



Welcoming San José

Plan 3.0: Uniting San José: A City of Inclusion and Belonging 2025-2030



Message from the Mayor



Matt Mahan

Mayor of San José

"This updated plan outlines practical steps to ensure that all residents, including newcomers, can access the resources, connections, and support they need to build their lives here—and to feel a true sense of belonging."

Dear San José Community,

It is my privilege to share *Welcoming San José 3.0*, our City's continued commitment to fostering a community where all residents—no matter where they come from—feel welcomed, supported, and empowered to succeed.

San José has always been a city of opportunity, built by generations of individuals and families who arrived with hopes for a better future. Their contributions have shaped local culture, strengthened our economy, and helped define who we are today.

This updated plan reflects our shared vision of a city where everyone can thrive. It outlines practical steps to ensure that all residents, including newcomers, can access the resources, connections, and support they need to build their lives here—and to feel a true sense of belonging.

As we move forward, I invite every resident to be a part of this effort. Whether through community involvement, supporting local businesses, or simply offering a warm welcome to a new neighbor, your actions make a difference.

Together, we will continue to build a San José that is not only a place to live, but a place to call home.

Sincerely,


Matt Mahan

Mayor, City of San José

Message from the City Manager



Jennifer Maguire

City Manager

"I invite you to join in creating a truly welcoming community by building connections with neighbors - both long-time residents and those who have recently arrived."

Dear Community,

I am dedicated to ensuring San José remains a certified Welcoming City, where belonging, inclusion, and humanity are at the forefront of everything we do. Closing Racial Inequities is one of my Foundational Strategic Support Focus Areas and I am committed to this work and pleased with our progress.

It gives me great pride to have worked with the City Council in unanimously adopting an equity ordinance and policy, establishing values and standards for all City of San José employees and residents. We are a city that fosters a welcoming environment by proudly embracing its cultural richness, treating residents and visitors with dignity and respect, and extending compassion to those who arrive in San José.

San José is a city shaped by the incredible diversity and innovation of its people. With nearly 40% of our residents born outside the United States and almost 60% speaking a language other than English, our community is a true reflection of global perspectives. Immigrants have always been essential to the story of San José and Silicon Valley — strengthening our local economy, enriching our cultural landscape,

and modeling remarkable resilience. Together, we honor and celebrate the contributions of immigrant families who continue to shape our city's past, present, and future.

I am grateful for the City Manager's Office of Racial and Social Equity and every City department who work as *One Team* to ensure City services are equitable and accessible to all residents. The City continues to collaborate with our community in an effort to move forward the goals of the Welcoming San José Plan. Now more than ever, it is critical we remain resolute in our commitments that San José is a place where everyone can find success.

I invite you to join in creating a truly welcoming community by building connections with neighbors — both long-time residents and those who have recently arrived.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer A. Maguire". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jennifer A. Maguire
City Manager

Message from the Director



Zulma Maciel

Director

Office of Racial and Social Equity

“San José is at its best when we stand together and ensure that every person has the opportunity to live out their dreams.”

Dear San José Community,

I am honored to share Welcoming San José 3.0 with you—a plan that reflects the heart of our city and the incredible people who call it home. San José has always been a place of hope and opportunity, shaped by generations of immigrants who have brought their dreams, resilience, and contributions to every corner of our community. This plan is a promise—a commitment to making sure that everyone, no matter where they come from, feels a true sense of belonging here.

As the Director of the Office of Racial and Social Equity, I have had the privilege of hearing the stories of our immigrant neighbors—stories of challenge, perseverance, and triumph. I've met families who have built businesses from the ground up, students who are the first in their families to attend college, and community leaders who work tirelessly to uplift those around them. Their journeys inspire this work and remind us why it matters so deeply.

San José is at its best when we stand together and ensure that every person has the opportunity to live out their dreams. This plan is not just about

policies—it's about people. It's about ensuring that our city remains a place where everyone feels safe, supported, and valued. It's about strengthening the bonds that connect us and building a future where inclusion is not just an ideal, but a reality.

This work is not something any one department or organization can do alone—it takes all of us. Whether you are a long-time resident, a newcomer, a business owner, or a community advocate, you have a role to play in making San José a truly welcoming city. I invite you to join us in this effort—to listen, to learn, and to take action. Together, we will continue to build a future where everyone belongs.

In community,

Zulma Maciel

Director

City Manager's Office of Racial and Social Equity

Executive Summary

The Welcoming San José Plan 2025-2030 outlines the City of San José's commitment to fostering a warm welcoming environment to those who arrive, including immigrants, helping them feel like they belong and have a valued place within our community. Building upon the successes and lessons learned from previous Welcoming Plans, this plan is guided

by the Welcoming America framework and aligns with the City's Racial and Social Equity Ordinance and Equity Values and Standards Policy. The Office of Racial and Social Equity (ORSE) plays a central role in driving this work, ensuring that policies, programs, and practices are designed to eliminate institutional barriers and create a welcoming environment for all.

The Welcoming San José Plan includes 7 Focus Areas and corresponding Goals:

GOVERNMENT & COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

1

Build clarity, confidence, and trust in City Leadership's commitment to prioritizing and implementing strategies that actively create spaces where all people, regardless of origin, feel welcome, valued, and able to participate fully.



2

EQUITABLE ACCESS

Ensure immigrant communities can easily navigate and access City services, helping new arrivals find resources in all aspects of daily life—such as housing, transportation, and legal aid—for a smooth transition to becoming securely rooted in San José.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

3

Support immigrant workers and businesses by simplifying business startup processes, improving access to City contracts and resources, and creating inclusive and fair work environments.



4

CONNECTED COMMUNITIES

Reduce prejudice and strengthen relationships among communities by creating opportunities for all residents, including immigrants, to connect across various backgrounds and identities, enhancing San José's reputation as a "Crossroads of the World."



EDUCATION

5

Support children, youth, and adult learners, including those from immigrant families, to thrive in and out of school and feel connected to the larger San José community.



6

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Enhance opportunities for effective and accessible community engagement, so that all residents, including immigrants, are able to fully participate in civic life.



SAFE COMMUNITIES

7

Increase the sense of physical and psychological safety resulting from strong, trusting relationships between immigrant residents and local safety services.



The Welcoming San José Plan is not just a vision—it is an actionable roadmap that calls upon City leaders, community organizations, and residents to work together in building a city where everyone, regardless of background, can thrive. Through this strategic plan, San José reaffirms its role as both the "Capital of Silicon Valley" and as a growing, vibrant, and culturally rich place to live

for almost a million residents. Over 40% of residents who call San José home identify as immigrants, the majority of whom have been long-settled in the United States for more than 10 years.¹ Due to this legacy, San José seeks to continuously evolve, to improve the experience and engagement of its immigrant communities and create enduring racial and social equity.

¹ Source: California Immigrant Data Portal, University of Southern California Dornsife Equity Research Institute, 2024: <https://immigrantdata.org/data-summaries?geo=07000000000668000>

Reflecting on the last five years and the Welcoming San José Plan 2.0

AS WE PLAN FOR THE FUTURE, we must also reflect on the lessons learned from the first ten years of the Office of Immigrant Affairs, the Office of Racial and Social Equity, and the two previous editions of the *Welcoming San José Plans*. Our initial Plan was far-reaching and aspirational; our 2.0 Plan was guided by the work and strategies that our immigrant community partners wanted us to prioritize; our 3.0 Plan will build upon the foundation of structural shifts that were outlined in previous plans, while clarifying a new set of strategic imperatives to ensure marked progress toward shared goals.

Since the inception of its first formal Welcoming San José Plan in 2015, the City has sought to engage community leaders and internal partners to develop a Welcoming Plan that has since resulted in notable headway in widening language accessibility and integrating the lens of racial justice across initiatives. This includes, but is not limited to the following:

- **INSTITUTIONALIZING EQUITY:**

The Mayor and City Council approved the Equity Ordinance and Values and Standards Policy,² committing to transparent, accountable equity practices.

- **EDUCATING:**

The Office of Racial and Social Equity (ORSE) implemented the second iteration of the Foundational Racial and Social Equity Training, which was required for all City employees. This training introduced key concepts and definitions related to equity and emphasized that embedding and fostering inclusion are essential values of City employees' roles.

- **COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT**

In partnership with local non-profit Only in San José, ORSE also launched a free, multilingual Civics Master Class,³ empowering immigrant residents to engage in local governance.

² City of San José Ordinance 31076: <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/114683/638627814226770000>

³ City of San José Civics Master Class, 2025: <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/your-government/departments-offices/office-of-the-city-manager/office-of-racial-equity/san-jose-civics-masterclass>



• **TRANSPARENCY IN ACTION:**

City departments developed ⁴Racial and Social Equity Action Plans (RSEAPs) that are published online, showcasing their progress in advancing racial and social equity. From procurement to hiring to promotional practices to the rollout of government services, every aspect of government can ask questions about whether services and programs deliver accessible, equitable, high-quality services to advance racial and social equity.

IN FALL OF 2024, AS SAN JOSÉ STARTED TO DEVELOP a Welcoming San José strategy for 2025-2030, it became clear the City has an urgent opportunity to think and collaborate differently within City Departments and with community partners to help everyone navigate coming changes to immigration policy and practice. Because studies have shown that 60% of San José's small business owners are from ethnic or minority backgrounds and over half are immigrants,⁵ this Plan also seeks to strengthen the economic and cultural vitality of these communities to build long-term resiliency in the region in addition to its ongoing focus on welcoming and accessibility to services for all immigrant communities in San José.

ORSE understands that building a Welcoming City requires an intersectional strategy that

integrates its efforts. Its work around inclusion and belonging, accessibility, and racial equity are mutually reinforcing and cannot succeed in isolation, particularly in the face of shifting political climates impacting our immigrant communities. This is the approach we embody as we continue to build a more welcoming San José.

This document highlights the plan and early action steps for building a Welcoming San José for the next five years.



Office of Racial and Social Equity

OUR VISION

A City of San José in which all people in our community and organization thrive and where no racial or social disparities exist

OUR MISSION

Support the City to embed a racial and social equity practice and embody a culture that sustains it

⁴ City of San José Racial and Social Equity Action Plans: <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/your-government/departments-offices/office-of-the-city-manager/racial-and-social-equity/racial-and-social-equity-action-plans>

⁵ Source: Institute of Government Affairs, University of California, Berkeley, 2021: <https://escholarship.org/content/qt8kv5n0x3/qt8kv5n0x3.pdf>

STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES FOR WELCOMING SAN JOSÉ 2025-2030 PLAN



The rapidly-evolving US political context following the 2024 Election had a significant influence on the conversation, analysis, and thinking about action steps for this iteration of the Welcoming plan. Input from both internal staff stakeholders as well as community partners who participated in the development of this plan underscored the necessity of highlighting a set of Strategic Imperatives that reflect key differences from previous years' plans and clarify the mindset for moving forward.

ACKNOWLEDGE URGENCY

The context for this Welcoming Strategy is not about “nice-to-have” engagement with immigrant communities; while political discourse may change over time, the City is in a moment where it must clearly name and take clear action to live its values. How can San José, CA continue to be both the “Capital of Silicon Valley” AND the “Crossroads of the World,” simultaneously?

STAND IN APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

Currently, many programs for immigrant populations treat the work as a “problem to be solved” and not the “opportunity to unleash” an unparalleled economic and social engine for positive growth and long-term resilience. While there are social challenges to consider, approaching them with curiosity and openness allows the City to recognize and build upon the strengths of its residents, fostering growth and enhancing what is already working well.

MIND THE NARRATIVE

Across Community and City engagement processes, many noted the negative narrative frame of people who have migrated to our community as “criminal,” or being otherwise wrong or bad for taking the journey. Intentionally, this plan centers its approach on the systems and processes that immigrant communities must navigate—aiming to clarify and simplify them—while deliberately steering away from emphasizing interpersonal differences or reinforcing notions of “otherness.”

ASSUME TRUST MUST BE EARNED

Much of the design and communications about different programs and interaction forums assume a baseline of trust in hosting organizations' authority or good intentions. Many are noticing that the City has an opportunity to be more forward-looking—and actions and communications must be developed accordingly.

Welcoming San José Goals and Strategies

Focus Area 1 - Government and Community Leadership



Goal

Build clarity, confidence, and trust in City Leadership's commitment to prioritizing and implementing strategies that actively create spaces where all people, regardless of origin, feel welcome, valued, and able to participate fully.



- 1** Further refine and improve systems for identifying and advancing anti-racist, immigrant-friendly, and intentionally equitable policies, practices, and budgeting processes. Assess current work plans, such as the RSEAPs, to identify opportunities to align with goals of welcoming and belonging.
- 2** Catalyze greater multi-sector investment and partnership in Welcoming approaches that safeguard against harmful policies, enhance existing systems and infrastructures, and link and align a cross-sector response.
- 3** Create and implement a City Leadership Communications Strategy focused on issues affecting immigrant communities. This strategy will support City of San José communications staff in effectively highlighting the City's welcoming efforts, engaging residents, promoting shared community values, and delivering accurate, timely, and unified messaging.
- 4** Advance the City's legislative priorities approved by Council in 2025. Support legislation that protects immigrant rights, provides a pathway for citizenship, legal permanent residency, or protected status including comprehensive immigration reform. Oppose efforts that remove due process rights, undermine the humanity of immigrants and refugees, weaken data privacy or confidentiality rights, and separate or require long-term detainment of families.

Focus Area 2 - Equitable Access



Goal

Ensure immigrant communities can easily navigate and access City services, helping new arrivals find resources in all aspects of daily life – such as housing, transportation, and legal aid—for a smooth transition to becoming securely rooted in San José.



- 1** Improve customer service for English Language Learners and recent arrivals by reviewing and providing learning opportunities for City staff to make information, processes, and the environment meaningful and useable for as many people as possible. New or updated training may include how to work with interpreters and technological tools, and how to access translation and interpretation services.
- 2** Identify and simplify key “landing” or “arrival” processes for first-touch experiences with City systems. Through Racial and Social Equity Action Plans, support departments to evaluate accessibility through the lenses of language, disability, immigrant inclusion, and service hours in areas such as housing, transportation, planning, and more.
- 3** Consolidate and organize welcoming resources into an easily accessible directory and consider opportunities to orient new arrivals from foreign lands in various parts of the City where immigrant communities are already gathering, by activating existing community ambassadors (such as Promotoras), liaisons, and partnerships.
- 4** Enhance communication and coordination with community partners to expand access to resources that support economically stable communities, including housing stability, tenant protections, workforce development, and community-building opportunities.

Focus Area 3 - Economic Development



Goal

Support immigrant workers and businesses by simplifying business startup processes, improving access to City contracts and resources, and creating inclusive, fair work environments.



- 1 Promote and support immigrant entrepreneurship, including both traditional and alternative business models such as worker-owned cooperative structures.
- 2 Support the process of starting a business by addressing access and eligibility barriers to contracts and procurement, and strengthening support from the Small Business Ally program that guides entrepreneurs through City licensing, permitting, and related services.
- 3 Identify ways to promote immigrant welcoming within the Office of Economic Development and Cultural Affairs' existing work plan goals.
- 4 Facilitate connections between departments and community partners such as local employers, labor unions, community colleges, and immigrant-serving organizations to identify opportunities to support small and immigrant-owned businesses, especially in anticipation of high tourism events (i.e., Super Bowl, NCAA, World Cup).
- 5 Promote welcoming work environments that retain and support immigrant staff by providing training, resources, and information about worker rights to both workers and business owners. Engage employers and management to uphold these rights and foster inclusive workplaces.

Focus Area 4 - Connected Communities



Goal

Reduce prejudice and strengthen relationships among communities by creating opportunities for all residents, including immigrants, to connect across various backgrounds and identities, enhancing San José's reputation as a "Crossroads of the World."



- 1 Review and ensure compliance with multilingual standards for communication channels from City website and social media platforms, highlighting inclusivity and the social and cultural traditions and richness of San José's communities.
- 2 Publicly display "welcoming" messaging and materials, through visual and audio channels including banners, posters, Know Your Rights cards, multilingual recordings and more, in public areas where people with diverse backgrounds frequent, including but not limited to City Hall, libraries, community centers, and parks.
- 3 Amplify strengths-based narratives to challenge and dismantle the stigma surrounding immigrant communities. Increase collaboration with arts-based cultural groups to support their efforts in uplifting voices and stories of immigrant communities in San José.
- 4 Provide training opportunities and highlight existing programs for both City employees and San José's communities that combat discrimination and hate, and promote cultural exchange and collaboration between immigrant and non-immigrant communities.

Focus Area 5 - Education



Goal

Support children, youth, and adult learners, including those from immigrant families, to thrive in and out of school and feel connected to the larger San José community.



- 1 Integrate immigrant community experiences into activities associated with implementation of the San José Education Initiative Council Policy⁶ and the Children and Youth Services Master Plan⁷ — especially in the strategic priority areas related to Health and Mental Wellness, Learning and Empowerment, and Meaningful and Sustaining Jobs.
- 2 Review and align with Youth Empowerment Alliance Strategic Plan⁸ (and its future iterations) to continue to highlight programming beyond the frame of gang violence and crime, focused on fostering a welcoming environment and improving access to after-school programs and childcare for working immigrant families.
- 3 Consolidate youth-specific “welcoming” resources for newly immigrated youth to be provided in public spaces such as libraries, community centers, and school campus resource centers.
- 4 Address barriers and improve accessibility to English language classes and other adult education programs through reevaluation of schedules and processes for enrollment and targeted, collaborative outreach.

⁶ City of San José Council Policy 0-30: San José Education Initiative: <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/53750/637172904840870000>

⁷ City of San José Children and Youth Master Plan, Library and Education Commission, 2024: https://www.sjpl.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/142/2024/02/LEC-Presentation_February-21-2024_CYS-Master-Plan.pdf

⁸ San José Youth Empowerment Alliance Strategic Plan, 2023-2025, <https://www.sanjoseca.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/95719/638151651809830000>

Focus Area 6 - Civic Engagement



Goal

Enhance opportunities for effective and accessible community engagement, so that all residents, including immigrants, are able to fully participate in civic life.



- 1 Train City Staff and Community Partners on implementation of the Citywide Community Engagement Framework.⁹
- 2 Expand access to the City of San Jose's free online Civics Master Class³ through collaboration with existing City programs and multi-sector partners by providing culturally-responsive translation into additional languages and more in-person opportunities aimed toward full-time workers.
- 3 Continue to strengthen the use of unified tools for City staff that encourage Racial and Social Equity Impact Analysis, so they may evaluate areas of community engagement in programs, policies, and services.
- 4 Work within the City organization to strengthen and sustain shared leadership models with and among community and neighborhood groups to ensure that immigrant perspectives are included in decision making processes.

⁹ **Citywide Community Engagement Framework Annual Report:** Accepted by City of San José Community and Economic Development Committee: May 20, 2024: <https://sanjose.legistar.com/View.ashx?M=F&ID=12947077&GUID=1909407E-0ED8-4D01-A9A2-28F34F2D7156>

Focus Area 7 - Safe Communities



Goal

Increase the sense of physical and psychological safety resulting from strong, trusting relationships between immigrant residents and local safety services.



- 1 Preserve and strengthen the Santa Clara County Rapid Response Network to provide rapid response and emergency services to immigrants experiencing a crisis during and after threat of detention or deportation. Support community liaisons in San José to provide accompaniment, resource navigation, family unification, and other family resources.
- 2 Uphold and ensure compliance with City policies and resolutions¹⁰ that reinforce the separation between local law enforcement and federal immigration agencies.
- 3 Enhance public safety through community-led safety initiatives and metrics, responsive services, preventative measures, and community engagement.
- 4 Promote credible data resources and available research to the public that replace harmful, othering narratives and emphasize the intersectional identities and experiences of immigrant communities.
- 5 Foster an environment for community empowerment and agency by supporting activities that help community members learn their legal rights and protections.

¹⁰ Resolution of the Council of the City of San Jose Reaffirming the City's Commitment to Protecting the Rights and Safety of Immigrant Communities: Adopted by City Council: January 21, 2025: <https://records.sanjoseca.gov/Resolutions/RES2025-19.pdf>

Implementation and Governance

PREVIOUS WELCOMING PLANS SUCCEEDED BY involving the community, evolving over time, prioritizing accessible language, allowing flexible outcomes, and providing a useful framework through which other departments can learn. This approach ensured broad buy-in while creating adaptable structures to meet a rapidly-changing social context.

ORSE will continue to bridge and actively highlight the intersectionality of Welcoming efforts with racial and social equity, and accessibility work, underscoring that these efforts are mutually reinforcing and cannot succeed in isolation.

WORKING WITH PARTNERS IN CITY DEPARTMENTS:

ORSE will continue to support City departments in learning from each other and implementing initiatives across the seven focus areas by taking a consultative approach to integrating the Welcoming lens into current departmental planning processes. In doing so, ORSE will enhance and support the ongoing efforts of City departments and community partners, elevating alignment with the Welcoming framework while respecting their current capacity and initiatives by:

- Continuing to provide equity and accessibility training, department-specific consultation and technical assistance, each by reinforcing the intersectionality of the Welcoming work and how each effort builds upon and strengthens the others.

- Reviewing submitted departmental RSEAPs to identify connections between departmental work and the Welcoming framework, celebrating successful approaches, collaborating with department leaders to plan and prioritize actions, and identifying areas where additional support or cross-sector collaborations are needed.
- Integrating Welcoming Plan items into existing RSEAPs accountability tracking tools and reviewing them on a regular basis to support alignment and progress.

STAYING CONNECTED WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS:

The ORSE team is also committed to updating and continuing to engage local Community Partners by:

- Highlighting progress toward the Welcoming Plan in quarterly briefings to the public.
- Maintaining ongoing conversations and feedback through multi-sector networks such as the Race Equity Action Leadership Coalition and Immigrant Protection and Empowerment Network.
- Regular briefings, as directed, to City Council.
- Highlighting strength-based narratives and annual progress toward the Welcoming Plan in public communications such as ORSE's annual Year in Review publication and social media channels.



The Invitation

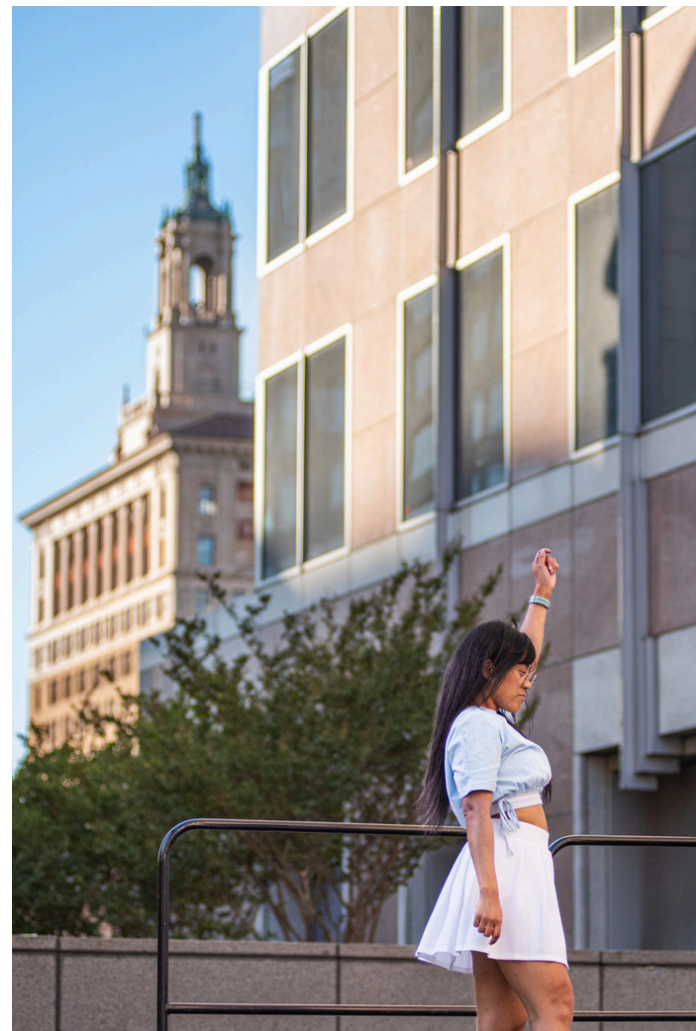
AT THIS PIVOTAL JUNCTURE IN OUR NATION'S HISTORY, building an inclusive and cohesive San José is work that requires a deliberate investment from all sectors. With an evolving national political discourse that threatens the economic stability of not only San José residents, but the fundamental structures of our local systems, a bold, collaborative set of local strategies that is rooted in universal values that transcend geographic boundaries are crucial.

The City of San José has shown a strong commitment to creating a welcoming environment for immigrants from all backgrounds. While significant progress has been made, our review and collaborative planning highlight key areas that still require considerable attention to ensure that all community members feel connected, valued, and welcome.

This Plan provides a clear path for advancing from a reactive to a proactive approach, focusing on solutions that create possibilities. As we move forward, we are reminded that building a truly Welcoming San José requires intentional collaboration across inclusion and belonging, racial and social equity, and accessibility efforts. These elements are interconnected and cannot thrive in isolation, particularly during times of shifting political climates that impact our immigrant communities.

For San José to continue to grow as a vibrant, inclusive city, it will take a united effort and partnership from City officials, community leaders, and residents. By embracing these recommendations and fostering ongoing communication, we can ensure that our city remains a place where every resident feels heard and valued. Together, we can set the standard for what it means to be a truly welcoming and inclusive major city.

WELCOMING SAN JOSÉ PLAN 2025-2030





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