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Subject: Input on Item 10.2 (Downtown West) of the 5/25 Council Agenda
Date: Thursday, May 20, 2021 1:27:46 PM

[External Email]

Dear City Council,

I urge you to approve Downtown West and its Development Agreement to create a transformational, vibrant, transit-oriented neighborhood at Diridon Station. Below are some reasons why this project should be approved along with a few small improvements I'd ask you to consider.

Why Approve:

1. Vibrant, Mixed-use Neighborhood. The neighborhood has an excellent mix of homes, offices, commercial, & public space. With activated ground floors & an extensive network of public open spaces, I'm excited to spend time in this fun, engaging place. Google is looking beyond its own site to integrate with the surrounding area while increasing walkability through access to the Los Gatos Creek & Guadalupe River trails. Downtown West includes pedestrian-first blocks, bike lanes & trails which will slow down cars & create a safe space for pedestrians & cyclists. With Google's emphasis on celebrating art, local culture, & river activities weaving through Downtown West, it could serve as an international example of placemaking.
2. A Large Number of Jobs & Homes. Downtown West looks to provide 4,000 homes (1,000 of them affordable), over 25,000 jobs, & 500,000 sq ft of ground floor uses. This is the density suitable for this area and needed in our city.
3. Community Outreach and Fund. The Downtown West team has engaged in an extensive, often outside-the-box effort to reach out to the community & solicit ideas, while the pioneering \$154.8 million Community Stabilization & Opportunity Fund will support prosperity & equity in our community as the Diridon Station Area transitions.

Small Improvements:

1. Don't Increase Parking. 7,000 parking spaces is more than enough for the Sharks and this neighborhood. In fact, I think there should be less parking next to a walkable area surrounding the highest number of public transit options in the Bay Area.

2. Increase the Heights for Affordable Housing Sites. I'm concerned about the City's ability to build 800 affordable homes on 2.96 acres at the current mid-rise building heights. Based on dozens of projects Catalyze SV has reviewed in Silicon Valley, I encourage the City to increase building heights of parcels H1, H5, & H6 to 290 feet.

3. Community Benefit Funds for Transit Passes. I would like to see transit passes for contractors, service workers, & low-income residents. I hope to see the City explore purchasing VTA and/or Caltrain transit passes for low-income workers & residents from the \$22.3 million in the unallocated Community Benefits commitment.

While I'm excited to see this project approved, I hope these small suggestions are considered. I look forward to seeing Downtown West becoming a transformed new neighborhood that centers San Jose.

Thank you for considering my perspective.

Sincerely,

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