

September 25, 2020

Raul Peralez, Councilmember

Dave Sykes, City Manager

Sent via email

Dear Councilmember Peralez and Mr. Sykes,


The presentation by the Planning staff at the September 16, 2020 SAAG meeting raised serious concerns about how Planning staff presents the DANG to the SAAG. It was very clear that it is their intention to pit the concerns of the DANG neighborhoods against the citywide need for more housing.

The DANG is supportive of dense commercial, market rate and affordable housing in the DSAP area. We have more affordable developments in our neighborhoods than the rest of the city. These developments went forward with the neighborhood leadership that we DANG members bring to the table. But this support was not unanimous in our communities. We are the leaders who have been speaking up for affordable development while enduring strong criticism from our neighbors.

The areas of concern for the DANG comprise only 4% of the entire DSAP area. The DANG is not asking for low density development; we are simply asking you to lower the allowable heights in the areas of concern to make it more compatible with the adjacent neighborhoods. Pages 47 to 53 of the Planning department presentation “did the math” and told the SAAG how many housing units would be lost if the heights were reduced, blaming DANG. This is gas lighting.

In fact, DANG previously presented to Planning our support for increased height limits in several areas within DSAP.

Page 66 of the presentation is the Planning department conception of where housing should be located. At the same time, the Planning department is actively bringing forward nonresidential developments within these identified housing areas. These developments will directly reduce the number of much needed housing units. We ask that the Planning department be directed to do the following:

- Defer consideration of nonresidential projects except Downtown West until the DSAP update is completed.
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- Determine the number of housing units that will be forever lost if nonresidential projects are approved and document the impact on the number of residential units in the proposed DSAP update.
- Send this information with a copy of this letter to SAAG members via email.
- Develop with DANG support, a detailed community outreach process for the DANG neighborhoods.

As longtime, engaged community leaders who have collectively volunteered thousands of hours to support our city, we will not allow the Planning department to publicly frame the concerns we raised as anti-housing. We are thoughtful leaders with experience and we have done everything to partner with developers and the City to bring positive change to our neighborhoods.

When we speak with Staff, they declare that they are simply following Council direction. It is time for Council to give new direction. Councilmember Peralez, we are your longtime leaders. We expect you to call out City staff as they unjustly malign us as a community coalition. We have a collective reputation to protect and we will not allow the City to present us in this light.

Sincerely,

Kathy Sutherland
Laura Winter
Edward Saum
Helen Chapman
Mary Pizzo

Bert Weaver
Sarah Springer
Harvey Darnell
Bill Rankin
Norma Ruiz

Mayra Flores
Kevin Christman
Jake Smith
Patrice Shaffer

cc: Mayor Sam Liccardo
Vice Mayor Chappie Jones
Councilmember Sergio Jimenez
Councilmember Lan Diep
Councilmember Magdalena Carrasco
Councilmember Dev Davis
Councilmember Maya Esparza
Councilmember Sylvia Arenas
Councilmember Pam Foley
Councilmember Johnny Khamis
Kim Walesh
Lee Wilcox
Kelly Kline
Nanci Klein
Toni Taber
Rosalynn Hughey
Timothy Rood
Lori Serevino, SAAG

Planning Commissioner Mariel Caballero
Planning Commissioner Rolando Bonilla
Planning Commissioner George Kasey
Planning Commissioner Jorge Garcia
Planning Commissioner Justin Lardinois
Planning Commissioner Pierluigi Oliverio
Planning Commissioner Deborah Torrens

League of Women Voters, San Jose/Santa Clara Carol Watt
League of Women Voters, San Jose/Santa Clara Gloria Chun Hoo
League of Women Voters, San Jose/Santa Clara Roma Dawson

Google Joe Van Belleghem, Senior Director of Real Estate Development
Google Alexis Arena, Senior Director of Real Estate Development
Google Javier Gonzalez, Government Affairs & Public Policy Manager
Google Ricardo Benavidez, Director of Social Infrastructure

Barbara Marshman
Jim Goddard, Sharks Sports and Entertainment
Alice Kaufman, Green Foothills