



# Memorandum

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR  
AND CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Jon Cicirelli

**SUBJECT:** SEE BELOW

**DATE:** March 1, 2019

Approved

Date

3/1/19

**COUNCIL DISTRICT: 3**

**SUBJECT: SAN JOSE LIGHT TOWER CORPORATION LANDMARK SITE,  
SELECTION AND NEXT STEPS**

## RECOMMENDATION

- a. Accept Guadalupe River Park at Arena Green as the highest-ranking location from the site selection analysis completed for the San Jose Light Tower Corporation in coordination with the Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services, Public Works, and Office of Economic Development/Office of Cultural Affairs; and
- b. Endorse the San Jose Light Tower Corporation's plan to proceed with an International Ideas Competition to solicit concepts for a world-class iconic landmark at Guadalupe River Park at Arena Green.

## OUTCOME

This action will allow the San Jose Light Tower Corporation (SJLTC) to consider the Arena Green portion of Guadalupe River Park as its preferred site for their proposed gift to the City. This will allow SJLTC to proceed with an International Ideas Competition, the next phase of work towards the goal of giving the City of San José an iconic landmark.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The SJLTC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation that seeks to build an artistically-inspired iconic landmark on park land located in downtown San José. On May 1, 2018 City Council endorsed SJLTC's concept and authorized City staff to coordinate with the SJLTC and its consultant team in performing a site selection study.

Steinberg Hart consultants were contracted by SJLTC to perform the Site Selection Study. Table ES-1 summarizes the results of this analysis.

**Table ES-1  
Results of Site Ranking**

<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Total Points</b>
Arena Green	67.03
Plaza de César Chávez	58.05
Diridon Station	54.72
Discovery Meadow	49.24
Park Avenue	48.75
Saint James Park	48.67
Guadalupe Gardens	48.63

If Council accepts the results of the Site Selection Study and authorizes the SJLTC to proceed, the next step in the development process will be an International Ideas Competition. The competition will be conducted and fully funded by the SJLTC, with support from staff within Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services (PRNS), the Department of Public Works (PW), and the Office of Cultural Affairs (OCA).

The Competition will occur in two phases. Phase 1 includes a solicitation of ideas from the local and international community with three finalists selected. In Phase 2, the three finalists will be awarded a monetary stipend to develop their ideas for further review and selection of the final design.

The competition is expected to occur throughout 2019, with a final selection occurring on or before January 31, 2020. Following completion of the competition, staff will return to Council with a recommendation for the preferred design and seek authorization for SJLTC to proceed with design development. At that phase of the project, more details will be developed around capital funding for the project, construction strategies, and long-term operational models.

## **BACKGROUND**

The San Jose Light Tower Corporation (SJLTC) is a nonprofit organization formed in 2017. The organization was founded by passionate, local-community leaders with the vision of creating an artistic and iconic landmark in downtown San Jose. This public landmark is intended to be a gathering place that produces civic pride, spurs economic development, and is a “must-see” for visitors and locals alike. The organization’s goal is to integrate the region’s vivid history into the project and inspire future generations with an urban masterpiece that encompasses the themes of innovation and collaboration.

On May 1, 2018, City Council endorsed the general concept of SJLTC's gift to the City and authorized PRNS and OED to coordinate with the SJLTC and its consultant team in performing a site selection study. City Council on May 1, 2018 approved the following sites for evaluation:

- Arena Green;
- Discovery Meadow;
- Guadalupe Gardens Park;
- Plaza de César Chávez
- Saint James Park; and
- Diridon Station Area.

During development of the site selection criteria, SJLTC was asked by City staff to also evaluate Park Avenue at Almaden Boulevard near the Center for the Performing Arts as a potential location for the project. Therefore, a total of seven sites were considered. SJLTC contracted with the firm of Steinberg Hart to lead the evaluation of the sites noted above.

The next step in developing this project will be the execution of a two-phase International Ideas Competition. In Phase 1, ideas will be solicited locally and from throughout the world, offering opportunity for anyone to submit ideas. No entry fee will be charged. All ideas will be reviewed and evaluated by a jury and, in Phase 2, three teams will be awarded a stipend to further develop their concepts. The final concept will be selected by the jury from among the three finalists.

## **ANALYSIS**

### **Site Selection Study**

The SJLTC consultant, Steinberg Hart, led representatives of the SJLTC, PRNS, PW, OCA, and other stakeholders through the site selection process. Sixteen criteria were identified as important to the success of the project and its value to the City of San José. These sixteen criteria were categorized into three Principles: Programming Criteria, Location Criteria, and Site Specific Criteria. Table 1 presents these criteria and the underlying elements that were included in each.

**Table 1**  
**Criteria for Site Evaluation – San Jose Light Tower Corporation**

<b>Principle</b>	<b>Specific Criteria</b>
Programming	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Area available</li> <li>2. Outdoor capacity (of events and gatherings)</li> </ol>
Location	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Site offers access to public transit</li> <li>2. Optimize view corridors</li> <li>3. Economic development considerations</li> <li>4. Incentives and cost off-sets (potential funding opportunities)</li> <li>5. Site location optimizes neighboring San José foot traffic (optimal opportunity)</li> </ol>
Site Specific	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Potential for future expansion</li> <li>2. Utility requirements - current and future</li> <li>3. Proximity to airport and One-Engine Inoperative restrictions (airport elevation restrictions)</li> <li>4. Site is evaluated based on aircraft noise contours (noise impacts from airport)</li> <li>5. No obvious negative environmental influences (no unmitigatable impacts)</li> <li>6. Available parking within walking distance</li> <li>7. Define and evaluate conceptual tower massing at each location</li> <li>8. Adjacent and surrounding land use</li> <li>9. Project Timeline</li> </ol>

A working session was facilitated by Steinberg Hart on July 13, 2018 in which City staff and SJLTC spent three hours taking an anonymous survey to prioritize the criteria and weight them accordingly. The criteria were ranked by each of the participants on a scale of 1 (not important) to 5 (very important). Based on the voted score, each criterion was then weighted to provide a total score of 100 possible points for each location.

The results of the weighting exercise are shown in Table 2. The Criteria and Weighting process is presented in the Site Selection Study in Attachment A.

**Table 2**  
**Weighting of Site Selection Criteria**

<b>Points</b>	<b>Criteria</b>
8.06	Site offers access to public transportation
8.06	Define and evaluate conceptual tower massing at each location
7.50	Optimize view corridors
7.50	Adjacent and surrounding land use
7.22	Outdoor capacity
7.22	No obvious negative environmental influences
6.67	Economic development considerations
6.67	Incentives and cost off-sets
6.39	Utility requirements current and future
5.83	Area available
5.83	Project timeline
5.28	Proximity to airport and One Engine Inoperative (OEI) Restrictions
5.00	Site location optimizes neighboring San José foot traffic
4.72	Site is evaluated based on aircraft noise contours
4.16	Available parking within walking distance
3.89	Potential for future expansion
<b>100.00</b>	<b>TOTAL AVAILABLE POINTS PER SITE</b>

Over the course of the summer and fall, Steinberg Hart used the weighting criteria listed above as the foundation for the site analysis, gathering data and meeting extensively with professionals having knowledge of each site.

Once the data were acquired and analyzed, scores for the 16 criteria were given for each site. The sum of the points for each location determined the most compatible site for the SJLTC's project. Table 3 summarizes the results of this analysis.

**Table 3**  
**Results of Site Ranking**

<b>Site Name</b>	<b>Total Points</b>
Arena Green	67.03
Plaza de César Chávez	58.05
Diridon Station	54.72
Discovery Meadow	49.24
Park Avenue	48.75
Saint James Park	48.67
Guadalupe Gardens	48.63

The Site Selection Study was finalized in Fall 2018. Results of that report were shared at the Parks and Recreation Commission in December 2018. (See below for information on the outcome of that meeting). Based on feedback received from PRC and at the community meeting of February 21, 2019 the report was refined and revised. The revised report considers additional information regarding Arena Green. Scoring for each location was adjusted to reflect the updated information.

Based on the results of the analysis completed by Steinberg Hart, Arena Green is the preferred location for the landmark proposed by the SJLTC. The preferred location for development does not include the Confluence Point area of Arena Green where various cultural memorials are located. That portion of the park will be preserved during the SJLTC project, but some enhancements to the Confluence Point area may be included in the final project concept. The preferred location is located within the Guadalupe River Park Conservancy's management area and therefore, the site will be referenced as the Arena Green at Guadalupe River Park in future discussions.

#### International Ideas Competition

A Competition Brief will be developed to communicate information about the physical site (e.g., existing park uses, the riparian corridor, etc.), adjacent uses of the site (e.g., Highway 87, SAP Center, and future Diridon area development), height limitations, and other physical attributes. The Competition Brief will provide background on San José and its place in Silicon Valley, its history, and the vision for its future. The proposed competition would seek ideas for activating the site and would not pre-suppose specific uses, such as a cafe.

In developing the Competition Brief, a variety of organizations will be consulted. Following are examples of some likely organizations:

- Guadalupe River Park Conservancy
- SPUR (San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association)
- City of San José (including Airport, City Attorney's Office, PRNS, OED, and PW)
- Santa Clara Valley Water District
- James Lick Observatory
- California Department of Transportation
- Little Italy

The SJLTC, through its competition consultant will develop the Competition Brief. City staff from PRNS, PW, OCA and OED will work collaboratively on the brief with SJLTC. Legal review from the City Attorney's Office will also be requested prior to the competition to ensure that concerns relating to City Charter or City ordinances are appropriately resolved.

The Competition Brief will be distributed via an extensive marketing plan that has been developed by the SJLTC in coordination with its consulting team. The plan is intended to cast a broad net and spark interest from various locations. The plan includes:

1. Development of a Website: The website will be the key marketing feature of the competition. The website will feature information about the Arena Green site, its context within the City and the aspirations of the project. Deadlines, submission requirement and other key information will be presented. Entrants will submit their concepts through the website and winning submissions will be posted there as well. This website will go “live” at the start of the competition.
2. Digital Advertisements and Outreach: Solicitations and advertisements for entrants will be purchased by SJLTC on various websites that focus on architecture, art, and design competition such as [www.bustler.net](http://www.bustler.net), [www.archinect.com](http://www.archinect.com), and [www.CallforEntry.org](http://www.CallforEntry.org). Additional websites may also be used for the solicitations at the discretion of the SJLTC. Other digital outreach may be via production of a YouTube video filmed at the competition site, and social media outreach via project partners such as the City of San José Office of Cultural Affairs and PRNS.
3. Print Media: Solicitations will be conducted by SJLTC and mailed to various chapters of the American Institute of Architects and targeted international firms, and placed in local galleries and museums. There will be outreach to select magazines (e.g., *Architectural Record*, *Metropolis*, *Architect's Newspaper*, *Architect*, etc.) and press releases will be issued to Bay Area, national, and international media outlets to garner additional attention.
4. Radio and Broadcast Media: The SJLTC intends to perform additional outreach via local, regional, national, and international radio and television media.

Submittals will be evaluated by a jury of at least seven people, including local and international leaders. The jury will represent the diversity of the San José community and include various backgrounds such as architects, community leaders, and a “place-making” expert. Other jury members will hold similar backgrounds but will not necessarily be from within the San José community. There will be at least three members of the local community on the jury, including, but not limited to, one representative from the SJLTC and one from the Guadalupe River Park Conservancy. The jurors will not know the names of the submitting individuals and teams.

The jury will evaluate the Phase 1 submissions and recommend three to move on to Phase 2. As part of the Phase 1 evaluation, a Local Advisory Group will select recommendations for review by the Jury. An exhibition of these selections will allow for public review and comment. The exhibition will occur at a location where regular public access is available, such as a local gallery or store front location.

The selection criteria will be relatively subjective. Jury members will be provided with rating criteria that will be developed as the competition moves forward, but prior to the deadline for

Phase 1 submittals. The rating criteria will be developed by the SJLTC ideas competition facilitator in collaboration with appropriate City staff.

In Phase 2, the three finalists will be provided a stipend of approximately \$50,000 each to support further development of their idea into a more detailed concept. The three concepts will then be judged and evaluated by the jury using similar subjective criteria to that used in Phase 1.

Following Phase 2, the jury will recommend a single preferred design to the SJLTC and the City Manager. The SJLTC and the City Manager will discuss the selection with their respective staff and environmental consultants, consider the outcome of the community input (see below) and make a recommendation to Council regarding acceptance of a final design.

#### *Ideas Competition Outreach Plan*

During the Ideas Competition Phase of the project, SJLTC will provide public outreach. This will include, at a minimum, the following:

1. SJLTC will develop and use social media to post information and notices about the project and its status.
2. SJLTC will post all relevant project information on its website as noted above.
3. All entries will be available for public viewing through the SJLTC web site. The web site will include a mechanism that allows the public to comment on each entry and the jury will be provided these comments for consideration during their review.
4. A Local Advisory Group will review all entries and recommend up to 50 submissions for final review by the Jury. The Local Advisory Group will be comprised of architects, arts leaders, architects and community leaders from the local community. The selections of the Local Advisory Group will be displayed at a public venue (to be determined with input from city staff) for comment from the local community.
5. The jury will select three finalists from the entries at the conclusion of Phase 1.
6. The three final designs will be presented to the Public Art Committee (PAC) and to the PRC prior to start of Phase 2. At PRC the public input will be summarized and the SJLTC team will document the process used to select the finalists. As noted above, the three finalists will receive a stipend to further develop their submissions.
7. Once received by SJLTC, the Phase 2 submittals will be posted publicly with opportunity for the public to comment in a manner similar to that of Phase 1.
8. Following review of the Phase 2 submissions by the jury a public community meeting will be held to present the recommended preferred design.



9. Following the community meeting, the final selection will be presented to PAC, PRC and City Council.

## **EVALUATION AND FOLLOW-UP**

If endorsed by the City Council, the SJLTC will proceed with an International Ideas Competition in early 2019. The competition will take place during 2019, with a final selection occurring on or before January 31, 2020. Following completion of the competition, staff will return to Council with a recommendation for the preferred design and seek authorization for the SJLTC to proceed with design development. At that phase of the project, more details will be developed around capital funding for the project, construction strategies, and long term operational models.

## **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

### *Site Selection Phase*

The SJLTC conducted numerous outreach sessions during the site selection process. The following groups were contacted by SJLTC and the project concept was presented:

- San José City Council (May 2018)
- San José Parks and Recreation Commission (September 2018, December 2018)
- San José Arts Commission (June 2018)
- Guadalupe River Park Conservancy
- Various City departments including PRNS, OCA, Airport, and PW
- San Jose Downtown Association
- Preservation Action Council of San Jose
- Silicon Valley Organization
- César Chávez Family Vision
- San Jose Jazz Board of Directors
- Christmas in the Park
- San Jose Social Club
- Silicon Valley Chapter of American Institute of Architects
- Preservation Action Council of San Jose
- San Jose Sharks
- GOOGLE
- San Jose Downtown Residents Association
- The Tech Museum

On October 22, 2018, representatives of the SJLTC and PRNS met with the Board of Directors of Guadalupe River Park Conservancy. At this meeting Arena Green was presented as the preferred location and the Board was given the opportunity to comment on and ask questions

about the project. The Board signaled general support for the project and indicated they were interested in future discussions.

Following the December 2018 meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission, additional outreach was conducted by SJLTC with the following organizations:

- San José Parks Advocates
- Committee for the Green Foothills
- Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter
- Santa Clara Valley Water District
- San Jose Parks Foundation
- California Native Plant Society
- Audubon Society

In addition, the SJLTC has established an ongoing advisory committee that meets periodically to provide guidance related to the project. This group includes community leaders from throughout the city who are committed to San José and its future.

#### Community Meeting

The SJLTC, with support from PRNS, held a community meeting on February 21, 2019. Notification of the meeting was posted on PRNS, OED, and Council District 3 social media platforms. In addition, SJLTC provided notification to its email database. PRNS staff also directly emailed concerned community members that spoke at the PRC meeting in December.

The community meeting included an overview of the project, including a description of the Site Selection Study, and the process used to evaluate each location. Approximately 70 community members attended and provided various comments on the project.

In broad terms, comments pertained to community input during the project development process and environmental concerns about the use of Arena Green at Guadalupe River Park as the preferred location. The comments regarding community input were used to shape the proposed Ideas Competition Outreach Plan noted above. SJLTC continues to work to address the environmental concerns by gathering baseline data such as existing lighting levels, biological conditions and land use restrictions. Some of this information was presented at the meeting, and the public was provided opportunity to comment

#### COORDINATION

This memorandum has been coordinated with the City Attorney's Office, the City Manager's Budget Office, the Office of Economic Development, the Office of Cultural Affairs, and the Department of Public Works.

### **COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION/INPUT**

SJLTC presented their project to the Arts Commission on June 18, 2018 and the Parks and Recreation Commission on September 5, 2018. Both presentations were for informational purposes and no formal action was taken.

On December 4, 2018, the City of San Jose Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) heard a presentation on the site selection. PRC was asked to accept a status report from staff on behalf of the San Jose Light Tower Corporation (SJLTC) regarding the Site Selection Study results and the concept of the International Ideas Competition. The memorandum and presentation included content consistent with the information provided to the City Council in this memorandum. (For the agenda of the PRC meeting and supporting documents refer to <http://www.sanjoseca.gov/DocumentCenter/View/81329>)

At PRC, eight members of the community spoke on the project. Comments generally focused around potential environmental impacts to birds and wildlife associated with light intrusion to natural waterways and removal of trees from the park area. Staff and the project proponent attempted to address the concerns during the meeting.

Draft meeting minutes from that meeting documented the following action:

Commissioner Ames moved to acknowledge receiving the report and not recommend any particular site, recommending the City Council make the selection, considering project guidelines based on location, environmental impact, footprint of the project, and compatibility with the site; and also suggests additional public outreach be conducted, seconded by Commissioner Adas. The motion passed. (5-1-1-3). Noes: Snider, Abstain: Woolfe, Absent: Cron, Lovely and Mandair

As a result of the concerns raised at PRC, SJLTC has contracted lighting, environmental and engineering consultants to develop more detailed documentation about the Arena Green site. That information will be communicated to competition entrants through the Competition Brief.

### **COST SUMMARY/IMPLICATIONS**

Though SJLTC would fund all aspects of the design competition through private fundraising efforts, a modest amount of staff assistance will also be necessary. Subsequent to City Council approval to proceed with the next phase of the project, staff will work with SJLTC to refine the project scope and level of assistance required. Any request to augment existing resources, if necessary, would be brought forward as part of a future budget process.

HONORABLE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

March 1, 2019

**Subject: San José Light Tower Landmark Site Selection and Next Steps**

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**CEQA**

Not a Project, File No. PP17-002, Consultant services for design, study, inspection, or other professional services with no commitment to future action.

/s/

JON CICIRELLI

Acting Director, Parks, Recreation and  
Neighborhood Services

For questions, please contact Nicolle Burnham, Deputy Director, at (408) 793-5514.

Attachment A: Site Selection Study

(Available online at:

<https://documentcloud.adobe.com/link/track?uri=urn%3Aaaid%3Aascds%3AUS%3A65251c38-27bb-458d-8c98-b11d5d08b072>)