



SIERRA CLUB
LOMA PRIETA CHAPTER



Santa Clara Valley Chapter
CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

May 17, 2021

To: Mayor Liccardo and members of the San Jose City Council

Re: Support for Item 10.2 on the May 25 Agenda: Google Downtown West Plan

The Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter, the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, the California Native Plant Society, Santa Clara Valley Chapter and Green Foothills write in support of the Google Downtown West Plan and its associated Development Agreement between Google and the City of San Jose.

For decades, our organizations have advocated for the preservation of the open landscapes of Santa Clara County and our native flora and fauna. At the same time, we promoted good urban planning that focuses on density in the urban core, prevents displacement, protects riparian ecosystems, integrates native trees and shrubs into urban design, and promotes sustainability. More recently, we have been advocating for climate action and resilience, adaptation to sea level rise, and transit-focused mixed-use development. Google's Downtown West Plan accomplishes many of these elements. We are pleased to see the long-term vision of incorporating nature into the public urban environment and the building of a vibrant, walkable, planned community coming to life in the City of San Jose.

The Google team reached out to our groups early in the design process and has been responsive to many of our suggestions and requests regarding riparian setbacks, protecting and enhancing nature and habitat along the creeks, and embracing a California native plant palette that includes locally native trees such as oaks and sycamores. Downtown West has been designed to stay consistent with policies and guidelines around Los Gatos Creek and Guadalupe River, and to allow people to enjoy nature along the creeks. Our suggestions for bird safety measures, avoiding light pollution and minimizing the impacts of artificial light at night were incorporated into the plan.

The project is a downtown-focused and transit-focused mixed-use development — the right thing for San José, as the creation of jobs and housing downtown contributes to climate action and resilience, and allows for the protection of open space, as in Coyote Valley.

Respectfully,

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Open Space Committee Chair
Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter

Matthew Dodder
Executive Director
Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

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Conservation Chair
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