

City of San José
City Manager Office
David Sykes, City Manager
200 East Santa Clara Street, 17th floor
San José, CA 95113

RE: Google Downtown West Mixed-Use Plan and DSAP Outreach

The Diridon Area Neighborhood Group (DANG) reached out to the City of San José on April 2nd expressing concern about the community outreach process and the approval timelines for the Google Downtown West Mixed-Use Plan and Diridon Station Area Plan (DSAP). We received an e-mail that the City was “developing a more complete message about the change in plans.” The “more complete message” that we received did not include conversation with the community, but instead was just a data dump of three presentations and a survey, with the request that the survey be completed by the end of April. Posting presentations online without any way to comment or ask questions and then requesting response to a survey is a wholly ineffective way to engage with a group of engaged, passionate, and involved community leaders. We have other questions such as:

- When will the City respond on the strategy dealing with the deadline for AB 900?
- Will the City guarantee that they will not vote on any item in regards to Downtown West in 2020?
- Are the Downtown West and the DSAP amendment still tied together or are you going to separate them?
- Why hasn't there been any outreach in regards to the preliminary concept heights map?
- Will you please clarify as to what the community can expect and the exact process you will be following?
- When will the detailed milestones, such as the Downtown Transportation Plan, The Diridon Station Area Plan Amendment, the Google Downtown West Mixed-Use Plan, etc., be made public?"

The three presentations left us with more questions than answers. We held several meetings to try to understand the presentations and what they mean for the surrounding neighborhoods. The DSAP presentation caused the most confusion. The maps showing the proposed changes to the building height limits did not show any context whatsoever, such as existing projects,

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existing height limits, and entitled projects. We have been told that the preliminary concept height map reflects staff current thinking on heights.

As to the Parks and Transportation presentations, we have attached a series of questions that we want answered. They demonstrate both our frustration and our resolve to work to ensure that the developments make the community better and not deteriorate it for the sake of financial gain for the City of San José.

We are looking for leadership, who will step up and show the resolve that the City will do the right thing and not rubber stamp these processes at the last minute without any community outreach. The time to send out consultants to have informal chats has passed; we need substantive conversations with lead City staff and Council offices about this. As a sign of good faith, we have agreed to a Zoom call with DOT on May 28th. However, from this point on, any meetings requested will require an agenda and outcome goal in writing. Now is the time for our respective Councilmembers to become engaged and focus some time on the largest development project in the history of the Bay Area.

Sincerely,

Kathy Sutherland
Laura Winter
Edward Saum
Helen Chapman
Mary Pizzo
Kevin Christman

Bert Weaver
Sarah Springer
Harvey Darnell
Bill Rankin
Norma Ruiz

cc: Mayor Sam Liccardo
Councilmember Sergio Jimenez
Councilmember Lan Diep
Councilmember Dev Davis
Councilmember Sylvia Arenas
Councilmember Johnny Khamis
Rosalyn Hughey
Kelly Kline
Toni Taber

Vice Mayor Chappie Jones
Councilmember Raul Peralez
Councilmember Magdalena Carrasco
Councilmember Maya Esparza
Councilmember Pam Foley
Lee Wilcox
David Keyon
Kim Walesh
Timothy Rood

**SUMMARY OF COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS REGARDING THE DIRIDON
STATION AREA PLAN BASED UPON THE "DSAP PRELIMINARY CONCEPT
HEIGHTS" MAP**

Staff has identified this map as their current thoughts on development height in the DSAP area under the new FAA limit.

The DSAP Preliminary Concept Heights Map colors over existing developments and ignores finished or entitled development projects. This map must be updated to provide a realistic view of building height developments with special attention paid to how infill development will interface with existing neighborhood developments and the Los Gatos Creek.

Update the map to show all entitled, under construction/occupied site within and adjacent to the DSAP area with existing or proposed building height.

Including but not limited to the following locations:

- Esperanza (Bird and Columbia)
- Delmas Apartments (Bird and W. San Carlos)
- Museum Park (San Carlos and Gifford)
- Eden Housing (Auzerais and Delmas)
- Park Side (Park and Delmas)
- Monte Vista and Cannery Square (Auzerais and Sunol)
- 808 San Carlos (W. San Carlos and Sunol)
- Park Avenue Senior Housing (Park and Laurel Grove)
- Georgetown
- Cahill Park
- Plant 51 (The Alameda and Bush)
- Clinton Place
- Former San Jose Water Company and Trammel Crow site which is proposed to be added into the DSAP boundary

Update the map to provide development heights for locations adjacent to the Los Gatos Creek to ensure proper top of bank, shade and reflection setbacks.

Include the current building heights for properties that are just outside of the DSAP boundary to give a sense of how the proposed height will interface with adjacent buildings.

Provide the following requested information:

- What is the process to develop a final building height map for the DSAP?
- What guardrails will be in place to ensure proposed developments integrate with the existing development?
- Any proposed development will be going into an established neighborhood that has only recently been included into the expanded boundaries of Downtown –

Please clarify the development approval process and community outreach process.

- The current DSAP amendment process has been entirely staff driven. When will the neighborhoods and public be asked for their comments?
- What is the current city policy for determining the appropriate building height next to a single family residence? What are the setbacks? Provide information about appropriate building heights adjacent to single family homes and apply this concept to all sites to ensure a realistic concept height map.
- What are the best practices and/or guidelines for development adjacent to a historic district?

Recommendations:

The city create a working committee consisting of representatives from Google, 'Silicon Valley Sports and Entertainment, developers, planning staff and representatives of the Delmas Park, Del Monte and St. Leo's neighborhoods to review individual development proposals within the DSAP boundaries. The term of the committee should be at least 5 years.

The DSAP setbacks from SFR should adopt the transitional heights as illustrated in The Alameda Urban Village Plan, Chapter 5, page 56, and page 67

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS REGARDING THE PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PRESENTATION

After viewing the Parks presentation, we have concerns with the focus of the planned recreation goals with the Station Area Plan being a community center with no accommodations or requirements to provide park space for the thousands of new residents.

We have several questions for which we would appreciate clarification and respectfully request a thorough response from City Staff on the following questions.

1. Is the Community Center that is planned using the bulk of Park credits and funds?
2. How can Gardner Community Center be more available for community members in Greater Gardner? Why can't the Gardner Center serve as the Youth Oriented Community Center portrayed in the presentation rather than building a whole new center.
3. How will staffing and O & M be provided if a new center is built? This is a great concern to us as the Gardner Center became a reuse center five years after it was built. The current condition of the economy doesn't provide us with much hope that the new center would not be affected by budget cuts.
4. How will the Los Gatos Creek Trail (LGCT) connect to both the Diridon Station and to the Guadalupe River Trail (GRT)?
5. What can be done to provide meaningful and safe trail connections off street? For example leaving LG Creek in its culvert and creating an adjacent faux non riparian trail off street corridor that would join the portions of the existing trail to a creekside LG trail north of San Fernando.
6. If trails are counted as parkland, why is so much of the LGCT connection between Auzerais and GRT on the street?
7. Is the City relaxing its General Plan goal of 3.5 acres of park space per 1000 residents in this area? Without added park/trail acreage - what will be the resulting acreage per resident for the Diridon area? What is the minimum

amount of acreage of open space the city is committed to require developers to provide given the dense housing envisioned for this area?

8. How much true open space is there in the plans? Are paved plazas counted as parks?
If so, will the City create a designation that preserves their use as recreational open space and that will keep them from being developed in the future?
9. In light of our lessons from the Covid-19 emergency, in order to maintain and improve their physical and mental health, high rise dwellers require adjacent open space outside their buildings to exercise, recreate outside eg (informal sports activities, etc) and to exercise their pets. How much acreage will be devoted to these nearby uses?
10. Since 1992, with the adoption of the Midtown Specific Plan, the community has been promised a 5-acre park where the Fire Training Center currently exists. In public meetings the community was also promised, with the raised building heights, more land would be available to develop as open space. Our expectation is that the promised 5-acre park would be included in this plan and not be substituted with a community center. How will you address this significant community concern?

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS REGARDING THE DOT PRESENTATION

Sarah Springer & Laura Winter

A. Transportation: Diridon Integrated Station Concept

1. Not clear on this slide and what has been shown in the past is a car/pedestrian separation, not merely a crosswalk across Santa Clara Street
2. What pedestrian improvements are proposed for Santa Clara Street?

B. Transportation: Downtown West

1. Please define "highly acceptable" street design
2. We need to see detailed street sections of the various rights-of way
3. Is Cahill Street going to be one or two ways?
4. Is there any reason NOT to make Cahill vehicle free, especially as it will intersect with a protected bike lane at Park Avenue? There should be no private vehicles on Cahill Street between Santa Clara Street and Park Avenue.

C. Transportation: Diridon Station Area Plan

1. What is the Parking District Model? When can we see it?
2. How will DOT meet its contractual obligation to SAP Center to provide parking?
3. When can we see the first public draft of the DSAP?
4. How does this all work with the TPMP for SAP Center?

D. Transportation: Major Improvements

1. How will VTA Light Rail increase its speeds through downtown?
2. Why outside service lanes here as opposed to inside on Alum Rock Avenue? Won't this be confusing? How will these transition to each other?
3. Early public engagement on the Bird Avenue/280 crossing is imperative.
4. The Santa Clara Street exit off 87 is neither a hazard nor a bottleneck, save for the homeless encampments. Does the Sharks organization approve of this removal? AC Hotel? Justify this decision.

E. Transportation: General Plan Network Downtown

1. This is extremely confusing and a larger scale plan with more detail is needed.
2. What is the difference between "City Connector" and Local Connector"?
3. How will private vehicles not be prioritized from these types of streets?
4. Where are the other micromodalities besides bicycles?

F. Transportation Better Bike Plan 2025

1. Will the plan truly come to Council in August?
2. One of the reasons Vision Zero is failing is due to driver, rider, and pedestrian confusion, and this seems like more of the same.
3. Why is Delmas Park south of San Carlos Street not on the map?
4. Why is "Buffered Bike Lane" not on the legend and exactly what is it?
5. Please explain the difference between a bike "Boulevard", a "Route", a "Lane", and a "Buffered Bike Lane"
6. Does W San Fernando Street through St. Leo's become no street parking to accommodate a protected bike lane? How about a protected bike lane on Hanchett Avenue? What happens to the Cahill Park promenade if it is a bike trail?
7. Why are there no separated bike lanes downtown?
8. If Race, Julian and The Alameda have separated bike lanes, is there no street parking?
9. There needs to be clear signage/maps/apps for bicycles so they can safely navigate the new network; not all bike routes are linear.