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Downtown West Mixed-Use Plan

UPDATE

Visualizing Downtown West together



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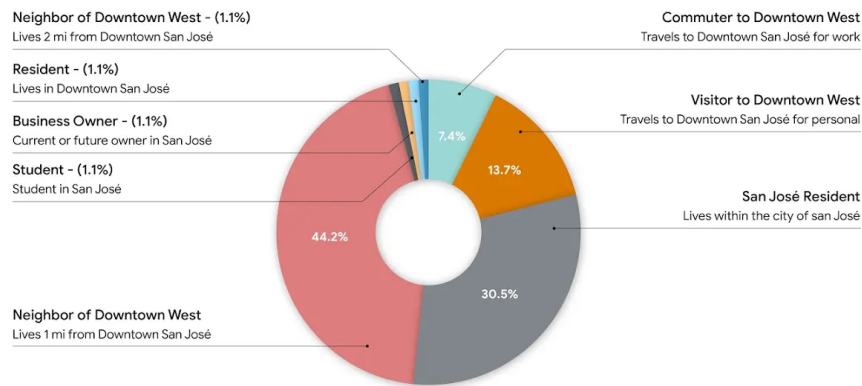
Dec 17, 2020

In early October, we released [draft concept sketches](#) depicting three open spaces in Downtown West. Alongside those sketches, we launched a survey asking a series of questions on each open space concept; how you see yourself in these spaces, and what activities, programs and amenities you would appreciate in these spaces. We're excited to create a place that will serve the local

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Downtown West Mixed-Use Plan



We received 100 responses which translated to over 1,800 new data points from the community—nearly half of which from people who live within a mile of the project— and that feedback will continue to inform our work building and designing a Downtown West that is a place of San José.

How we use renderings

In large development projects like Downtown West, renderings are a helpful tool to reflect the design intent and communicate the look and feel of a place. Renderings aren’t an exact representation, nor do they show final design.

By sharing and discussing our renderings and concept sketches, we hope to advance our conversation with the community around program intent, showcasing the range and potential in the over 400 [design standards and guidelines](#) that regulate the project’s future implementation. Your feedback helps us to refine our thinking around these public spaces, which in turn is reflected in our renderings too.

Now let’s talk about the themes and takeaways connected to the Gateway and the Creekside Walk.

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Downtown West Mixed-Use Plan



In the Gateway concept along West Santa Clara Street we asked: “How do you see yourself using the open space plaza?” The top two responses we heard were:

- "I see myself coming here to relax and people watch."
- "I see myself coming here with family for cultural events and attractions."

As the entrance to Downtown West, this is designed to be a welcoming gathering place for all to enjoy, embodying the city’s culture of innovation through ongoing programs. The Gateway could host seasonal events both indoors and outdoors—like the Tech Challenge with their design competition that engages thousands of students or summer concerts with San José Jazz and local musicians. There will also be room for other large cultural events and a flexible plaza for temporary pop-up programming and events.

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Downtown West Mixed-Use Plan



We also asked: “What do you see in the rendering that supports the goal of creating a space for immersive learning?” We noticed that many community members shared the same sentiments in their responses, highlighting their desire for a place that is, in their words, “*interactive*,” “*playful*,” and “*inclusive*.” One person expressed interest in, “*Native landscaping, interactive sculptures, and areas to learn through the experience of playing*.” We couldn’t agree more! We see the Gateway also as a place for creative learning, exploration, and incorporation of the area’s native ecology. In the Gateway there is an opportunity to create a welcoming environment that is family-friendly, vibrant, diverse and comfortable for people of all walks of life to enjoy.

A different community member said they’d like to see, “*Interactive features that make technology accessible to all people of different ages and backgrounds*.” We intend to bring inclusivity to all the public spaces, envisioning both formal and informal learning, playing outside and inside the ground floor with flexible space for community organizations.

The Creekside Walk

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Downtown West Mixed-Use Plan



At the Creekside Walk at South Autumn Street, we envision a place for environmental education moments and for experiencing ecology right in our own backyard—an opportunity for people of all ages to be immersed in nature and to get a reprieve from the urban environment. We asked: “What’s important to you about immersion in nature? What does it do for you and/or your family?” Several community members responded with a common thread that nature is critical as a quiet place for decompressing. One community member said: *“Immersion in nature, especially during the pandemic, has been absolutely vital to mental and spiritual well-being. I love quickly getting away from work and being able to hike or walk for 1-1.5 hours and seeing beautiful views while getting exercise.”*



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Downtown West Mixed-Use Plan

with other people. Now more than ever, many in our community deeply value vibrant and healthy green spaces, for their restorative qualities when it comes to personal and community health. In the rendering above, visualize a new connection across Los Gatos Creek and being able to stand on this bridge, immersing oneself in nature. In the foreground you'll see the intention to bring an educational component to this as well, with signage to educate visitors about native wildlife in the riparian corridor. In the background you'll see an area that includes local artwork, food, music and shops. As one community member noted, natural spaces keep *"the cultural legacy of San José being a laid back easy-going place for all types to get together and to accept one another."* We strive to facilitate this connection with trails for walking, educational experiences, and green spaces along Los Gatos Creek, creating a unique oasis in the urban environment.

Overall, we heard many overlapping and common themes in the survey responses, such as:

- Outdoor areas for music, art and food.
- Showcasing San José's local artists, restaurants and small businesses.
- A place to integrate all cultures, technology, art and people.

And with nearly 300 mentions in survey feedback, it's clear that art and creative expression are a strong part of what makes San José vibrant, and an important community priority for Downtown West. Community members overwhelmingly want interactive art and learning to be accessible to people of all ages and backgrounds.

We also heard some points of constructive feedback relating to mobility, open spaces and drawing in a representative portion of the community. As we continue to think about open space across Downtown West, we'll likewise continue to prioritize these community focus areas.

- Focus on bike circulation and parking throughout the project, and make sure it's

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Downtown West Mixed-Use Plan

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Illustrations are conceptual and subject to change

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