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Leslye Corsiglia
Executive Director

Honorable Mayor Liccardo and Members of the City Council
City of San José
200 E. Santa Clara St.
San José, CA 95113

Dear Mayor Liccardo, Vice Mayor Jones, and Councilmembers Arenas, Davis, Diep, Carrasco, Esparza, Foley, Jimenez, Khamis, and Peralez,

On behalf of Silicon Valley at Home we write today to provide comments on the draft amendments to the Diridon Station Area Plan and the Affordable Housing Implementation Plan. As a member of the Station Area Advisory Group, SV@Home has been deeply engaged on all phases of the Diridon Station planning process. We are encouraged by the work city staff have undertaken to fulfill the vision of a vibrant, mixed-use Diridon neighborhood that is connected to the largest transit hub in the region and accessible to people of all incomes, backgrounds, and abilities.

Achieving this vision requires the City of San José to plan for a bolder, more inclusive future. **That is why we urge the City Council to continue to support a housing-rich Station Area Plan that includes at least 13,000 new homes, which adds to the roughly 2,000 units recently constructed or entitled to reach the goal of 15,000 homes in the Station Area, at least 25% of them affordable.** City staff has done tremendous work in creating a framework that is responsive to the full range of community interests. To keep us on track, the City must ensure that it does not constrain this housing potential through further reduction in height limits, or additional design constraints.

Downtown San José and Diridon are primed to become even more significant jobs centers, with well over 50,000 new jobs anticipated for the Station Area alone. Importantly, both the City and Google have committed to making housing a priority as well. Not only will this enhance the quality of this new urban center, it will begin to address the housing needs generated by these new jobs and avoid shifting affordability pressures to other parts of the city. We know that many of these new jobs will not pay the kinds of wages needed to afford San José's high housing costs; as a result, we need to also ensure that we create affordable housing in the Area that gives people of all incomes and abilities access to this new, vibrant neighborhood.

SV@Home has conducted its own analysis of potential development capacity in the Station Area, concluding that San José should plan for at least 15,000 new homes in the Station Area. Our analysis has been cross-checked with the excellent work done by city staff on the Diridon Station Area amendments process, and we believe that our figures coincide. The latest versions of the plans for Downtown West and DSAP amendments envisions around 13,000 new homes which, when added to the 2,000 homes that have been recently built or entitled, would meet our 15,000 new home goal. As with all planning processes, it is critical that this housing potential remain a priority, and that further adjustments to the plans not constrain our ability to actually build this housing we so desperately need.

With Google committing to at least 4,000, and up to 5,900 new homes (at least 25% of them affordable), San José must focus on how the remaining housing capacity can be realized. The latest proposed amendments to the Diridon Station Area Plan concentrate opportunities for new housing construction around existing residential developments in the southern end of the Station Area. SV@Home's calculations of the remaining housing opportunity parcels support staff's findings that, in order to reach the housing targets, roughly 75% of new residential development will need to be high-rise construction.

The draft Affordable Housing Implementation Plan goes a long way towards responding to these challenges. There is more work to do, but with continued commitment from all parties we are confident we can get there, and we can do so while being creative and accountable to the preservation and protection pieces that are going to fulfill the broader goals of keeping communities whole even as we grow. Thank you to the City Council for your commitment to achieving at least 25% of new homes in the Station Area as affordable, and thank you to Housing Department staff for beginning to develop plans to make this possible.

We ask that the Council support the Planning and Housing Department staff's efforts to realize the housing potential of the Station Area by:

- **Maintaining the maximum heights for residential construction throughout the entire Station Area, as originally planned;**
- **Actively embracing new construction technologies such as cross-laminated timber and modular construction;**
- **Committing to the required affordable housing subsidies that will ensure we are able to meet our affordability targets;**
- **Committing to feasibility without sacrificing our ability to produce needed affordable units. This will require new, innovative approaches to building and financing affordable homes as part of high-rise construction.**

Additionally, the City should give serious consideration to maintaining flexibility in converting commercial parcels or shifting designations in ways that maintain the broader goals and capacity targets, but that are responsive to the market and the Station Area as it is built out. Similarly, both Caltrain and VTA-owned parcels should be prioritized for housing development. These steps would take additional pressure off of individual residential parcels and provide more flexibility in meeting the goals for both jobs and housing.

The Diridon Station Area is a tremendous opportunity for the City of San José to create a vibrant new neighborhood with new jobs, new housing, new retail space, new parks, and a fully interconnected transit system. Great downtowns around the world have all of these things, and we must ensure that we plan for the housing and affordable housing that will make Diridon accessible to all. That is why the Council must act to ensure that we do not constrain the opportunities for residential development so we can fulfill the promise of a more equitable, vibrant Downtown San José for all residents.

Sincerely,



Leslye Corsiglia
Executive Director

