

**From:** [Hendler Ross, Stacey](#)  
**Subject:** VTA Daily News Coverage  
**Date:** Wednesday, April 7, 2021 7:55:07 PM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)

---

[External Email]

## ***VTA Daily News Coverage Wednesday, April 7, 2021***

1. [Google promises \\$200M worth of community benefits under Downtown West plan for San Jose \(Business Journal\)](#)
2. [Google, San Jose Release Long-awaited Development Agreement for Downtown West Project \(San Jose Inside\)](#)
3. [Google's downtown San Jose transit village project offers \\$200 million in community benefits \(Mercury News\)](#)
4. [Google's San Jose megaproject offers \\$200 million in community benefits, 1,000 affordable homes](#)

### **[Google promises \\$200M worth of community benefits under Downtown West plan for San Jose \(Business Journal\)](#)**

Google LLC plans to devote \$200 million to homeless services, job opportunities for local residents and other items as part of an effort to ensure its proposed San Jose project benefits the community at large.

The technology giant detailed its community benefits plan in a draft of its 30-year development agreement with the City of San Jose. The city posted the draft contract for the project, dubbed Downtown West, [on its website Tuesday](#).

"I'm proud that together with the City of San José, 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," Alexa Arena, Google's San Jose development director, said in a prepared statement. "Downtown West is a great example of a new way to approach development, where community is placed front and center."

As part of Downtown West, which will be located near Diridon Station, Google is planning to build offices, housing and retail space. If approved by the City Council and built out as designed, the project would bring millions of square feet of commercial space and thousands of housing units in what would be the largest development in downtown's history.

Included in Google's package of community benefits for the project is an approximately \$154 million "Community Stabilization and Opportunity Pathways" fund. It's intended to support programs such as affordable housing preservation, homeless prevention and homeless services. The fund's full amount will be paid out as Google constructs the office portion of its mixed-use village, a company spokesperson said. And assuming the San Jose City Council gives final approval to Downtown West,

Google will pay part of that amount up-front, the spokesperson said.

San Jose residents will be able to offer suggestions on how and where the fund's money is spent, creating a unique opportunity for the city, Nanci Klein, San Jose's economic development director, told the Silicon Valley Business Journal.

"Over the many months now in working with the community, the desire to have decision-making in the hands of the community has been repeated many times," Klein said. "We have done research, and we can't find a fund that does that."

The City Council will set the guidelines for the fund's priorities and nominate 13 people for a so-called "Community Advisory Committee," Klein and a Google spokesperson said. The committee will work with a fund manager appointed by the City Council to solicit grant proposals, screen applicants and allocate fund money. That money, as well as the other items in Google's community benefits package, are all intended to assist people who are of low income, Klein said.

Google's announcement also drew praise from community groups that have, in the past, been cautious or critical of the tech titan's downtown designs.

"Google didn't just say, 'Here's what we think is important,' and throw money at that," said Maria Noel Fernandez, director of organizing and civic engagement for Working Partnerships USA and a leader of the organization's Silicon Valley Rising program.

"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," she said in an email to the Business Journal.

Downtown West sets a new model for how tech development can keep families housed and lift the quality of blue-collar jobs, said Fernandez, the campaign director of Silicon Valley Rising, which represents a coalition of labor, faith and community-based organizations.

Mayor Sam Liccardo told the Business Journal that Google's community benefits package addresses affordable housing, community programs, and job and learning opportunities "in a more impactful way than we've ever seen from any other expansion of employment in this Valley." The package "is one piece of a larger picture that shows that Google is not coming to San Jose either as a savior or a supplicant, but as a community partner," he said.

It also serves as a model for how a tech company can work in harmony with a community, which flies in the face of other large employers trying over the years to squeeze "every kind of subsidy and tax break to humanity" out of cities and states, Liccardo said. The benefits package and other investments Google is making in San Jose also puts the city on a path to be the one to lead the United States out of the Covid-19 pandemic in a successful and equitable fashion, he said.

Laura Winter, a member of the Diridon Station Area Advisory Group (SAAG) and co-founder of the Diridon Area Neighborhood Group (DANG), said Google's outline of its community benefits plan addresses the SAAG's concerns on project-related issues such as the amount of affordable housing and new job and learning opportunities. SAAG is comprised of 38 member organizations appointed by the City Council to provide input to the city on land use, development, transportation and construction plans affecting the Diridon Station Area, which encompasses the Downtown West project site.

A representative of the St. Leo's neighborhood, which is adjacent to the planned development, Winter also said she appreciates the time Google has spent listening to DANG's concerns and committing to an ongoing dialogue. The group is made up of three neighborhood associations whose areas [meet at the doorstep](#) to Downtown West.

Some of the other noteworthy community benefits and items stipulated in Google's draft development agreement with the City of San Jose include:

- 25% affordable housing in the Diridon Station area. This amount of affordable housing is comprised of land Google is dedicating to the city for affordable housing, representing 600 future units; the use of [commercial linkage fees](#); on-site affordable housing distributed among market-rate buildings; and the payment of affordable housing "in-lieu" fees.
- A 30% "local hire goal" for Downtown West's on-site building construction.
- A more-than-\$250 million investment by Google to satisfy the City of San Jose's project requirements that's in addition to its \$200 million community benefits package. More than two-thirds of that money will go toward making at least 20% of Downtown West's residences affordable. The rest will be used to construct nearly 5 acres of parks and trails dedicated to the city as well as local transportation improvements.

Later this spring, the San Jose City Council will consider for approval Google's plans for Downtown West. The City Council should vote on it by May, Liccardo [said last month](#).

[Back to Top](#)

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

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.”

### **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 upfront 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.”

### **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](#).

[Back to Top](#)

## [\*\*Google's downtown San Jose transit village project offers \\$200 million in community benefits \(Mercury News\)\*\*](#)

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

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.

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.

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 Perez 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.

“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.

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.

[Back to Top](#)

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

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 two and a half 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 [over \\$1 billion 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 was 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 new vitality to 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 the vote with a two-thirds vote.

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.

[Back to Top](#)

Stacey Hendler Ross  
Public Information Officer

Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority  
3331 North First Street, San Jose, CA 95134  
**Mobile 408.307.2922**



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