



Diridon Station Area Advisory Group (SAAG)

Draft Meeting Notes | April 14, 2021

Date + Time *April 14, 2021 | 6:00 PM*

Location *Zoom Webinar – Virtual Meeting*

Meeting Objectives

- *Provide a brief update on the Diridon Station Area engagement process.*
- *Review and discuss the staff-recommended Draft Development Agreement for the Downtown West project.*

AGENDA

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Meeting Minutes from SAAG Meeting on November 9, 2020
3. General Process and Community Engagement Update
4. Downtown West Development Agreement
5. Public Comment
6. Adjournment

ATTENDANCE

SAAG Members: 26 of the 38 SAAG members were present at the meeting (*please see the Meeting Minutes posted to the project website for the names of SAAG members that were present*)

City Staff/Presenters:

- *Lori Severino – Diridon Program Manager*
- *Nanci Klein – Director of Economic Development*
- *Rosalynn Hughey – Director of the Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement Department*
- *Robert Manford – Deputy Director, Planning Building and Code Enforcement*
- *Tim Rood – Planning Division Manager*



- John Tu – *Planner IV, Planning Division*
- Jose Ruano – *Planner II, DSAP Project Manager*
- James Han – *Planner II, Planning Division*
- Nicole Burnham – *Deputy Director of Parks, Recreation, and Neighborhood Services*
- Jessica Zenk – *Transportation Deputy Director*
- Eric Eidlin – *Station Planning Manager*
- Rachel VanderVeen - *Deputy Director, Housing Department*

Consultant Team:

- Dave Javid, Paul Kronser and Suhaila Sikand (*Plan to Place*)
- Matt Raimi and Diana Benitez (*Raimi + Associates*)

Public: There were approximately 70 members of the public present at the Zoom call, or via the local public broadcasting or YouTube Live.



MEETING SUMMARY

The primary agenda items were to provide a brief update on the engagement process and to review and discuss the components of the staff-recommended Draft Development Agreement for the Downtown West project. Nanci Klein welcomed everyone to the meeting and Dave Javid, from Plan to Place followed with approval of the last SAAG meeting minutes (November 9, 2020) and Agenda Overview. Staff then gave a presentation, followed by a round of comments and questions from SAAG members. Staff responded to questions and reiterated appreciation for the SAAG's time and input. The meeting ended with public comments and adjourned around 8:20pm.

The full set of meeting materials, including the agenda, presentation, video recording, draft minutes, and information distributed in advance, are available at: www.diridonsj.org/saag. Background information about the Development Agreement and [Frequently-Asked Questions about the Downtown West Project \(April 2021\)](#) are available at: www.diridonsj.org/downtownwestda.

SAAG Discussion

The following summarizes the SAAG comments following the presentation. Responses to questions by City staff are represented in *italics* below.

- For years the Sharks have supported the DSAP vision and we signed a letter of intent to work towards development. We were under the assumption that the development agreement would protect parking. We have provided comments to advocate for the preservation of existing access and parking and to protect the arena during construction. None of our requests have been taken into consideration, and we feel the development should not proceed at the cost of the arena. We cannot support the project as currently proposed.
 - *Nothing has changed the fact that the Sharks are incredibly important to San José. Our teams have been working to find very solid ways for patrons to get in/out of the arena. We value the Sharks as partners, so we can come to a place where we will all be happy. [See the [Frequently-Asked Questions about the Downtown West Project \(April 2021\)](#) for more information].*

- I appreciate the collaborative nature of this whole process and the commitment made to Transit Oriented Development (TOD). This aligns with the High Speed Rail (HSR) statewide plan to build housing around our stations. We look forward to continuing to work together to implement our project and others in the Diridon Area.
- Thank you to the Google and City staff for coming together to create a Development Agreement (DA) of this caliber. I am delighted and anxious to welcome Google and their development to my neighborhood. Google is setting a top notch standard for design, infrastructure, fee structure, and community outreach. I hope the City will require the same thoughtfulness and standard for all developers in the DSAP area. Generally, a project's feasibility is based on how strong the financial benefit is for the developer. We must remember the impact development has on our neighborhoods and ensure that high design standards are applied to the whole DSAP.
- Thank you Google for all the time spent walking the neighborhood and getting to know us as people and create an agreement that includes us in the design scheme. Hopefully other developers will be held to the same standards. I would like assurance that the community benefit funds won't get lost in the paperwork as staff and direction changes (e.g., different council members, mayor). How can we can guarantee City oversight for this fund?
 - *The DA is legally binding. There will be an annual performance review that goes to the Planning Commission. The specifics you heard are embedded in DA. You can read DA and exhibits - there is an index to help you. We share your concern about oversight. We need to make sure that as staff and council changes, the DA moves forward as intended. We appreciate the comment and it will be taken to Council. There is a lot of work on Anti-displacement including City policies, eviction moratoriums, and how the stimulus fed dollars are used. There will be an intensive effort going forward for that. Staff acknowledges that this project raises all boats and expectations of what is possible in San José.*
- I am excited to see this DA, and that the community would be the lead in Fund decision making. I am glad that the Fund is focusing on anti-displacement. COVID has exacerbated the existing housing deficit and disproportionately impacts low-income residents. We have seen 21% increase in the demand for our services (Law Foundation of Silicon Valley). Thank you to the City and to Google

for your hard work and looking forward to seeing this move forward!

- Thank you Google for committing to an integrated agreement. The DA offers a good start to parks and trails and I am hoping for additional money to be put toward surrounding neighborhood improvements if there isn't enough space within DSAP. I would like to ask the City to hold other developers, especially within the DSAP, to the same standards to which Google has been held, and to make sure the standards to which Google is being held are maintained, particularly for parks. Thanks to the Sharks, we really want to support them, and the surrounding neighborhood equitably, so the traffic management plan should consider impacts.
- Thank you to the City for listening and engaging in dialogue. Listening is key in this process. As we move to the next round, please involve the Community Land Trust, which supports community dialogue and empowerment. Please continue to center the voices of the people that are most impacted and draw on the living experiences of people. Those closest to the pain are closest to the solution.
- Residents are excited about this project and we have great support from City staff and the Department of Transportation. I would request that all parties consider that our impact zone extends outside of the DSAP boundary. For example, mitigating traffic intrusion issues, such as those on Laurel Grove and Bush. Let's make sure that these continue to be monitored and considered. We appreciate being heard and seeing the change occur.
- I commend Google and City Staff for their leadership and patience. This process has effectively integrated competing interests. We have supported the project from day one. This is a significant investment that will go beyond the City's benchmarks for housing and open space, and the agreement will be a paradigm for other cities. I appreciate the efforts to provide connectivity and the \$10M set-aside for transportation is good. We are a business focused organization (San José Downtown Association), and also understand the need to include systems that support business such as housing, open space, etc. Regarding the community benefits, we think job education, training, and employment opportunities are a priority. We have 30 years of supporting small businesses in the downtown core and can be a key partner in this business stabilization endeavor. Re-training workforce will be important as well as bolstering current business operations.

- San José State has been downtown San José's largest employer and largest landowner, and the City's public university, transforming students' lives in San José and Silicon Valley for over 150 years. SJSU would welcome Google's presence in downtown San José to further transform the city into a destination where all of us can work, live, play and grow.
- I want to commend the City and Google for driving this thoughtful process; it has resulted in a vast Community Benefits package. I continue to support this TOD.
- These development standards should be the norm for the City, they are top notch. Can we get clarification on the Mayor's comments that the depot is going to be relocated? I appreciate Google's willingness to work with the broader community, which needs to encompass all areas. I look forward to the next phase of community involvement.
 - *The historic depot is a gem - many people love it. To date, only conceptual work has been done, which shows us that we really need to rethink if the station can operate at the level it should and if we can leave it where it is. The next step is to get into much more detail and consider options such as re-location or keeping it in place. This study has not yet been done, but will be done in the future. [Note that since the meeting, the City has worked with Caltrain to add a response to this question in the [Frequently-Asked Questions for the Diridon Integrated Station Concept Plan.](#)]*
- I am excited for this agreement, and think the community benefits are well thought out. This proposal does a great job with community stabilization to help prevent displacement and focus on connections. Prioritizing community input as part of the process can inform future partners and will be a continuing resource. I hope we can work with Sharks and come to an agreement.
- I would like to acknowledge union members and working members who have showed up to make their voices heard. Google and the City listened and as a result there are significant benefits for community and working people including commitments to high-quality blue-collar jobs. The question I've had throughout the process is, will people who build and work on the campus be able to live in San José? I am happy to see that there's commitment to make that happen. Thanks for hearing our voices, we've created something special and it should be a model moving forward.

- Thanks to the City and Google for working with us and all surrounding stakeholders.
- We wanted to make sure decision makers were listening and that this project would be a model for the region and country. Thousands of people showed up and spoke up, and what we heard today is that the City listened. I echo that tenant education and organizing is critical and should be considered for allocation of the early money.
- We are excited about the housing components. The 4,000 new homes will help jumpstart housing across the area and create a vibrant neighborhood. I like that Google worked with the City to meet the 25% affordability goal and are excited to see 1,000 deed-restricted homes. We like the approach of combining some on-site units and dedicated parcels, so the City can reach deeper levels of affordability and bring some of the affordable homes online as soon as possible. Getting parcels early is a great opportunity to leverage Measure A funds and get homes for some of our most vulnerable neighbors. The community benefits package will be a tremendous resource to respond to needs of tenants, support preservation, and help counter displacement pressure – including beyond Google’s footprint. We are also supportive of staff’s DSAP Amendments, which will help us get to our goal of 15,000 new housing units over the station area. This will require ongoing work and continued community engagement to meet our goals. We are committed to staying involved as a partner.
- I offer strong support for the package outlined today. The community benefits package is a model for development in the tech sector for community displacement and creates power structures for those to have a voice in these strategies. This is an enormous opportunity to do something that hasn't been done before. It is smart to invest in anti-displacement activities. Providing access to legal services for eviction, and access to state/federal resources to prevent eviction is essential.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The following is a brief summary of public comments following the SAAG discussion.

- I am concerned that the Chicano community has not been articulated in these conversations. Silicon Valley Rising and SOMOS are not representative of Latinos. The property that Google bought from the city is not legitimate and historic redlining denied people of color access to this area. Mexicans were not allowed equal protection under the law.

- I appreciate the presentation and questions on the DA and city fees. I have reviewed the project and believe that Google and the City have been listening.
- I would like a better understanding of the Sharks' parking requests. It is great news if the Depot can be saved. I would stop planning for two high speed rails underground in Downtown West, they require more than 2 months to construct.
- I see a lot of large mega projects and this one is the cream of the crop. The SAAG, City staff, and community have put in a lot of work. The significant community benefits package, infrastructure, and affordable housing at no cost to the City is a once in a lifetime transformative proposal. This should be a standard, but may be hard for other private developers to meet.
- Having a union job with awesome healthcare has made such a difference in my life. Google's commitment to quality service jobs and affordable housing is appreciated. It means service workers like me can have a stable life in San José!
- How will the historical neighborhood going up in the Stockton Avenue area work? The future potential of high speed rail going through Alameda County is an interesting concept. Do the heights of buildings account for the southern flyaway area? I don't think those can be over 120-150'. Height has been an issue in the past. Regarding the East side, this is similar to the Vancouver downtown.

