oriented development grounded in equity and backed up with investments to generate shared value. It has committed to San Jose during an unprecedented pandemic. It has managed to establish a new infrastructure development framework that catalyzes construction into community. Put simply: Google did the work.”

-- Ahmad Thomas, CEO, Silicon Valley Leadership Group

The Mercury News, May 22 (Ahmad Thomas, OpEd)

[Google's Downtown West provides new urban vision for San Jose](#)

“...Google has ‘set the bar for community outreach’ and for truly taking thoughts and concerns from the community into consideration when crafting its overall plan.”

-- Bob Staedler, Representative, Diridon Area Neighborhood Group

The Mercury News, May 22 (Maggie Angst)

[Google searches for San Jose's final OK to launch major downtown transformation](#)

“I think the end product is a really responsible approach to dealing with the impact of this type of development in a way that creates resources for the community, creates good jobs and as a result, has most stakeholders in the area coming to the city council on Tuesday to ask them to say yes to it.”

-- Jean Cohen, Executive Officer, South Bay Labor Council

The Mercury News, May 22 (Maggie Angst)

[Google searches for San Jose's final OK to launch major downtown transformation](#)

“While the Downtown West numbers are staggering – over 4,000 housing units, 7.3 million square feet of office space, 15 acres of parks, and subsidized spaces for non-profits and other local, small businesses – what stands out most is the commitment to creating some real affordability. The 25% goal for affordable housing in the area exceeds the city’s baseline requirements and opens more doors than it closes for hardworking folks who very well might want to call this place home someday.”

-- Ray Bramson, Chief Impact Officer at Destination: Home

San Jose Spotlight, May 10 (Ray Bramson, OpEd)

[How to build a downtown best in San Jose](#)

“They (Google) don’t just listen to our concerns – they listened and took action”

-- Kathy Sutherland, Diridon Area Neighborhood Group

The Mercury News, April 29 (Maggie Angst)

[Google’s downtown San Jose transit village clears crucial hurdle. What comes next?](#)

“We hope other companies will look at this agreement as the bar for responsible corporate citizenship ... and we look forward to seeing this finalized as the minimum standard for future development agreements”

-- Kiyomi Yamamoto, Silicon Valley Law Foundation

The Mercury News, April 29 (Maggie Angst)

[Google’s downtown San Jose transit village clears crucial hurdle. What comes next?](#)

"Google didn't just say, 'Here's what we think is important,' and throw money at that. They sat down with us, we brought in experts we both trusted, and we came up with a really innovative community fund focused on housing and good jobs, grounded in racial and economic justice, and governed by people with lived experience facing these challenges."

-- **Maria Noel Fernandez, Campaign Director, Silicon Valley Rising**

Silicon Valley Business Journal, April 6, 2021 (Matthew Niksa)

[Google would provide \\$200M worth of community benefits under Downtown West plan for San Jose](#)

"Downtown West is going to be a new community. It will not be a walled-off spaceship. It will be part of the streets, it will provide open space, housing, transit, nature areas. This is the way a city is supposed to work."

-- **Scott Knies, Executive Director, San Jose Downtown Association**

The Mercury News, April 6 (Maggie Angst and George Avalos)

[Google releases new details of development deal for downtown San Jose project](#)

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[Google, San Jose Release Long-awaited Development Agreement for Downtown West Project](#)

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