



Board of Directors

June 15, 2020

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Kim Walesh
Economic Development Director
City of San Jose - Office of Economic Development
200 E Santa Clara Street
San Jose, CA 95113

Re: Inclusion of the Guadalupe River Park in the DSAP Boundaries

Celeste Angelich
Terry Austen
Mark Baginski
Sheryl Ehrman
Jared Gamelin
Helen Han
Dan Kennedy
Natasha Marwah
Charles McCarroll
Allie Ottoboni
Carl Salas
Katia Terentyeva
Carrick Young

Dear Ms. Walesh,

I am writing on behalf of the Guadalupe River Park Conservancy's (GRPC's) Board of Directors, membership, and staff to request that the Guadalupe River Park (GRP) and Trail be included within the Diridon Station Area Plan (DSAP) boundaries in the currently proposed boundary expansion. Specifically, the areas of the GRP from the Union Pacific Railroad alignment to the Arena Green and Confluence East at W. Santa Clara Street should be included as shown on the attached figure.

GRPC is the City's official non-profit partner in managing the GRP with a mission that provides community leadership for the development and active use of the Guadalupe River Park and Gardens through education, advocacy, and stewardship. We provide outdoor environmental education to children focusing on the environmental benefits and considerations of the river and greenspace. We manage extensive volunteer programs that engage the public and our partner corporations in stewardship of the park and gardens. We steward key community assets in the City including the Rotary PlayGarden, Heritage Rose Garden, and Guadalupe River Trail. Through our mission, leadership, advocacy, and programs, we aim to sustain and create a vibrant public space to serve the residents, workforce, can visitors to Downtown San Jose.

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The GRP is the largest available public space in the vicinity of the DSAP and has been described by parks staff, along with the Los Gatos Creek, as the "spine" of the parks system in the area. The Downtown West (Google) project is expected to include approximately 21,000 new residents in the Downtown West/DSAP area and new parks will be required per the City's General Plan and Parkland Dedication Ordinance to the tune of three acres per 1,000 residents. In addition, new residential growth in the greater Downtown will also access the park and trail.

Executive Director

Jason Su

The Guadalupe River Park and Arena Green are part of an existing trail and park system. Due to the proximity and opportunity the Guadalupe River Park offers to the DSAP boundary, and with expected impact to park use from future developments, it is imperative that the planning, investment, and collective development of the district includes consideration of the largest open space area already present. We agree with the Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services (PRNS) belief that there are opportunities to enhance what already exists as part of the re-envisioning of the DSAP and the proposed Downtown West project.

PRNS's goals for the DSAP area include construction of the Los Gatos Trail, community programming enhancements, improving and facilitating connectivity, and maintaining and activating trails and parks. Therefore, including the GRP and Arena Green in the DSAP is logical and supports these goals. In fact, their achievement is predicated on a thorough evaluation of future land use, non-motorized circulation/connectivity, activation, and programming of community

events. Considering these important resources in this evaluation and the planning process is imperative and we welcome the opportunity to participate.

Arena Green is a wonderful opportunity for enhancement and programming. It is located on Santa Clara Street - the main gateway to and from DSAP and the main accessway to Diridon Station. The trail provides the only off-street, non-motorized access to the area and its continued use supports PRNS' and the Department of Transportation's goals of enhancing this mode of transportation. The trail also provides access to the future Los Gatos Trail and the two systems must be considered together to facilitate the continued and future safe use of the trails.

Including the GRP and Trail in the DSAP boundary will also be the opportunity to better focus the building strategy around public life. Public art installations and including area history in the design of green spaces enriches our cultural identity, but green spaces are also necessary for the health and well-being of our community in ways that far exceed the aesthetic value. Natural ecosystems and open space are of benefit to the public not only in terms of environmental benefits provided in air filtration and reduction of urban heat island effect, but also in terms of the physical and mental well-being of a community. Our parks and open spaces have never been more important than right now in this time of pandemic. The increase in usership of these kinds of spaces has been substantial, and inclusion of them in the planning process should be of high priority future open space planning.

Evaluating parks as part of an open space network is necessary and needs to be planned for with the same rigor as transportation and economic development. Including the Guadalupe River Park into the DSAP boundaries allows for a more comprehensive plan that helps address public health, equity, ecology, and recreational impacts the development will have in the district and city.

We support thriving parks and trails that create civic, economic, and ecological value not only to Downtown but to the City as a whole. The placemaking of the DSAP will be greatly enhanced by the inclusion of the largest open space on its doorstep in the planning process and we welcome the opportunity to participate and provide leadership for the future. It will allow the City to benefit from our partnerships and expertise as we all work together to create a thriving community that prioritizes natural assets and encourages a seamless integration from the built to the natural environment that all existing and future residents, workers, and visitors will appreciate, use, and enjoy.

In conclusion, the DSAP process will benefit from the inclusion of the Guadalupe River Park and Arena Green to ensure that these open space resources support the district and City's development and quality of life goals. This is an opportunity for the City of San Jose to redefine success by connecting growth and circulation goals to ecology, equity, and public health. GRPC urges our city leadership to include GRP and Arena Green in the DSAP boundary.

Regards,



Jodi Starbird
President of the Board of Directors

Cc: Sam Liccardo
Raul Peralez
Dev Davis
Lori Severino
Lee Wilcox
Jon Cicirelli
Rosalynn Hughey

John Ristow
Nicolle Burnham
Jessica Zenk
Tim Rood
Helen Han
Alexa Arena
Michelle Huttenhoff

Figure A: Proposed DSAP Boundary Expansion

