

November 15, 2022

San José City Council  
City of San José  
200 E. Santa Clara Street  
San José CA 95113

**Comments for Item 5.1 File 22-1660 – Downtown Transportation Plan.**

Dear Mayor Liccardo, Vice Mayor Jones and Councilmembers:

SPUR commends the Department of Transportation's development of the Downtown Transportation Plan. We want to thank the City and staff in pursuing bold strategies and big ideas for San José's Downtown that will move the city closer to meeting its goals for sustainable and equitable mobility within and beyond the city center. SPUR has been a supporter of the city's efforts to align its many transportation policies and strategies to better serve the people of San José.

San José is at the center of an expanding transit network with ongoing local and regional investments, and employers in Silicon Valley are continuously interested in great places for people to live, work, and play. **The Plan anticipates that Downtown will grow and bring in over 60,000 new residents, 100,000 new workers, 15,000 new students, and many more visitors by the year 2040.** However, many of the assumptions in the plan rely on housing, work and mobility patterns from 2019 – before the COVID-19 pandemic upended how people live their lives. One of the most transformative changes has been in the number of working-from-home options offered by employers and the lower number of commercial office space leasing in downtowns in comparison to pre-pandemic levels. The success of the Plan's initiatives will rely on how the City adapts to these new realities in its implementation of transit and mobility priority projects.

In order to meet the needs of an evolving and more highly dense city center, the Plan's prioritization of short-term and long-term projects offer strong targets and goals to meet within specified time frames. It has been critical for the City to set a structure to prioritize transit and multi-modal access within San José, and the Downtown Transportation Plan has clearly aligned many of these big ideas and projects alongside Move San José and Transit First Policy to bring

the city's many efforts under one roof. Moreover, Move San José's focus on key goals, metrics, performance indicators, and co-creation with community organizations and the public will ensure that good planning will guide the city's decision-making process.

While the Downtown Transportation Plan sets a course of action and a list of prioritized improvements for an efficient and reliable transportation system, it also asserts the value of public life by identifying streets as the primary public space of our daily lives. The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way people work, go to school, and shop. Outdoor dining initiatives, slow streets, and other public realm improvements have demonstrated their popularity and the role they can play in centering public life in the city. In particular, the Plan's big idea to lead a reimagining of Santa Clara Street promises to deliver on Downtown's potential to capture and leverage transit investments for a more connected and vibrant downtown. Grand boulevards carry the possibility of attracting residents, students, and commercial activity while enhancing safety. The development of a Santa Clara Street Grand Boulevard Plan will be vital to weave together corridor improvements across multiple concurrent projects in Downtown San José including BART Phase II, the Guadalupe River Park Re-envisioning, and Diridon Station Area planning.

We acknowledge and thank the City and staff for their dedication in building a vision alongside the San José Downtown community for a sustainable and equitable future of improved mobility and accessibility. However, we also recognize that the Plan's three categories – and in particular the Big Moves for Public Infrastructure – will require effective and coordinated implementation alongside strong community partnerships in order to make them a reality. SPUR stands ready to support the City in making sure that Downtown can achieve its goals for a better transportation future.

Sincerely,

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Erika Pinto  
San José Planning Policy Manager

Fred Buzo  
San José Director