



February 23, 2020

Re: Feb. 25, 2021 City Council Priority Setting Session

Dear Mayor Liccardo and San Jose City Council Members,

Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter, Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, the Santa Clara Valley Chapter of the California Native Plant Society, Mothers Out Front Silicon Valley and Green Foothills recognize the merit of many existing and newly proposed priorities on the 2021-2021 City Roadmap, and the tough decisions and challenges Council faces. We write this letter to urge you to:

- Support new priority RR5 - Urban Greening Implementation Plan
- Support existing priority CP22 - Single Use Plastic Ban
- Support existing priority CR4 Climate Smart American Cities Climate Challenge
- Curtail all planning processes leading to the accommodation of digital signs and billboards in San Jose.

Support new priority RR5 - Urban Greening Implementation Plan

At this time, we see a great need for breaking silos with a strong, comprehensive approach to climate adaptation and ecological resilience in San Jose, and an implementation plan that includes rewilding and expands nature-inspired greening of the urban landscape.

Envision 2040 General Plan already requires greening of the City. The language is quite extensive. For a few examples:

- MS-21.1 Manage the Community Forest to achieve San José's environmental goals for water and energy conservation, wildlife habitat preservation, stormwater retention, heat reduction in urban areas, energy conservation, and the removal of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.
- MS-21.6 As a condition of new development, require the planting and maintenance of both street trees and trees on private property to achieve a level of tree coverage in compliance with and that implements City laws, policies or guidelines.
- MS-21.7 Manage infrastructure to ensure that the placement and maintenance of street trees, streetlights, signs and other infrastructure assets are integrated. Give priority to tree placement in designing or modifying streets.

- ER-2.5 Restore riparian habitat through native plant restoration and removal of nonnative/invasive plants along riparian corridors and adjacent areas.
- MS-18.11 Adopt guidelines or ordinances that encourage or require Bay-friendly, water efficient design, landscape and irrigation within San José.

Recognizing that “*Climate change and development pressures are creating an urgent need to build more resilience into the ecosystems we live in and rely upon*”, the San Francisco Estuary Institute, SPUR, and the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority provide key strategies for integrating nature-based solutions into Silicon Valley. Their recently released report, “[Integrating Planning with Nature: Building climate resilience across the urban-to-rural gradient](#)”, demonstrates the many opportunities that moving forward with priority #RR5, Urban Greening Implementation Plan, would provide.

Support existing priority CP22 - Single Use Plastic Ban and CR4 Climate Smart American Cities Climate Challenge.

In order to address the crisis of climate change, which threatens our planet and civilization, San Jose must continue to accelerate its climate action in 2021. San Jose should also make progress towards reducing its contribution to plastic pollution which is threatening our bay and ocean ecosystems. Our organizations have been supportive of priorities that address Climate Change and reduce pollution of our waterways.

Drop Digital Billboards

The Staff memo proposes that the work on Phase II of the Electronic Billboard Policy will be “be sufficiently completed by June 30, 2021 and do not need to be included on the City Roadmap in FY 2021-2022.” We ask you to direct staff to curtail all work on Phase II of the Electronic Billboard Policy (private properties), and if possible, reverse Phase I (City-owned properties). Such action would:

- Save taxpayer money currently being expended to pay consultants for CEQA work.
- Save a frustrated community of residents and environmental advocates from the burden of ongoing engagement with this unpopular quest.

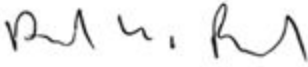
We oppose outdoor electronic/digital signs and billboards due to the undisputable, pervasive harm that artificial light at night imposes upon the dark sky, animal and plant species, ecosystems, and human health (United Nations Report, Oct 2020)¹. Furthermore, electronic signs use tremendous amounts of energy, an unjustifiable use at a time that climate change requires caution. Lastly, studies show that 80% of Americans cannot see the Milky Way from their homes². What will inspire children to want to learn about the universe, when they cannot see the stars?

¹ Dark and Quiet Skies for Science and Society, Report and Recommendations, United Nations Oct 2020

² <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/article/milky-way-space-science>

Please promote the mental and physical health benefits that come with Urban Greening, protect our environment from the harms of single-use plastic and climate destabilization, and protect San Jose's night sky, wildlife and residents from light pollution that comes with electronic billboards and the associated poor health and climate effects.

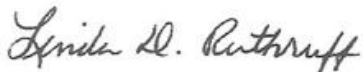
Respectfully,



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Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter



Shani Kleinhaus, Ph.D., Environmental Advocate
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Linda Ruthruff, Conservation Chair
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