



Diridon Station Area Advisory Group (SAAG)

Draft Meeting Notes | August 22, 2019

Date + Time *August 22, 2019 | 6:30 PM*

Location *San Jose City Hall, City Council Chambers*

Meeting Objectives

- *Provide an update on the Citywide Anti-Displacement Strategy*
- *Present Google's Conceptual Mixed-Use Framework*

AGENDA

1. **Welcome and Introductions**
2. **Meeting Minutes from SAAG Meeting on May 22, 2019**
3. **Meeting Objectives**
4. **Update on Citywide Anti-Displacement Strategy**
5. **Presentation on Google's Conceptual Mixed-Use Framework**
6. **Public Comment**
7. **Adjourn**

ATTENDANCE

SAAG Members: 32 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:

Lori Severino – *Civic Engagement Program Manager for the Diridon Station Area*

Lee Wilcox – *Chief of Staff to the City Manager*

Kim Walesh – *Deputy City Manager*

Rosalynn Hughey – *Director of the Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement Department*

Jackie Morales-Ferrand – *Director of the Housing Department*

Kristen Clements – *Division Manager Policy, Grants & Commission, Housing Department*

Victor Farlie – *Business Development Office, Office of Economic Development*

Presenters:

Alexa Arena - *Real Estate Development Director (Google)*



Laura Crescimano – *Principal (SiteLab)*

Consultant Team:

Dave Javid - *Principal (Plan to Place)*

Matt Raimi – *Principal (Raimi + Associates)*

Leah Chambers – *Outreach Specialist (Plan to Place)*

Public: There were approximately 70 members of the public present at the meeting.

SUMMARY

The primary agenda items were to receive and discuss updates on the Citywide Anti-Displacement Strategy and Google Conceptual Mixed-Use Framework. The following notes summarize the presentation and discussion of these two agenda items.

Matt Raimi, from Raimi+Associates, provided a brief overview of the agenda and major topics. Dave Javid, from Plan to Place, followed with an overview the SAAG Group Agreements and provided an update on other opportunities for the community to offer feedback.

The following sections summarize the main agenda items. The full set of meeting materials, including the slideshows, video recording, and handouts, are available at: www.diridonsj.org/saag.

UPDATE ON THE CITYWIDE ANTI-DISPLACEMENT STRATEGY

Jackie Morales-Ferrand and Kristen Clements from the City’s Housing Department provided an update on the Citywide Anti-Displacement Strategy for Residents and an overview of the draft consultant scope of work for an Affordable Housing Plan for the Diridon Station Area. Next, Victor Farlie from the City’s Office of Economic Development provided an update on the Citywide Anti-Displacement Strategy for Small Businesses.

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

- It has been a great opportunity to work with the city on this strategy. I want to emphasize that we have been focused on equity impacts of displacement (especially for people of color), and that will continue. We know that displacement is a huge problem, and if the Google project will make it worse, there is an opportunity to use the project to shape citywide policies. Working Partnerships USA put out a rent increases study recently, discussing the potential displacement effect and what it would take to address it.
- Thanks to the City for their work on anti-displacement policy. Displacement is the #1 issue when thinking about Diridon Station Area development, and it important that there are connections between policies and development to ensure that working families and people of color are not pushed

out. SAAG and members of the public should contribute to and advocate for this strategy. Resident support such as access to legal services should be included.

- I am concerned over displacement of residents and businesses. Willow Glen is seeing rising rents through investors purchasing duplexes and attempting to evict residents. A local Ethiopian restaurant is being priced out due to rising rents.
 - *City's Rent Registry is up and running now and is something to explore.*
 - *Support is available for all businesses in the city, regardless of location. They are aware of change within the West San Carlos area. It is not in the pilot area, but want to come back to that area when we come back to Council in 2020.*
- Community Land Trusts sound really good but are complicated. Request an explanation of some of those complications. Was opportunity for Community Land Trust missed with selling the land to Google?
 - *The challenge is scale and cost. You have to have enough land and units to support it. There is potential for ownership or rental models.*
- I am looking forward to "gentrification" since there is currently nothing there. Whole Foods and subsequent development have been positive and changed the area in good ways. The Georgetown neighborhood association is not seeing people, including people of color, moving out of the neighborhoods. A criticism of the report is that it seems to assume that people of color aren't capable of affording homes in these neighborhoods.
 - *The Housing department believes that gentrification without the other tools to support the opportunity for all populations to stay and enjoy its benefits is a negative thing, not the word on its own.*
- The Gardner neighborhood is seeing high occupation rates (garages, attics, etc.) as the housing gets more unaffordable. The City needs to address absentee landlords and assure that R1 and R2 aren't being stressed for services.
 - *One of the goals is to create a balance between housing and jobs through transit-oriented development, which would help relieve stress on the neighborhoods.*
- Thank you for being proactive to address some of these issues and thank you to Google for being a catalyst for that. What does affordability mean in the City's definition?
 - *Each county looks at income levels by family size, and the ordinance has requirements per income level. Levels include 1-person household (\$800/month) up to 4-person household (\$158,000/year). 25% is the goal for the Diridon Station Area across all income levels.*
- PACT appreciates the Housing Department's efforts and recognition that this has been going on in San José, beyond the Google project. We also appreciate the emphasis on preservation and protection, in addition to production. I suggest a focus on the physical character of the neighborhoods being affected, and encourage the Housing Department to meet with SAAG's Solution Group on Housing + Displacement to discuss ideas.

GOOGLE CONCEPTUAL MIXED-USE FRAMEWORK

Rosalynn Hughey provided an update on the timelines for the City-initiated work and the Google Mixed-Use Project. Next, Lori Severino outlined upcoming outreach events and near-term opportunities to offer feedback. Alexa Arena, from Google, then gave a background of the outreach events hosted to date, what

Google has heard so far, and six key objectives for the project. Laura Crescimano, Principal Urban Designer with SiteLab, provided a presentation on the Google Conceptual Mixed-Use Framework. Alexa wrapped up the presentation with an overview of the project process and timeline.

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

- This was an amazing presentation. Has there been any thought on how you handle Delmas Park and how it can be included in the vision, because there are so many opportunities and developers? How do we get same level of design?
 - *In conjunction with the City, Google is planning on a robust engagement process in the next phase. Google is considering improvement and operating models for park activation and improvements.*
- It was a very powerful presentation in terms of commitments and vision. I appreciate the reduced office and dedication to open space and cultural elements. It is important for us all to feel welcome Downtown.
- Our union addresses the affordability challenge by bringing up the income levels of workers. A success story is with Google Cafeteria Workers in New York and Seattle, whose collective bargaining units secured better incomes, pensions, and healthcare. We hope that we can replicate this in San Jose.
- I have not heard anything about homelessness. I have no issues with Google, but over last two years, the homeless population has increased. How will Google and the City address homelessness?
 - *Google plans to address housing, affordability, and homelessness by producing more housing, adding affordable housing, and investing in different strategies and projects that are addressing the issue today. Specifically, Google is giving the \$250M housing fund for Bay Area and \$50M grants for homelessness and anti-displacement programs. We are partnering with non-profits to put the funds to work.*
 - *There is a huge commitment from the City to work on the homeless issue. Our first 100% permanent supportive housing project is opening soon in San Jose, and we are starting a homeless plan.*
- Thank you for your conscientious approach to the project. Would you give more information on the buildings and newly-raised heights?
 - *Google is focused on good design, combined with heights and densities. We are looking at having varied heights with areas of step backs to meet surrounding neighborhoods, and ensuring special treatment of the first 40' of height to enhance the public realm. This will culminate in the design guidelines, considering community input.*
- Thank you for your presentation. I am also concerned about local businesses. I want to advocate for streamlining of permitting processes to support small businesses. What is the process and how is it being improved upon?
 - *The City has a Small Business Ally Program to assist small businesses through permitting process. The City can make connections for any small business in the area to this program.*
- Thank you for your presentation. We still have some questions about displacement and affordable housing. We are also encouraged by the Google Service Workers story in Seattle and New York, and hope that workers here can form a union and benefit from everything we are seeing today.



- Valley Water has large projects coming up, and we are thinking about the need for future engineers and technical workers to do that infrastructure work. I am happy to hear that Google is thinking about that too, and are interested in partnering with Google to train workers. I appreciate Google's respect for the environment and how they have treated Los Gatos Creek, and hope that other developers will also support environmental restoration. I hope that Google's Community Benefits will set an example for other developers as well, since it will take more than just Google to build up San José.
- I also support the suggestion for cafeteria workers to form a union. I appreciate seeing the goals and targets for housing overall, including donations to anti-displacement funds and how to optimize affordable housing. There are still unanswered questions, and I hope there will be a collaborative process to address affordable housing and displacement. It's important to maximize housing in the Diridon area, but we should also look for opportunities around the city when it comes to the Community Benefits Plan, linkage fee, and infrastructure financing district. How do we leverage Google's regional investments, and prioritize San Jose?
- I am excited about what I saw in the presentation in terms of transit, housing, art, and green space. Jobs near transit will be good for greenhouse gas reduction, health, environment, and walkability. A sense of place is key to creating a vibrant downtown and a campus that is part of a place.
- Wonderful presentation. I am disappointed that daylighting Los Gatos Creek isn't part of the plan. Once we do make creek connections, there could be high activity within the riparian corridor. Ensure you are including active open spaces for employees close to the offices. Second, what is happening to the historic buildings such as Poorhouse Bistro? Move them? Reuse them?
 - *We are working with SFEI (ecology specialist) on the Google team to develop a protected riparian corridor, and to provide active bikeways and plazas separate from the corridor. This will be part of the landscape design.*
 - *We are thinking about which buildings to keep. The framework has taken into consideration which businesses to keep, and Poorhouse Bistro is on that list. Specificity should be coming within the next 6 months.*
 - *The goal is to take pressure off the creek by introducing the setback, balanced with people-centric places.*
 - *The City's DSAP Amendment process will include an inventory of all historic resources for the entire area.*
- I appreciate the creativity and clarification about building heights, since building articulation is important. I would be remiss for my neighborhood to not mention the trains. Your maps show them going through our neighborhood and blocks off one of two ways into and out of the Gregory Heights neighborhood. Extend your creativity and support an alternative route that includes a flyover along the 280/87 corridor for the high-speed rail project.
- SV@ Home is excited about how housing is central to the plan, including affordable housing options. We just released a comprehensive vision for housing in the Diridon area this morning. Beyond Google, there are more opportunities. We think there can be about 10,000 homes within the Station Area. We are excited to continue working with the City on the affordable housing and displacement strategies, including maximizing affordable housing along transit.
- During previous outreach, we emphasized the ability to connect this area to surrounding neighborhoods. With the tracks and SR 97, it is not ideal for access. This plan will be successful by

analyzing needs for access by different means. I also want to emphasize historic preservation (e.g., the station, Foundry, Water Company building). The ability to reuse existing buildings is also important to the SAAG, and we are pleased to see it as part of the plan.

- Thank you for your creativity and design. I want to clarify that my previous question about Community Land Trusts is about the role of public land in addressing vexing problems. The City Council approved an iconic Arena Green structure, which I assume you are planning for. We are also dealing with unknowns with rail planning. We are already battling Union Pacific Railroad about noise in downtown, and are now talking about adding more residents. I am not sure if we will get another presentation on the [Diridon Integrated Station Concept Plan], but want to propose looking at the UP/railroad situation as part of the overall design.
- It is obvious that Google has done a lot of work and has invested effort in making sure all voices are heard. In terms of the DSAP, how much of the plan will be Google, and what happens with the remaining acres? Will there be edits to the housing and office assumed for those areas?
 - *Yes. The City's DSAP Amendments process will consider additional development capacity via increased heights and some land use designation changes outside of Google lands and for the ballpark site.*
- I appreciate your care towards open spaces and the Los Gatos Creek, but I did not see as much about Guadalupe River. What is the approach for the Guadalupe River and Park? Is it part of the transit hub?
 - *Google is looking at the parks and rivers as a whole system. The Guadalupe River and Park is an important resource. The only edge of the project site touching Guadalupe River is an engineered section so there are less opportunities for enhancements, but still want to look at how best to appreciate that experience despite that constraint.*

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Following the discussion by the SAAG, 23 members of the public provided comments on the agenda items. A summary of the public comments are below:

1. The number of unhoused people in the city has increased tremendously. I am concerned over the lack of representation on the SAAG by the homeless population and have offered to be a part of the SAAG for some time. Would it be possible to have sanctioned encampments on Google properties that will be undeveloped for some time?
2. I am glad the design takes advantage of the transportation network. A mix of housing should be included to provide a vibrant area. The offices should not be fenced off as an enclave. I am glad to see shops, parks, and open spaces for workers to escape their screens. This is the right time for this transition. Include historic resources, and accommodate the elevated alignment. I am glad you are aiming high.
3. Thank you for your wonderful presentation. My concern is about people like my son, a teacher who commutes from Gilroy. With more affordable housing options, he could live closer, spending more time with his family and less on the road. What can be done now to help teachers that can't afford to live in San José? I'm also concerned about our schools. What is Google and the City doing to ensure that our youth in low-income neighborhoods could possibly get good-paying jobs with Google in the future?



4. I am worried about how affordable the 3,500 units will ultimately be. Housing is a basic right. I encourage you to look at public housing, in addition to community land trusts and limited equity coops. We are in a public health emergency that requires bold action. We are in a wealthy region, and the City needs to use taxation and eminent domain to build affordable units for low, very low, and extremely low-income folks.
5. I am happy with the design, specifically the open space, but am disappointed that the daylighting of Los Gatos was not included since having a trail go under the street would make it easier to get to the station for pedestrians. If not, the Los Gatos Creek Trail should be located close to the tracks to connect to the station. The less peds and bikes interact with street traffic, the better. Also, I urge the DISC partners to elevate the tracks to reduce the impediment that they are now, and to build the viaduct over 280/87 to build for the future.
6. I am excited about thousands of units being added to the Diridon Station Area. The challenges we face are no secret. It is important that they include affordability for a range of households, especially for extremely low-income households (making less than 30% of the area median income). These households have the fewest housing choices and face the greatest risk of homelessness. Consider this as part of the added housing capacity in the Google mixed-use development and the City's revisions to the Diridon Station Area Plan.
7. The amenities you show look great, but the problem is that before people can enjoy the proposed amenities, they need a good place to live and bed to lay in at night. Take the millions of dollars to first build housing, then possibly the amenities. One way to help people get affordable housing is through Community Land Trusts.
8. I love San José and it breaks my heart that low-income residents are getting evicted by owners that are trying to capitalize on higher rents because of Google coming. I feel especially vulnerable because of my home and the medical treatments for breast cancer I have access to here. If my aging, rent-controlled building is torn down, where will I go? How will I survive if I have to leave San José?
9. There are currently two homeless shelters within the Diridon Station Area boundaries. What will happen with those? Gentrification and displacement affect renters more than homeowners. I felt that is appalling to hear that only doctors and lawyers can afford to live in Georgetown – low blow. I see a direct connection between gentrification and the adoption of the Diridon Station Area Plan in 2014.
10. Could we negotiate a 12:1 or 10:1 ratio of jobs to housing? Accountability and openness are key practices for peace and community sustainability. Consider an express train from Bakersfield to Tracy, and high-speed rail from Merced to Tracy with an ACE train and BART extension to Tracy. Balance high-speed rail choices and be open with the community.
11. Google should give back the public land to the South Bay Land Trust, who will do the right thing. Google should not come to San José because rents will skyrocket. There is no way Google can build the housing for the thousands of people that need the housing currently. Google's racist, misogynist policies and surveillance are not healthy for us. Their plans are not good for low and no-income people.
12. Google in San José is going to be awesome. The people who live near the station are excited. Thanks for helping to make this area better for us. I recommend Google works to get a sound wall put up because employees won't like the train noise.
13. The Anti-Displacement Plan lacks numbers on how many people will be displaced. There is no sense of how many people the 10-15 policies will be able to protect. We have a problem with commercial



development, which is out of control. The jobs-housing imbalance in Silicon Valley is causing homelessness and displacement. In addition to Google, there are other projects in Downtown that will add thousands of jobs – not to mention other parts of San José. The General Plan allows for 382,000 new jobs but only allows 120,000 housing units to be built, which will end up displacing 400,000 people. We are in a moral crisis. Homelessness is up 42% in the past two years. Homelessness is out of control! If we want it to change, we have to stop this crazy commercial development.

14. There is zero conceptualization of inclusive design. San Jose is following ADA, but ADA is outdated. There is not enough inclusive design in San Jose or this Google plan. The presentation did not follow basic principles of universal design for text size. Affordability housing for people with disabilities is never affordable. There aren't vouchers, so new housing will not apply to the disabled population. Lower-income people are not included in this plan either. Where are the voices of those who will be most impacted? When we are not included, nothing changes.
15. In looking at the slide of the A team that Alexa presented, I was thinking about how much the team knows about rail. It would be wonderful to extend the framework boundary up to the tracks to include the historic station as part of the Google design to see what they can bring to the conversation. My other comment is about how much land is dedicated to streets out of the 80 acres. Why can't we have an at-grade street grid and build above it? A bunch of cities around the world are doing this.
16. How many of the units will be for low-income residents? How many will be prioritized for generational SJ residents? What can you really build for \$50 million? Seems like peanuts compared to the need. We can't afford the new condos. What are you doing to ensure You need to build more community models of housing. Are you going to support local businesses, accommodate street vendors, hire locally, pay living wages, hire Black and Brown people, and fund education throughout San jose? Give the Water Site to community organizations so they can do what they want. Will you sign a community benefits package so you give back more than you take?
17. Understand the economic context of what \$650,000 gets for one unit and how a fund for the entire Bay Area wouldn't do much. This is a question of power. We don't know what the City can do to put community needs first because the land got sold. Were we sure this is the appropriate step? What happens if the community doesn't support the Google project plan in 2020? What is the process moving forward in that case? I would like City staff to address this.
18. Thanks to the City and Google for the presentation. The Guadalupe River Park is an urban park, and the premier riverfront in the area. We are excited for more people to experience this great public space. The project boundary parallels the river, and we would encourage enhancement and maintenance of the connection to the river, especially where Santa Clara and the river intersect. Take the constraints as exciting design opportunities and find something more interesting and cohesive to unite both sides of Downtown.
19. I am from East San jose and a founding member of the South Bay Community Land Trust. Before Google comes to San jose, what are you doing about the families living on the streets and in RVs just blocks from your campus? Is your plan to disappear entire communities, because that's what it feels like? You ignore people who oppose the project and that's not collaboration – that's a takeover. People who don't want this project know what you did in Mountain View and other cities. Why should we allow that here when it will only benefit 1% of the population and when most people won't be here to benefit from this shiny new campus? Google is not welcome here.

20. We will not be here to see any of this. The housing achievements listed are under attack, like the Ellis Act and other protections. Google is a predatory and sexist company. The payouts are like the money that they are throwing at housing as payout for the assault on our communities. There is concern about having enough space for employees to throw their frisbees, but what about the concern for children who live in dangerous areas and are over-crowded in their living situation. As a cafeteria worker for a tech company, it's great to have a union, but is the point if you have to commute two hours. Nothing everything Google is gold.
21. I love living here in San Jose. The project looks beautiful, and it will be nice for Google employees. But the people that don't have anything to do with Google are paying high rent. Right now there is a lot of homeless everywhere. If they can't help make the rent low, we don't want Google here. We want a guarantee from Google that will do what they say they will do.
22. I am being displaced from my residence on San Carlos because a new luxury project is being built. Displacement is personal and means uprooting a normal lifestyle and pushing someone out of their place of living, due to financial power. I rely on my neighbors and lose that when they move. Can you prioritize training and employing local people? When I was homeless, Guadalupe River was my home. If the human population is important, do any plans positively affect people who are living here now? We say no to Google.
23. I work with unhoused people and tenants' union, and worked with people displaced from Willow Glen. Displacement is a big deal and affects people a lot. Anytime that you defend gentrification, you are on the wrong side. Women have to go back into abusive situations because they feel safer there than in shelters. We need better providers for homeless services and women's services. We need to use the unused Google parcels for sanctioned encampments and safe parking places. Take action now. We need only ELI and VLI affordable housing.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:33 pm.

