



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Vice Mayor Chappie Jones
Mayor Sam Liccardo
Councilmember Raul Peralez
Councilmember Dev Davis
Councilmember David Cohen

SUBJECT: El Paseo de Saratoga

DATE: June 17, 2022

Approved

Date 6/17/22

RECOMMENDATION

Approve Staff and Planning Commission's recommendation to approve the project with the following conditions:

1. Direct the Developer to work with Development Services to explore the option of a pedestrian bridge connecting the site across Saratoga Avenue.
2. Developer shall initiate a community visioning process for the remainder of the El Paseo site.
3. Developer shall offer free VTA transit passes as an option to all residents of the new project for their time of residence, with a maximum of two passes per unit.
4. Developer shall work with DoT and VTA as part of the Urban Village process for the area.
5. Improve physical aesthetic to include:
 - a) A signature piece of architecture at a prominent corner (ie a sign, arch, or other unique feature)
 - b) Greenery or a water feature to the large empty space to the left when facing Whole Foods
 - c) Update the materials in the 1777 Saratoga building to mirror the buildings on the El Paseo site, including eliminating any metal grate materials

- d) Increase overall urban greening of the project to limit the urban heat island effect on the project site

BACKGROUND

We would like to thank our community members, the developer, Sandhill, and our City staff for working on this project collaboratively over the past three years. We have come a long way with El Paseo de Saratoga from the first community conversations back in the Summer of 2019 and We appreciate the consistent community engagement through the process of developing this project. The concept has evolved from two large residential towers and a commercial office building to the proposal we now have before us: a robust, mixed-use urban center including ground-level retail, a grocery store, and affordable housing.

Density is coming to every area of our City as a response to the growing population and struggle to keep up with housing demands. This project will add 994 new units, including 151 affordable units, to West San Jose. We are proud of the work Sandhill and the community have done to make this space an inclusive and vibrant urban center that will advance the City's housing goals, both market-rate and affordable, while adding a signature gathering space to West San Jose.

The influx of residents will undoubtedly add traffic congestion to this corridor, which is why we commend DoT and Public Works for their efforts in working with the developer on solutions to improve traffic flow and highlight pedestrian safety. We look forward to the Saratoga Ave improvements included in the West San Jose MTIP and request a robust transit improvement plan as part of the Urban Village planning process for this area. In the meantime, including VTA transit passes to residents will assist our efforts to offset single-occupancy vehicles coming in and out of the site.

Strong pedestrian connection across Saratoga Avenue has been a consistent priority of Vice Mayor Jones in the development of this project. A pedestrian bridge will connect the 1777 Saratoga building, containing the affordable housing units, to the main El Paseo site and facilitate the safest possible pedestrian connection while increasing the equity for those residents residing in affordable units as well as reducing traffic strain on the neighboring intersections.

We want to thank the Moreland West and Baker West neighbors for their consistent engagement in this project which has helped make it a more beneficial project for everyone. The surrounding community has been consistently requesting a plan for the entire 30 acre El Paseo site, which is why we request for the developer to conduct a visioning session and collaboratively pursue exploring options for future development.

Additionally, this memorandum highlights some key components that we believe will enhance the project to a "signature" status.

The signers of this memorandum have not had, and will not have, any private conversation with any other member of the City Council, or that member's staff, concerning any action discussed in the memorandum, and that each signer's staff members have not had, and have been instructed not to have, any such conversation with any other member of the City Council or that member's staff.