



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR AND
CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Councilmember Raul Perez

SUBJECT: DOWNTOWN STRATEGY
2040 UPDATE

DATE: December 14, 2018

Approved by:

Date:

12/14/18

RECOMMENDATION

Accept staff recommendation and

1. Direct staff to agendize for the Transportation & Environment (T&E) Committee a discussion on Transportation Analysis Policy 5-1 specifically on Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plans and include data on how TDMs have offset parking impacts from development projects to adjacent communities.
2. Require for future project-level environmental reviews in the Downtown Strategy 2040 boundary to include evaluation on the path of travel to public schools as part of their Local Transportation Analysis (LTA) and implement improvements, if needed. Furthermore, path of travel to schools should strongly be evaluated in the Downtown Transportation Plan.
3. Direct staff to explore scheduling a future public meeting between the City Leadership and leadership from all primary public school districts serving San José to discuss issues related but not limited to land use considerations, effects of General Plan growth on schools, and impacts from decreasing enrollment.
4. For any future project on the parcels located at the intersection of Ryland and Santa Teresa Streets between SR-87 and the Guadalupe River and recommended for re-designation from Combined Industrial/Commercial to Downtown and Commercial Downtown, require adequate time for the community to review the project and hold public meeting(s) as needed to discuss the proposed project.

DISCUSSION

Thank you to our City Staff for bringing forth these recommendations on how our City should manage the projected growth for Downtown. As the Downtown councilmember, I have heard from both residents and businesses their excitement and anxiety about this growth. There is indeed consensus on the need to increase job capacity in Downtown while maintaining a balance with needed housing. Simultaneously, concerns around traffic, parking, congestion, and other quality of life matters are real issues that we as elected officials must continue to confront alongside this growth.

Development in Downtown enjoys the allowance of reduced parking and rightfully so as that will help reduce congestion in our urban core. However, most if not all projects in the boundary may be subjected to produce a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) plan to offset parking and congestion impacts to surrounding neighborhoods. As required, TDMs must demonstrate annually that their plan is indeed effective. However, community members have often rebuffed the notion of a TDM and shared skepticism at its efficacy. I understand that since the approval of Council Policy 5-1, our City Staff has been collecting data on TDMs and would appreciate an update on how we as a City are mandating and evaluating TDM measures.

Another consideration is the accommodation of families who desire to reside in urban settings such as Downtown. While many dense housing projects in Downtown are marketed toward the “working professional”, creating an environment that encourages working families to opt for urban multi-family housing rather than single family dwellings is important. However, families often prioritize school proximity in their housing search.

For example, in *Figure 1*, a family living in a Downtown property such as City Heights Condos (175 W. St. James St.) would be assigned to send their middle school age children 1.3 miles to Peter Burnett Middle School, which is either a 25-minute walk, 14-minute bus ride, 9-minute bicycle ride or 6-minute drive. Ideally, families should feel safe enough to consider modes other than vehicle travel, but most unlikely due to barriers such as lack of walkability, unsafe environments or time convenience. This is in large why there are efforts such as the City’s Walk n’ Roll

program that works to eliminate barriers for school travel. It is critical then that those efforts are met by ensuring that future developments we entitle and policies that we consider support our multi-modal vision for downtown while prioritizing safety and convenience for our children traveling to and from school daily.



Figure 1 – Walking Path from 175 W. St. James St. to Peter Burnett Middle School & SJUSD Schools in DTSJ

Ultimately, this should be part of a larger discussion on how our growth will affect our public school districts. Downtown should not only be a place for working professionals to live, work and play - but one that anyone can raise their family in.