City Council Hearing

April 23, 2019

CITY OF SAN JOSE
CAPITAL OF SILICON VALLEY

Planning, Building and Code Enforcement

Item 10.2

Council Priority #19 (Part 1)

GPT19-001 & PP19-018: City-initiated General Plan Text Amendment and San Jose Downtown Design Guidelines and Standards.

Presenter: Tim Rood, Planning Division Manager, PBCE

Project Description

- **Council Priority #19, Part 1**
- **New Guidelines** would replace 2004 **Downtown Design Guidelines**
- **General Plan text amendment** would amend the introductory text and delete certain identified Guidelines from "Chapter 3. Final Plan Design Guidelines" of the 2014 **Diridon Station Area Plan**

Project Area

Values	Guiding Principles
PROSPERITY	ENHANCE THE LOCAL, CITY, AND REGIONAL ECONOMY.
Innovate and Support Creativity	Encourage innovation in a built environment that supports the flexibility to enable creativity and innovation, public art, and cultural engagement.
Promote High Quality Architecture	Create an attractive and functional urban environment through the positive addition of each new building or exterior modification of a non-historic building.
Focus on the Ground Floor	Promote a diverse, active, and attractive pedestrian environment at the ground level including flexible, multi-purpose spaces suitable for arts as well as commercial and residential uses.
Mix Uses and Activities	Enable positive interaction between a diverse and fine-grained mix of uses.
HEALTH	PROMOTE HUMAN AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH.
Design for Sustainability	Use new development to make the area more environmentally and economically sustainable through building quality and multimodal connectivity.
Put People First	Promote health and activity with safe, attractive, functional, and comfortable urban spaces and buildings.
Create Connection and Accessibility	Use new development to enhance individual health through Downtown's multimodal accessibility and enhance pedestrian and bicycle connectivity.
Generate Resilience	Create a physical infrastructure that enables human, economic, environmental, and social resilience.

Values	Guiding Principles
IDENTITY AND HISTORY	ACCENTUATE THE AREA'S UNIQUE CHARACTER AND CULTURE
Create Legibility	Promote Downtown as a cohesive and unified district with citywide and regional importance while celebrating unique sub-areas and using public art as a placemaking method.
Create a Memorable Destination	Build on Downtown's unique strengths as the cultural, artistic, and creative center of the South Bay and support residents' active, personal participation in arts and culture.
Be Authentic to San José	Build upon the cultural, historic, and environmental characteristics of San José.
Welcome All of San José	Strengthen the area as a center for the City and the region, for people of all abilities, ages, genders, and income levels.

4.4.2.a Windows and Glazing

DESIGN FOR SUSTAINABILITY, BE AUTHENTIC TO SAN JOSE, PROMOTE HIGH QUALITY ARCHITECTURE

Use window type and design to create a building that is more pleasant for its occupants, sustainable, and efficient.

RATIONALE

The use of directionless *facades* with no response to solar and wind conditions creates a building unsuited to its environment. Such a building is over-reliant on mechanical systems, which is environmentally wasteful and unsustainable. Sealed off spaces can be less healthy due to poor air quality and can foster lower worker productivity than spaces with fresh air. Responding to *context*, climate and orientation will create a cityscape that is interesting and sustainable.

Individual in-window and through-wall air conditioning units are less desirable than other alternatives. Units frequently become dirty and lack external maintenance. Replacement with mismatched units creates a haphazard appearance. Noise and water condensation reduce the enjoyment of balcony space and adjacent ground level *Public Space*. The energy efficiency of individual units is typically poor compared to centralized systems.

GUIDELINES

a. Design the building's window size and location and the *facade* treatment to respond to nearby buildings and interesting elements of the ground level *Public Realm*.

b. Preserve, acknowledge, and exploit long distance and near views of noteworthy structures or natural features.

c. Use operable windows to allow occupants to take advantage of San José's typically warm, sunny climate and potentially reduce the need for mechanical heating and cooling.

d. Respond to the building's orientation by varying the *fenestration* on different *facades*. Use architectural elements such as shading devices or balconies to regulate solar gain on southern and western *facades* with passive solar design. Technological solutions such as windows with variable opacity may be used as an alternative.

e. Create a balance between window and wall, especially in the *Podium Level*, to give the *facade* character and weight. Potentially combine some windows to reduce busyness in the *facade*.

f. Orient windows vertically near building corners to emphasize verticality.

g. Do not use individual through-window or through-wall air conditioning units.

STANDARDS

a. Do not use individual through-window or through-wall air conditioning units on buildings over three stories tall.

b. When individual air conditioning units are present, shield them from view with uniform *facade* elements.

RELATED GUIDELINES

3.5.1 - Pedestrian and Bicycle Entrance Location

5.3.1.a - Active Frontages

5.5.1 - Pedestrian and Bicycle Entry Design

GENERAL PLAN REFERENCE

- Climate Smart San José
- CD-2.8, CD-1.11, MS-4.1, MS-4.2

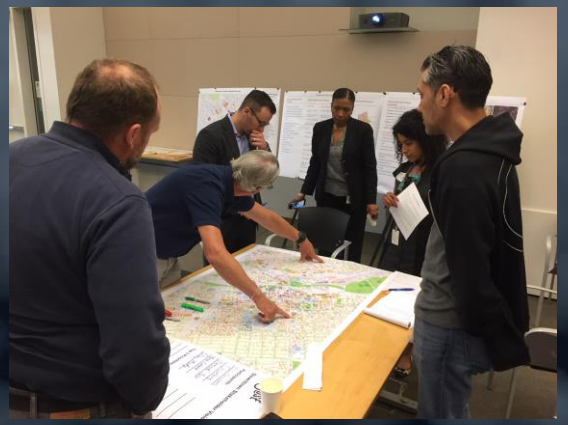
DO - Vary *fenestration* by building *facade*, placing windows to take advantage of solar conditions and views to the nearby ground level *Public Realm*.

DO NOT - While present on some historic buildings and others, window air conditioning units do not create an attractive *facade* and should be avoided.

DO / DO NOT - Operable windows enhance livability and sustainability. Shading devices would have reduced the potential for glare.

Guidelines Structure

- **Guideline title:** limited to one subject.
- **Value** corresponds this section to one or few values
- **Statement:** intent of the guidelines
- **Rationale:** design principle and the reason for its importance.
- **Guidelines:** best practices, qualitative, overarching
- **Standards:** numeric and verifiable. Proposed projects must meet the minimum standards
- **General Plan Reference** and **Related Guidelines** sections



Community Engagement

- **Workshop 1:** April 19, 2018
- **Focus Groups:** May 2018-Jan 2019
- **Planning Commission Study Sessions:** Nov 7 & Dec 12, 2018
- **Workshop 2:** Dec 5, 2018
- **Historic Landmark Commission:** Feb 6 & March 6, 2019
- **Public Hearings:** March & April 2019
- **Website:** City Design Team: http://www.sanjoseca.gov/index.aspx?NID=6064

Key Messages

- Become more vibrant and people-centric
- Focus on the ground floor
- Preserve historic buildings/districts
- Promote high quality architecture
- Mix uses and activities
- Focus on the local identity
- Create a more dramatic skyline

Planning Commission Recommendation:

Approve Staff's recommendations with three changes to the updated Downtown Design Guidelines & Standards:

(a) Section 1.1, map on page 3, change the label of Downtown core (2011 General Plan) on the map to "General Plan Downtown Growth Area."

(b) Define "historic building" in Section 2.3, 1c on page 13, and in Section 4.2.4., Applicability, item c on page 38.

(c) Section, 4.4.2.b, "City of San José Voluntary Bird-Friendly Building Design Fact Sheet" shall be mandatory for projects located in the design guidelines boundary.

Voluntary Bird-Friendly Building Design Fact Sheet:

1. Reduce large areas of transparent or reflective glass.
2. Strategically place landscaping:
    a. Locate water features and other bird habitat away from building exteriors to reduce reflection.
    b. Reduce or eliminate the visibility of landscaped areas behind glass.
3. Reduce or eliminate spotlights on buildings.
4. Turn non-emergency lighting off at night, especially during bird migration season (February - May and August - November). Visit www.pge.com for lighting control rebate opportunities.

Staff Recommendation:

Planning Commission items (a) and (b); and
(c) Voluntary Bird-Friendly Building Design Fact Sheet:

- Make item #1, "Reduce large areas of transparent or reflective glass" applicable only to projects within 100 feet of a riparian corridor.
- Make item #2, "Strategically place landscaping:
    a. Locate water features and other bird habitat away from building exteriors to reduce reflection.
    b. Reduce or eliminate the visibility of landscaped areas behind glass" Applicable only to projects within 100 feet of a riparian corridor.
- Make item #3, "Reduce or eliminate spotlights on buildings" applicable only to projects within 100 feet of a riparian corridor.
- Make item #4, "Turn non-emergency lighting off at night except during June, July, December and January due to bird migration" applicable only to projects within 100 feet of a riparian corridor and change "at night" to "between 2:00AM and 5:00AM.

Staff Recommendation, Continued:

Minor editorial changes to provide enhanced readability:

- Additional definitions added to Section A.0, Glossary
- One addition to the "Exceptions to the Standards," in Chapter 1, Introduction, Section 1.4
- Several minor editorial/clarifying changes throughout the document

Q&A / Discussion