

Colors, culture, and community that
make up the essence of San José

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Project Vision



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2.1 Project Overview

Downtown San José is marked by the confluence of the Guadalupe River and Los Gatos Creek, the historic El Camino Real regional corridor and State Route 87, and the rail lines that have transported everything – from the Valley’s canned fruit to its residents throughout the Bay Area. The Downtown West Mixed-Use Plan imagines a connected hub of activity that builds on San José’s cultural and ecological roots, and draws from San José’s multi-cultural identity, vibrant personality, and innovative spirit.

In 2014, the City adopted the Diridon Station Area Plan (DSAP). This plan established a long-term goal to create a mixed-use urban destination encompassing approximately 240 acres in Downtown next to an expanding intermodal transit station. Google is working with the City of San José and the community to help bring this vision to life. On 85 acres located largely within the DSAP Planning Area – slated to become the largest multi-modal transit hub on the west coast – Google is planning to develop a mixed-use, transit-oriented development as an extension of the Downtown.

The Project includes approximately 16 acres of open space in parks and plazas, including areas for outdoor seating and commercial activity, green spaces, landscaping, mid-block passages, riparian setbacks, and trails along Los Gatos Creek Trail. Additionally, the Project includes improvements to the public realm that optimize pedestrian connections to regional transit services in the immediate vicinity; enhance overall local pedestrian circulation; and improve cycling linkages to Downtown, adjacent neighborhoods, and regional trails.



FIGURE 2.1: Contextual Project location

- Orange shaded area: Downtown West Project area
- Dashed blue line: DSAP boundary

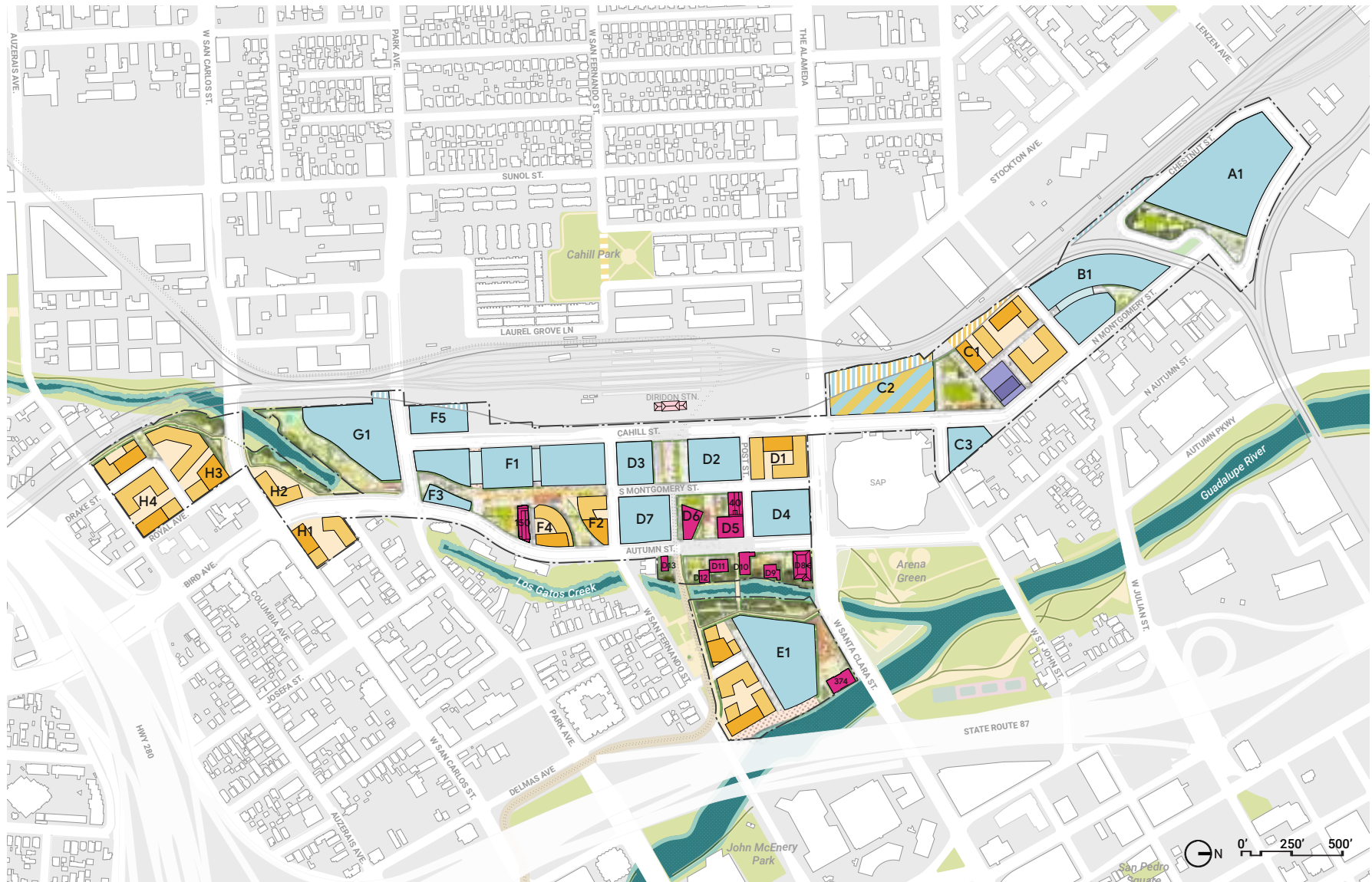


FIGURE 2.2: Illustrative Downtown West mixed-use plan

NOTE: These are illustrative uses and building footprints; for permitted primary land uses, please refer to Figure 3.3 in Chapter 3: Land Use. For locations of ground floor active uses, please refer to Figure 3.5 in Chapter 3: Land Use.

- Downtown West boundary
- Office
- High-rise Residential
- Mid-rise Residential

- High-rise Hotel
- Mid-rise Hotel
- Active Use

A Place Inspired by San José

Marked by economic prosperity, technological innovation, and growing aspiration, San José is a city of dreamers and doers. It boasts both a robust, natural landscape comprising the Guadalupe River, Los Gatos Creek and an abundance of open space, as well as a diverse cultural landscape of backgrounds, ages, languages, and celebrations. Born from the Santa Clara Valley, San José has long had an industrious and pioneering spirit. The city's history is marked by "Firsts" – the first state capital city; the first public university; and the first commercial radio station in California. The city has also been a leader in innovation, from pioneering organized agricultural labor in the orchards of the Valley of the Heart's Delight to being at the center of the tech boom that established Silicon Valley.

It is a city as much defined by its present-day ambitious spirit and lively community as it is by its culturally rich history. Downtown West envisions a place of San José — a mixed-use neighborhood that continues the city's spirit and urban identity.

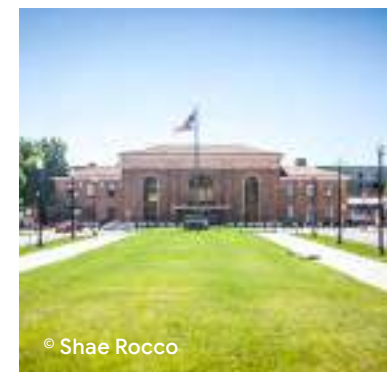


FIGURE 2.3: Images representing the culture of San José

Shared Values

Years of public engagement and city efforts in the Diridon Station Area culminated in the approved DSAP in 2014. In December 2018, Google and the City entered into a non-binding Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with an intention to “collaborate on development in and around the Diridon Station Area to aid implementation of the planned expansion of San José’s Downtown, the Diridon Station Area Plan, and the General Plan”. These documents are the foundation for the vision of a new, integrated district.

The MOU identifies shared values between Google and the City as well as planning objectives of Downtown West, that guided the proposed permit and vision memorialized in the Project Approvals.

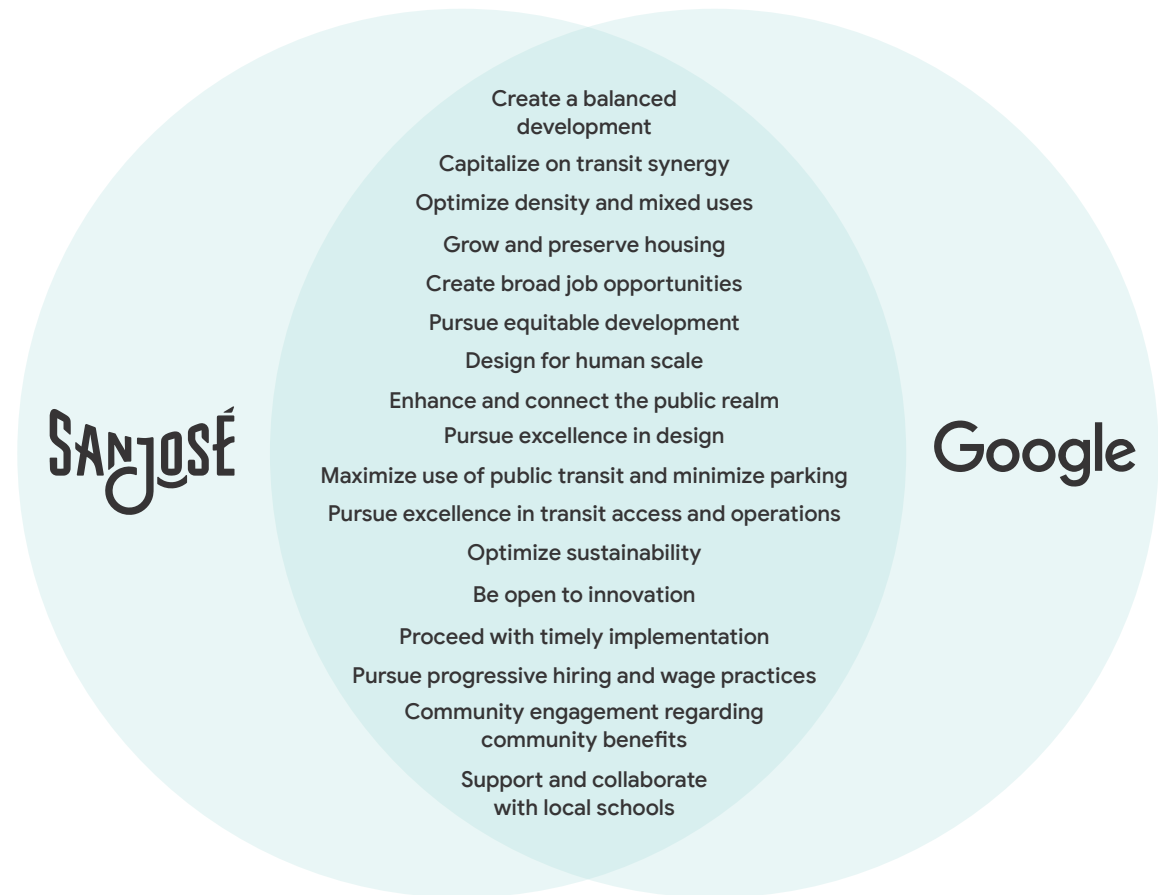


FIGURE 2.4: MOU shared values

2.2 Design Framework

Spanning approximately 85 acres, Downtown West is not singular — neither in identity nor experience. Rather, the Project mirrors the immediate and greater Downtown context in connectivity, public realm design, land use, massing, and architecture.

Downtown West is located at a pivotal intersection of rail, nature, the SAP Center, and smaller-scale residential neighborhoods. This mosaic of urban fabric presents an opportunity for new and varied connections. The design for Downtown West creates a living framework that will guide development and create experiences unique to its location.

The design framework is founded on the following components:

- A growing transit hub;
- Connected to nature;
- People first;
- Diverse and open;
- Built on context.

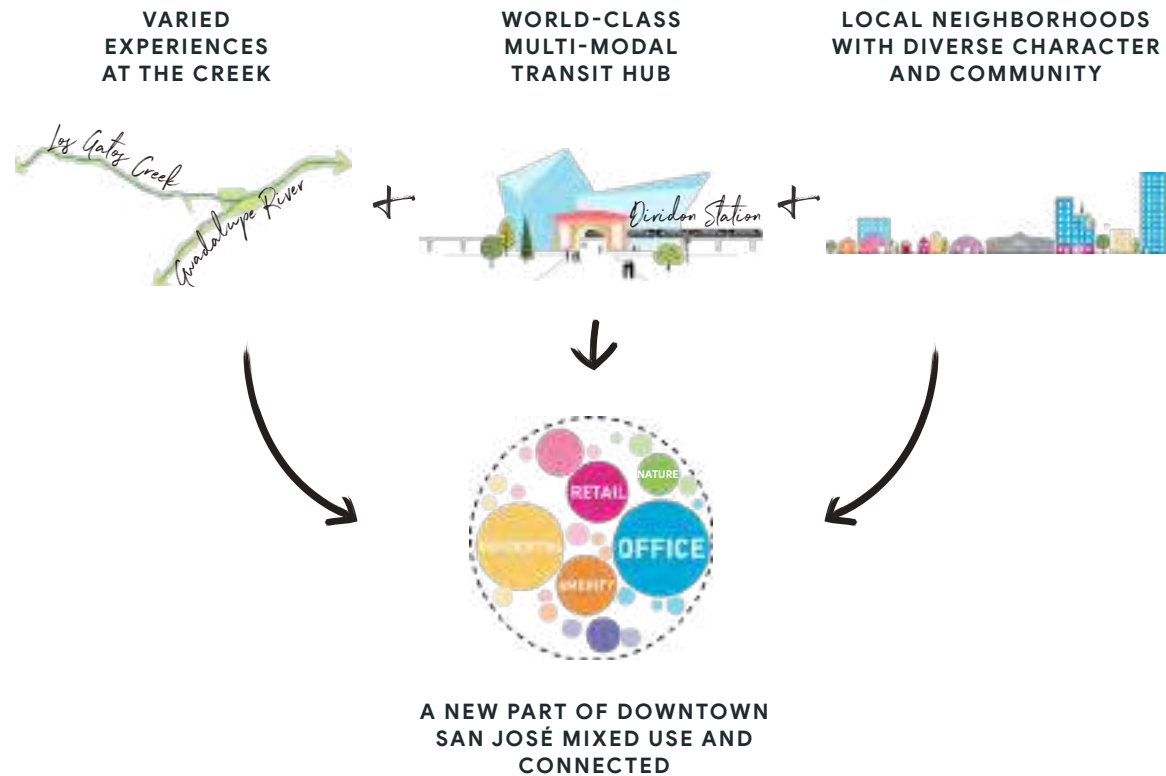


FIGURE 2.5: Downtown West experience drivers

A Growing Transit Hub

Located at the transit gateway and natural confluence of Los Gatos Creek and the Guadalupe River, Downtown West is an anchor to Downtown and neighbor to many diverse neighborhoods. The rail corridor is both a barrier and a major resource — bringing people to and from San José yet limiting connections across the tracks. Improvements to the Downtown West pedestrian, bike, transit, and vehicular networks serve to increase connectivity between transit stations, Downtown, and surrounding neighborhoods where gaps exist today.

Downtown West delivers a transit-oriented center with new jobs, residential units, and active uses. The variety generated by the mixed-use urban core next to Diridon Station further promotes transit ridership and activity in the public realm throughout the day. This document includes the design controls that establish Downtown West as the expanding, landmark transit hub for San José.

Cahill Street between West San Fernando Street and West Santa Clara Street marks the intersection of the Alameda, VTA, and BART at Diridon Station. A Transit Plaza sits at the convergence of these mobility components, marking the doorstep to the Project. This space will host thousands of transit riders each day, while surrounding buildings and public spaces will provide a place for civic gathering, and represent the postcard image of the Gateway to San José.



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FIGURE 2.6: Examples of multi-modal transportation in San José

Connected to Nature

While underutilized today, Los Gatos Creek carries incredible ecological value and presents an opportunity to connect people to nature. The Project mends broken links in the regional trail network along Los Gatos Creek. These trail improvements build on the vision of the Los Gatos Creek Trail Master Plan as a major off-street north-south spine connecting the foothills to the San Francisco Bay.

In addition to existing riparian corridor controls, the public realm improvements in the riparian setbacks for the Project revive the ecological roots of San José's origins near the confluence of the Guadalupe River and Los Gatos Creek. Areas along the creek that are today predominantly asphalt parking lots are converted into enhanced creekside ecology experiences, sun-soaked pocket parks between existing buildings, and creek overlooks.

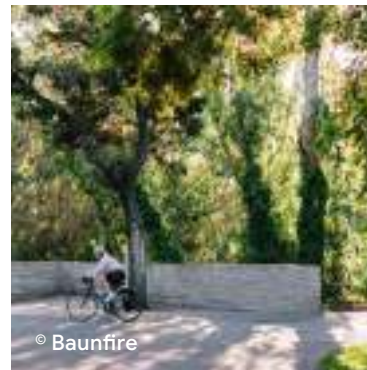


FIGURE 2.7: Images of open spaces near and within Downtown West

People First — Pedestrians and Cyclists

Downtown West centers around enhanced connectivity; locally, along priority east-west streets linking neighborhoods west of Diridon Station to Downtown, and regionally, completing a north-south ecological spine along the riparian edge that connects neighborhoods south of Interstate 280 to Downtown along Los Gatos Creek. Mobility improvements promote a place that is people-centric, not car-centric. In a world of evolving personal transportation modes, streets throughout Downtown West are designed with generous sidewalks, meandering off-street paths, protected bike lanes, and traffic calming measures, all of which support safe commuter and recreational movement.

Priority improvements are aimed to mend mobility gaps and realize the city's connectivity goals envisioned in the DSAP and Better Bikeways – an initiative by the City of San José to design streets that are safer, more convenient, and more comfortable for bikers and pedestrians alike. A small-scale street network, including the extension of Cahill Street from the north reaches of the Project to Park Avenue, enhances walkability, safety, and neighborhood connections.

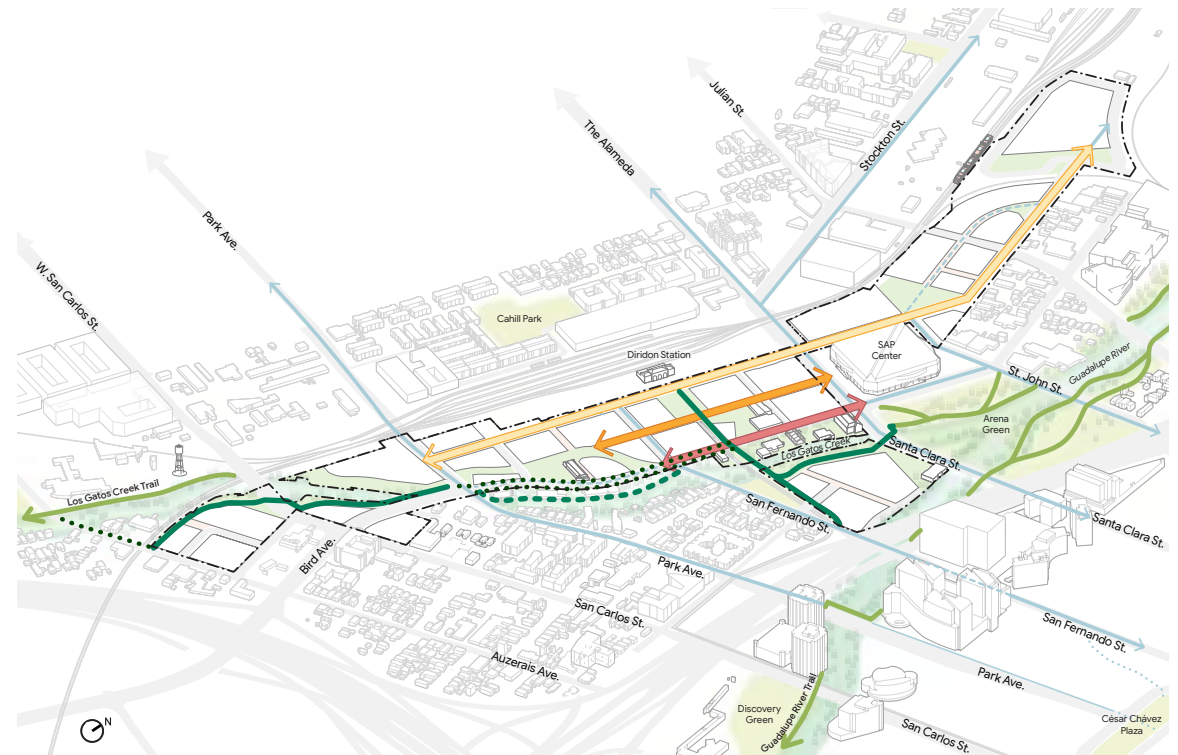


FIGURE 2.8: Enhanced connectivity network

- Downtown West Project boundary
- Existing trails
- City proposed trails
- Project trails
- On-street bikeway connections
- Cahill Street
- South Montgomery Street
- South Autumn Street
- Connections to adjacent neighborhoods

Diverse and Open

The Project's open space network creates new gathering points that range in size, character, and program in response to nearby context and immediately adjacent new uses. Downtown West has parks and plazas at nearly every major intersection, near each neighborhood, and no more than a block away from any location in the Project, creating a district rich in open space. This expanded open space network complements existing larger parks in the area, such as Arena Green, Discovery Green, and Cahill Park.

Active uses— which may include commercial retail, restaurants, arts, cultural, institutional, childcare and education, non-profit and small-format office space, and maker spaces — are distributed across the site with the greatest concentration at the center of the Project to strengthen the existing cultural links from Diridon Station to Downtown. Active uses are included in both new construction mixed-use buildings, and as standalone structures. Standalone retail, cultural or amenity buildings shown in Figure 2.10 include small scale activation hubs within reused existing structures.

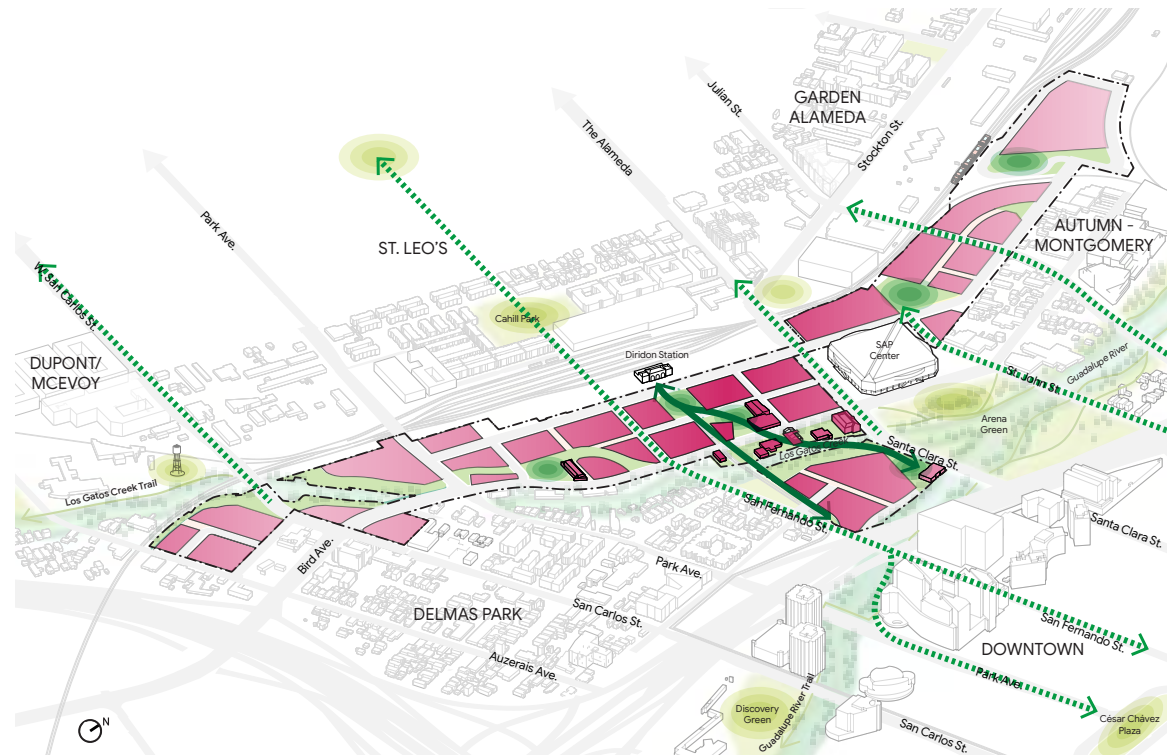


FIGURE 2.9: Open space and active use network

- Downtown West Project boundary
- Connections to adjacent open spaces
- Main pedestrian connection to and from Diridon Station
- Varying concentrations of active use areas

Built on Context

The Project's land use distribution aligns with existing neighborhoods; locating new residential uses along existing residential neighborhoods east of Los Gatos Creek, while office uses are focused along the predominantly industrial rail edge and adjacent to Downtown. Buildings with larger footprints are located along existing industrial zones and infrastructure, including the rail, underpasses, PG&E facilities, and the highway.

Over half the site area is devoted to residential, open space, arts, retail, and community uses to host a variety of people and activities throughout the day. Co-created programs and partnerships with local organizations, institutions, and small businesses bring the Project to life and ensure that Downtown West is not just for San José, but of San José.



FIGURE 2.10: Primary land use

- Downtown West Project boundary
- Open space
- Office
- Residential
- Hotel
- Active Use

2.3 Contextual Design

A Place of San José

To be a cohesive piece of San José’s urban fabric, Downtown West acknowledges and embraces the components of San José’s past, present, and future. Downtown West draws from San José’s multi-cultural identity, vibrant personality, and innovative spirit. The public realm and building design celebrates San José’s rich history in a contemporary way and embraces cultural diversity through programmatic variety.

Layers of Contextual Design

Downtown West is imbued with contextual forces on a local level as it seeks to embrace adjacent historic and natural resources, and at a regional level, as it strives to be a model for innovation within Silicon Valley. This holistic response to context considers orientation, views, scale, natural resources, materials, color, history, and events.

From broad vision to specific strategies, the DWDSG incorporates contextual design throughout the document. “Contextual Considerations” are identified throughout the Open Space and Buildings chapters to encourage integration of contextual design cues into the final designs.



FIGURE 2.11: Illustrative elements of San José’s past, present, and future



IMMEDIATE CONTEXT



CHARACTER ZONES



DOWNTOWN SAN JOSÉ



BAY AREA

FIGURE 2.12: Spectrum of contextual characters

Character Zones

As a mile-long site, the Project varies considerably from north to south and east to west. The framework creates four distinct characters, each with spaces and buildings designed to be site-specific and rooted in their unique context. The Southend, Meander, Core, and Northend have their own urban character, contextual design cues, and land use mix.

Southend

An immersive place of respite and learning

The Southend is set in an immersive landscape fronting Los Gatos Creek, with connections to the regional trail network. Neighborhood-serving retail and other amenities introduce new, convenient resources for the community.

Core

An active hub

The mixed-use Core is the Project's social heart located at San José's transit gateway. The connection from the Diridon Station to Downtown offers varied experiences: Retail-lined public open spaces within a mix of new and old buildings, a robust creek ecology, and cultural amenities that complete the link to Downtown. Cahill, Montgomery and Autumn Streets create unique experiences by serving as transit hub, main street, and urban-to-nature connector, respectively.

Meander

An urban promenade and place for innovation

The Meander is an urban promenade with outdoor pockets that create local spaces for families and friends to gather, taking full advantage of the surrounding nature, mix of uses, and ideal climate.

Northend

A place for creativity

The Northend draws from the energy of the creative community and strengthens connections to the rest of Downtown. Experiences range from entertainment and local gathering at the terminus of the St. John corridor, to activities focused on making, arts, and culture. Characteristics of industry, fabrication and making complement and coexist with the rail lines, adjacent residential neighborhoods, and the regional event center.

A Gradient of Experience

While each character zone is distinct in its adjacencies and influences, contextual influences extend beyond zone boundaries to establish an urban fabric that is woven into Downtown San José. Elements of ecology, industry, and greater San José influences will permeate across zone boundaries. The Southend, Meander, Core, and Northend provide a framework that balances celebrating location-specific inspiration, broader aspirational influences, and experiential continuity.



FIGURE 2.13: Character zones experience framework



FIGURE 2.14: Illustrative examples of character by zone

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