

WORKING PARTNERSHIPS USA

June 10, 2019

RE: Item 4.2 General Plan Four-Year Review Scope of Work.

Dear Mayor Liccardo, Vice Mayor Jones, and Members of the City Council,

I am writing to offer comments on the proposed scope of work for the 4-year review of the Envision 2040 San Jose General Plan. The last general plan review, completed in 2016, reaffirmed many of the principles expressed in the original plan: a focus on job creation, urban-village centered-housing growth, and the need to protect employment lands. In the years since, major changes have happened or been announced in the city. Major developers like Gary Dillabough, Boston Properties, and Jay Paul Co. have announced plans for millions of square feet of office space to move into the Downtown area. Google has announced plans for a mega-campus of up to 8 million square feet near Diridon Station. At the same time, the need for affordable housing has only grown in response to the slow production of affordable housing, the lack of protection for tenants in naturally occurring affordable housing, and the overall economic stratification taking place in the city.

We offer the following comments on the scope of work in the spirit of engaging with city staff and the council to move to the council towards a policy of planning for economic and residential inclusion and making sure that land use policy does not contribute to our housing affordability challenges.

We believe that in order to better balance job growth and to be responsive to the market, the city should be as flexible and nimble as possible to address increased housing and job creation goals. Part of that is making sure that if changes to the general plan increase risks to existing vulnerable populations, that the city would take care to plan for that eventuality. The taskforce for the General Plan review should reflect the diversity and the differences of experience in the city. To do that, we should allow council members from each district to appoint members to the taskforce.

Tools may include everything from opportunity housing to expanded production in underutilized business corridors, to facilitating the preservation of naturally occurring affordable housing. We look forward to working with the taskforce to make sure that the City of San Jose can remain a welcoming and opportunity-rich place where everyone can have a safe home to thrive and grow.

Regards,

Aboubacar Ndiaye
Policy Manager, Working Partnerships USA