

Transmitted via email

May 13, 2021

Honorable Mayor Sam Liccardo and Members of the City Council
City of San Jose
200 East Santa Clara Street, 18th Floor
San Jose, CA 95113

Dear Mayor Liccardo, and Councilmembers Arenas, Carrasco, Cohen, Davis, Esparza, Foley, Jimenez, Jones, Mahan, and Peralez,

Re: 10.2 – North San Jose Strategy

With this opportunity to significantly increase the number of affordable homes in the City of San Jose, we are looking for explicit housing policies that center equity and inclusion in the redevelopment of North San Jose. We call on our elected officials to lead with boldness and intention in creating a San Jose that is affordable to its residents and integrated racially and socio-economically. When North San Jose was opened up for new housing development nearly two decades ago it was intended to be a transit and job-rich, new community accessible to everyone in San Jose. To realize this vision, the North San Jose Area Development Policy stated that 20% of all new homes would be affordable. This did not happen in Phase I; the policy was not followed. North San Jose was built as an exclusive community.

Reopening North San Jose to additional development was central to the Housing Crisis Workplan adopted by City Council in June 2018, a response to Mayor Liccardo's call for the development of 25,000 new homes, including 10,000 affordable homes, by 2023. Council has continuously directed staff to meet these goals, most recently in November 2020, through policies that would allow the overall new development to hit the 20% affordable goal, making up for what was not built in Phase I.

Despite council direction, the amendments and plans included in the Staff memo and ordinances retiring the NSJADP do not recommit to the 20% affordable requirement once the plan is retired, and once again the affordable housing policy work remains an under-defined work in progress. We are concerned that the policy ideas presented as under consideration, while potentially impactful, do not go far enough to address the depth or breadth of the challenge.

To make good on the promises and potential for North San Jose, Council action retiring the NSJADP must explicitly include direction to staff to:

- **Develop policies and land use tools that will make it feasible and realistic to meet the original requirement that 20% of housing built in the plan area be affordable.**
- **In addition to the rezoning overlay of appropriate sites for affordable housing and modification of the Inclusionary Housing Ordinance, consider additional policies to secure land, increase access to city resources, and lower costs for affordable housing.**
- **Return to council with specific, detailed policies for consideration, including timelines for them to return to council for final adoption.**

North San Jose should be accessible to everyone in San Jose. It is close to jobs, it is well served by transit, and it has a brand new K-12 school campus. Its build-out was originally intended to accommodate more than a quarter of the new homes in the City's General Plan and has long been prioritized for affordable housing. It would be counterproductive to allow a newly exclusive neighborhood to be built at a time when San Jose is working to confront and dismantle the ways that city policies undermine equitable access to opportunity and sustain racial and ethnic divisions that have been institutionalized over generations.

Our communities continue to struggle under a housing affordability crisis, even as our range of resources expands, and we continue to explore the potential of new tools. We call on this Council to follow through on the commitment to affordable housing in North San Jose as a recognized part of the solution.

Sincerely,

Regina Celestin Williams
Executive Director – SV@Home

(Contact mathew@svathome.org to add your name and organization here)