

January 27, 2021

San Jose City Council 200 E. Santa Clara Street San Jose, CA 95113

Mayor Liccardo, and Members of the Council:

The real and increasing impacts of climate change are now undeniable. 2020 was the warmest year on record, and in the western states that resulted in an historically devastating wildfire season, persistent drought, record-setting urban heat, and compromised air quality. In the Bay Area, these challenges will soon be compounded by sea-level rise and inland flooding. It is critical that cities begin planning for how to adapt to and protect residents against these growing climate threats.

One of the most effective steps that San Jose can take is to prioritize and implement an equity-focused, comprehensive strategy to expand urban greening.

Urban Greening is the process of incorporating nature-based solutions like rain gardens, swales, green roofs, and street trees into the built environment. These natural features help filter stormwater to improve the water quality in the Bay and provide a host of complementary community benefits that provide the city with high return on investment.

By incorporating urban greening as design elements of road and transit projects, San Jose can make streets safer and more appealing for bikes and pedestrians while also encouraging people to move away from overly relying on cars, which helps achieve GHG reduction goals. Using native trees and plants creates habitat for native wildlife, improves air quality, and reduces urban heat in areas that currently lack sufficient tree canopy as climate change leads to higher average temperatures. Creating more walkable neighborhoods supports local businesses, and promotes public health, which is more important than ever as people stay close to home and rely on their immediate surroundings for recreation during the Covid-19 pandemic. And as future storms are predicted to become more intense and unpredictable, these vegetated areas within the streetscapes can help manage stormwater and attenuate localized flooding.

San Jose already has a green stormwater infrastructure plan but needs to create a coordinated implementation strategy that prioritizes urban greening across departments and creates alignment throughout project planning and delivery. Urban greening can and should be incorporated into existing community development and transportation plans such as BetterBike2025, Vision Zero, and the urban villages. This approach will accelerate the city's climate resilience and make these plans more successful and appealing to city residents.

It is also important to recognize that the risks to San Jose residents from climate change are not the same in all parts of the city. Air pollution and urban heat tend to be higher in lower income communities. By creating an equity-focused strategy to promote urban greening, the Council can ensure that these important resilience strategies are equitably distributed throughout the city and reach the neighborhoods that need them the most.

A comprehensive implementation strategy will also enable the city to be more competitive for outside funding to finance these projects. We have worked with city staff to identify existing funding sources at the federal, state, and regional levels. Encouragingly, the new Presidential Administration has indicated that it will prioritize climate change, equity, and mode shift away from cars for federal transportation funding. This implementation strategy will align with those federal goals and make San Jose more competitive for federal funding.

San Jose has shown bold climate leadership though the adoption and implementation of Climate Smart San Jose to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and take responsibility for the city's contribution to the problem. But the challenges outlined above are already apparent and require action now to improve the quality of life for San Jose residents and prevent future harm. San Jose has demonstrated repeatedly that it has the capacity to lead on climate. Adaptation is the next frontier in that effort, and urban greening should be key to the city's strategy.

Sincerely,



David Lewis Executive Director



January 12, 2021

San Jose City Council 200 E. Santa Clara Street San Jose, CA 95113

Mayor Liccardo, and members of the Council:

As the council continues to monitor progress on Climate Smart San Jose, California Walks/Walk San Jose would like to urge the City to embrace climate adaptation alongside the plan's goals to reduce greenhouse gas emission and promote resource conservation. While Climate Smart San Jose shows bold leadership on climate mitigation, it leaves adaption and resilience strategies as topics for future consideration. We no longer have the luxury of waiting to adapt our communities to be resilient to the changing climate and acting now can provide multiple benefits for the City's people and wildlife.

One of the most effective steps that the city can take is to prioritize and coordinate a comprehensive strategy to expand urban greening.

Nature-based solutions like urban greening – including rain gardens, swales, and urban tree canopy – help manage stormwater and improve water quality in the Bay, and they also provide a host of climate adaptation benefits that are urgently needed. By incorporating more vegetation into roadway designs and public spaces, urban greening can alleviate urban heat, better manage more frequent rain events, improve air quality, and make streets safer and more appealing for bicyclists and pedestrians.

California Walks is the statewide voice for pedestrian safety and walkable, healthy communities, and Walk San Jose works at the local level to promote walkability and safety in the City of San Jose. California Walks/Walk San Jose has a long history of working with the City of San Jose to advance pedestrian safety efforts through Vision Zero. A comprehensive urban greening strategy will allow San Jose to meet environmental, traffic safety, and mode of travel goals set by Climate Smart San Jose and Vision Zero.

Improvements like these benefit public health and enhance the quality of life within neighborhoods, which is more important than ever as people stay close to home and rely on their immediate surroundings for recreation during the Covid-19 pandemic.

San Jose's current green stormwater infrastructure plan relies almost exclusively on underground regional projects that provide necessary water quality improvements but fail to deliver any of these additional resilience benefits that above-ground urban greening provides.

Therefore, we urge the council to adopt a comprehensive urban greening strategy and implementation plan as a city council priority.

In doing so, the council should direct staff to incorporate urban greening elements into all roadway improvement projects wherever feasible and make urban greening a default – not just suggested or optional – component of the city's various infrastructure planning documents, such as Vision Zero, Better Bike 2025, the Community Forest Management Plan, and the Urban Villages. This approach will accelerate the city's climate resilience and make these plans more successful and appealing to city residents.

The risks to our communities from climate change are not the same in all parts of the city. Air pollution and urban heat tend to be higher in lower income communities. By making urban greening a council priority, you can ensure that these important resilience strategies are equitably distributed throughout the city and reach the neighborhoods that need them the most.

Sincerely,



Co-Executive Director California Walks



Walk San Jose Program Manager California Walks



January 22, 2021

Rules and Open Government Committee and San Jose City Council 200 E. Santa Clara Street San Jose, CA 95113

Re: Urban Greening Implementation Plan

Dear Mayor Liccardo, Rules and Open Government Committee members,

The Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter, the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, and the California Native Plant Society Santa Clara Valley Chapter, are environmental organizations with strong interest in climate adaptation as well as in urban ecology. Our groups have engaged in the development of Climate Smart San Jose and a large scope of environmental, land use, open space and sustainability planning efforts in the City. **We write in support of council member Davis memorandum titled Urban Greening Implementation Plan.**

At this time, we see a great need for breaking silos with a strong, comprehensive approach to climate adaptation and ecological resilience in San Jose. We hope San Jose will **prioritize and coordinate a strategy and implementation plan to introduce rewilding and expand nature-inspired greening of the urban landscape.** This will augment the City's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emission and clean storm water, promote the City's resilience to the changing climate, improve health and well-being and integrate nature into the city's infrastructure to help slow the loss of species in our region and beyond. Indeed, the San Jose Envision 2040 General Plan aspires to expand nature-based solutions, see Exhibit A, as does the ActivateSJ Strategic Plan.

Developing tree canopy and inserting natural greenways into the most harsh asphalt and concrete dominated neighborhoods will mitigate the urban heat islands while promoting equity throughout the City since pollution and urban heat tend to be higher in lower income communities.

A multitude of studies show the health benefits that come with urban ecology and nature are especially needed in less affluent communities. A review by the National Institute of Health¹ concludes, "*This literature reveals an extraordinarily broad range of benefits* [of access to nature], *albeit with, varying levels of evidentiary support* (*Table 1*)", see Exhibit B.

Earth has witnessed five mass extinction events. The latest occurred 66 million years ago, when 76% of all species went extinct. Biologists believe that we are now living through the 6th extinction event, associated primarily with climate change, land use choices and other anthropogenic impacts. It has never been more critical to integrate ecology and nature based solutions into our urban landscapes.

"Among terrestrial vertebrates, 322 species have become extinct since 1500, and populations of the remaining species show 25% average decline in abundance. Invertebrate patterns are equally dire: 67% of monitored populations show 45% mean abundance decline."² We now even face the extinction of the once ubiquitous western monarch. "The decline in the western monarch population from the 1980s to the present can be hard to conceptualize. Here we approximate the scope of the decline from 4.5 million monarchs in the 1980s, to about 2,000 today."³



https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5744722/

² https://science.sciencemag.org/content/345/6195/401

³ https://xerces.org/western-monarch-call-to-action

Three primary key ecological principles determine the degree to which urban ecosystems function effectively and, by extension, increase resilience to climate change, provide natural infrastructure, and support the health, wellbeing and related benefits for people:⁴

- Degree of connectivity the extent to which large and small green-blue spaces and freshwater systems are joined up, physically and functionally
- Degree of naturalness how close the flora, fauna, soils and freshwater systems are to what was there before the city was built
- Degree of structural diversity the structural complexity and variety of the flora, fauna, soils and freshwater systems present

At a finer City scale and with intent and planning, these elements can include nature-based solutions such as native plantings in parks, rain gardens, swales, and the urban tree canopy. The benefits of this approach are compounding: in addition to a host of climate adaptation benefits that are urgently needed, incorporating more vegetation (especially California Native plant species) into roadway designs, rain water management and public spaces can help manage stormwater, increase shade, reduce heat-island effects, improve air quality, support a biodiverse ecosystem, improve human physical and mental health, make streets safer and more appealing for bicyclists and pedestrians and result in a healthier, happier city and residents. For an in depth local study of these issues, please consult the recently published "Integrating Planning with Nature: Building climate resilience across the urban-to-rural gradient" by SFEI, SPUR, and the Open Space Authority⁵.

San Jose's current green stormwater infrastructure plan relies almost exclusively on underground regional projects that may provide necessary water quality improvements but fail to deliver any of the additional resilience benefits that above-ground urban greening provides.

We hope the Rules committee brings to Council this opportunity to direct staff to incorporate rewilding and urban greening elements into parks, stormwater infrastructure and roadway improvement projects wherever feasible and make urban greening a default – not merely suggested or optional – component of the city's various infrastructure planning documents, such as Vision Zero, Better Bike 2025, the Community Forest Management Plan, the Urban Villages, Downtown Strategy 2040, Vision North San Jose, Activate SJ Strategic Plan, San Jose Trail Network Toolkit Planning & Design, and all new area-specific planning efforts. This

⁴ <u>https://www.iucn.org/crossroads-blog/202010/cities-must-reconnect-natural-foundations-face-climate-health-and-biodiversity-crises</u>

⁵https://www.sfei.org/sites/default/files/project/Integrating Planning with Nature SFEI 112020 low res.pdf.

approach will increase equity and sustain and regenerate biodiversity, accelerate the city's climate resilience and make these plans more successful and appealing to city residents.

Sincerely,



Shani Kleinhaus, Ph.D., Environmental Advocate Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society

David W. Poeschel, Guadalupe Regional Group Conservation Chair

Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter

Linda Ruthruff, Conservation Chair California Native Plant Society, Santa Clara Valley Chapter

EXHIBITS

Exhibit A: Related General Plan References:

[Stream Protection (homelessness) Much of the GP language is addressed in the Riparian Corridor and Bird Safe Design ordinance.]

ER-2.5 **Restore riparian habitat through native plant restoration** and removal of nonnative/invasive plants along riparian corridors and adjacent areas. [Not necessarily just development mitigation.]

[Urban Canopy (trees)]

Community Forest San José's Community Forest consists of trees growing on public lands, such as street trees (i.e., those in median islands and roadside landscape areas), parks, trails, community centers, libraries and schools; and trees growing on private property, including trees in the backyards of homes, shopping center parking lots, and within the landscaped areas of high-technology office buildings. The Community Forest provides scenic beauty, serves as a barrier to wind and as a visual buffer, and provides shade to reduce heat in urban areas. It also removes pollutants (e.g., carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, and particulate matter) and absorbs carbon dioxide from the air, helps conserve energy and water use, replenishes oxygen, and protects against flood hazards, landslides, and soil erosion by absorbing rain water. Native and landscape trees within this Forest provide important wildlife habitat for birds and other animals living in urban areas. All large specimen and heritage trees, especially native oaks, have special aesthetic and historical value. Street trees promote neighborhood traffic safety by encouraging motorists to drive more slowly. San José's Community Forest softens the effects of urban development, raises neighborhood and commercial property values, and contributes to the community's identity and sense of place.

MS-21.1 Manage the Community Forest to achieve San José's environmental goals for water and energy conservation, **wildlife habitat preservation**, stormwater retention, heat reduction in urban areas, energy conservation, and the removal of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

MS-21.2 Provide appropriate resources to preserve, protect and expand the City's Community Forest.

MS-21.3 Ensure that San José's Community Forest is comprised of species that have low water requirements and are well adapted to its Mediterranean climate. Select and plant diverse species to prevent monocultures that are vulnerable to pest invasions. Furthermore, consider the appropriate placement of tree species and their lifespan to ensure the perpetuation of the Community Forest.

MS-21.4 **Encourage the maintenance of mature trees, especially natives**, on public and private property as an integral part of the community forest. Prior to allowing the removal of any mature tree, pursue all reasonable measures to preserve it.

MS-21.5 As part of the development review process, preserve protected trees (as defined by the Municipal Code), and other significant trees. Avoid any adverse affect on the health and longevity of protected or other significant trees through appropriate design measures and construction practices. **Special priority should be given to the preservation of native oaks and**

native sycamores. When tree preservation is not feasible, include appropriate tree replacement, both in number and spread of canopy.

MS-21.6 As a condition of new development, require the planting and maintenance of both street trees and trees on private property to achieve a level of tree coverage in compliance with and that implements City laws, policies or guidelines.

MS-21.7 Manage infrastructure to ensure that the placement and maintenance of street trees, streetlights, signs and other infrastructure assets are integrated. **Give priority to tree placement in designing or modifying streets.**

MS-21.8 For Capital Improvement Plan or other public development projects, or through the entitlement process for private development projects, require landscaping including the selection and planting of new trees to achieve the following goals: • Avoid conflicts with nearby power lines. • Avoid potential conflicts between tree roots and developed areas. • Avoid use of invasive, non-native trees. • Remove existing invasive, non-native trees. • Incorporate native trees into urban plantings in order to provide food and cover for native wildlife species. • Plant native oak trees and native sycamores on sites which have adequately sized landscape areas and which historically supported these species.

MS-21.9 Where urban development occurs adjacent to natural plant communities (e.g., oak woodland, riparian forest), landscape plantings shall incorporate tree species native to the area and propagated from local sources (generally from within 5-10 miles and preferably from within the same watershed).

MS-14.4 Implement the City's Green Building Policies (see Green Building Section) so that new construction and rehabilitation of existing buildings fully implements industry best practices, including the use of optimized energy systems, selection of materials and resources, water efficiency, sustainable site selection, passive solar building design, **and planting of trees and other landscape materials to reduce energy consumption.**

[Access to Nature (native plant landscaping and wildlife friendly habitats and green streets)]

ER-6.3 Employ low-glare lighting in areas developed adjacent to natural areas, including riparian woodlands. Any high-intensity lighting used near natural areas will be placed as close to the ground as possible and directed downward or away from natural areas.

ER-6.4 Site public facilities such as ballparks and fields that require high-intensity night lighting at least 0.5 mile from sensitive habitats to minimize light pollution, unless it can be

demonstrated that lighting systems will not substantially increase lighting within natural areas (e.g., due to screening topography or vegetation).

ER-6.5 Prohibit use of invasive species, citywide, in required landscaping as part of the discretionary review of proposed development.

ER-6.6 Encourage the use of native plants in the landscaping of developed areas adjacent to natural lands.

Goal ER-7 – Wildlife Movement Minimize adverse effects of future development on wildlife movement and remove or reduce existing impediments to wildlife movement.

ER-7.1 In the area north of Highway 237 design and construct buildings and structures using bird-friendly design and practices to reduce the potential for bird strikes for species associated with the baylands or the riparian habitats of lower Coyote Creek.

ER-7.2 In areas important to terrestrial wildlife movement, design new or improved existing roads so that they allow wildlife to continue to move across them (e.g., either over the road surface or through undercrossings or overcrossings designed for the animals moving through the areas). Enhance undercrossings used for wildlife movement (e.g., by enlargement) when roads are improved.

ER-7.3 Where new road crossings of streams are constructed, or existing culverts are replaced or improved, design them to allow movement of aquatic species present in any watercourse crossed by the road. Use clear-span bridges in place of culverts where feasible.

MS-11.5 Encourage the use of pollution absorbing trees and vegetation in buffer areas between substantial sources of TACs and sensitive land uses.

[Green Streets (green pathways to parks)]

MS-18.11 Adopt guidelines or ordinances that encourage or require Bay-friendly, water efficient design, landscape and irrigation within San José.

MS-18.12 Encourage stormwater capture and encourage, when feasible and cost effective, onsite rainwater catchment for new and existing development.

MS-14.2 Enhance existing neighborhoods by adding a mix of uses that facilitate biking, walking, or transit ridership through improved access to shopping, employment, community services, and gathering places.

MS-21.7 Manage infrastructure to ensure that the placement and maintenance of street trees, streetlights, signs and other infrastructure assets are integrated. **Give priority to tree placement in designing or modifying streets.**

[Green Watershed (bioswales)]

MS-3.1 Require water-efficient landscaping, which conforms to the State's Model Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance, for all new commercial, institutional, industrial, and developer-installed residential development unless for recreation needs or other area functions.

MS-3.3 Promote the use of drought tolerant plants and landscaping materials for nonresidential and residential uses. **[Natives should be promoted for pollinaters, birds, etc.]**

MS-3.4 Promote the use of greenroofs (i.e., roofs with vegetated cover), landscape based treatment measures, pervious materials for hardscape, and other stormwater management practices to reduce water pollution.

MS-3.5 Minimize areas dedicated to surface parking to reduce rainwater that comes into contact with pollutants.

MS-3.6 Develop and maintain policies, ordinances, and guidelines that require reduced use of potable water and that reduce water pollution.

MS-20.4 Work with local, regional and state agencies to protect and enhance the watershed, including the protection of surface water and ground water supplies from pollution and degradation.

[ActivateSJ Strategic Plan References]

Key Plan Outcomes: Stewardship, Nature, Equity & Access, Identity, Public Life

We will cultivate a park and recreation system that **preserves nature**, **supports wildlife** and enhances community wellbeing.

Operate and maintain the outdoor spaces that provide the residents of San José access to nature.

We Protect, Preserve and Promote Natural Areas for All People

Access to nature encourages early childhood development, reduces stress and promotes socialization. Nature exists in parks, trails, community gardens, community centers, and open space. Well planned outdoor spaces can support wildlife corridors, provide tree canopy, sustain

our waterways, and offset the effects of climate change. As the provider of parks, recreation and neighborhood services in a rapidly growing city, we embrace access to nature for all residents.

Increasing access to nature in parks can help the environment and people. Emphasizing the use of California native and drought-tolerant landscapes in park and landscape designs will support native wildlife, better suit our localized climate and improve maintenance practices.

Exhibit B: National Institute of Health (Table 1)

No	Health/well-being	References
•	benefits	
1	Reduced stress	Berto 2014; Fan et al. 2011; Nielsen and Hansen 2007;
		Stigsdotter et al. 2010; van den Berg and Custers 2011; van
		den Berg et al. 2010; Ward Thompson et al. 2016
2	Better sleep	Astell-Burt et al. 2013; Grigsby-Toussaint et al. 2015; Morita
		<u>et al. 2011</u>
3	Improved mental	
	health:	
	Reduced	Astell-Burt et al. 2014c; Beyer et al. 2014; Cohen-Cline et al.
	depression	2015; Gascon et al. 2015; Kim et al. 2009; Maas et al. 2009b;
		McEachan et al. 2016; Nutsford et al. 2013; Sturm and Cohen

2014; Taylor et al. 2015; White et al. 2013

Reduced anxietyBeyer et al. 2014; Bratman et al. 2015a; Maas et al. 2009b;Nutsford et al. 2013; Song et al. 2013; Song et al. 2015

- 4
 Greater happiness, Ambrey 2016; Fleming et al. 2016; Larson et al. 2016;

 well-being,
 life

 MacKerron and Mourato 2013; Van Herzele and de Vries

 satisfaction
 2012; White et al. 2013
- 5 Reduced aggression Bogar and Beyer 2016; Branas et al. 2011; Kuo and Sullivan 2001a, b; Troy et al. 2012; Younan et al. 2016
- 6
 Reduced
 ADHD
 Amoly et al. 2014; Faber Taylor et al. 2001; Faber Taylor and symptoms

 Kuo 2009; Faber Taylor and Kuo 2011; Kuo and Faber Taylor

 2004; Markevych et al. 2014b; van den Berg and van den Berg 2011
- 7 Increased prosocial <u>Broyles et al. 2011; Dadvand et al. 2016; de Vries et al. 2013;</u>
 behavior and social <u>Fan et al. 2011; Holtan et al. 2015; Home et al. 2012; Piff et</u>
 connectedness <u>al. 2015; Sullivan et al. 2004</u>
- 8 Lower blood Duncan et al. 2014; Markevych et al. 2014a; Shanahan et al.

	pressure	2016
9	Improved postoperative recovery	Park and Mattson 2008; Park and Mattson 2009; Ulrich 1984
10	Improved birth outcomes	Reviewed by <u>Dzhambov et al. 2014</u>
11	Improved congestive heart failure	<u>Mao et al. 2017</u>
12	Improvedchilddevelopment	<u>Fjørtoft 2001; Kellert 2005</u>
13	Improved pain control	Acutely (<u>Diette et al. 2003</u> ; <u>Lechtzin et al. 2010</u>) and chronically (<u>Han et al. 2016</u>)
14	Reduced obesity	Bell et al. 2008; Cleland et al. 2008; P. Dadvand et al. 2014a; Lachowycz and Jones 2011; Sanders et al. 2015; Stark et al.

2014

15 Reduced diabetes Astell-Burt et al. 2014a; Bodicoat et al. 2014; Brown et al. 2016; Thiering et al. 2016 16 Better eyesight French et al. 2013; Guggenheim et al. 2012; He et al. 2015 17 Improved immune Li et al. 2006; Li et al. 2008a; Li et al. 2008b; Li et al. 2010; Li function and Kawada 2011 18 Improved general health: Adults Brown et al. 2016; de Vries et al. 2003; Kardan et al. 2015; Maas et al. 2006; Maas et al. 2009b; Stigsdotter et al. 2010; Wheeler et al. 2015 Ray and Jakubec 2014 Cancer survivors Children Kim et al. 2016 19 Reduced mortality Coutts et al. 2010; Gascon et al. 2016b; Hu et al. 2008; James

et al. 2016; Takano et al. 2002; Villeneuve et al. 2012

20	Asthma	and/or	Andrusaityte et al. 2016; Dadvand et al. 2014a; Fuertes et al.
	allergies	(studies	2014; Fuertes et al. 2016; Lovasi et al. 2013; Lovasi et al.
	show	both	2008; <u>Ruokolainen et al. 2015</u>
	improvements and		
	exacerbati	ons)	



January 15, 2021

San Jose City Council 200 E. Santa Clara Street San Jose, CA 95113

Mayor Liccardo, and members of the Council:

As the council continues to monitor progress on Climate Smart San Jose, Green Foothills would like to urge the city to embrace climate adaptation alongside the plan's goals to reduce greenhouse gas emission and promote resource conservation. Green Foothills is an environmental nonprofit working to protect open space, farmland and natural resources in San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties through advocacy, education and grassroots action.

While Climate Smart San Jose shows bold leadership on climate mitigation, it leaves adaption and resilience strategies as topics for future consideration. We no longer have the luxury of waiting to adapt our communities to be resilient to the changing climate and acting now can provide multiple benefits for the city's people and wildlife.

One of the most effective steps that the city can take is to prioritize and coordinate a comprehensive strategy to expand urban greening.

Nature-based solutions like urban greening – including rain gardens, swales, and urban tree canopy – help manage stormwater and improve water quality in the Bay, and they also provide a host of climate adaptation benefits that are urgently needed. By incorporating more vegetation into roadway designs and public spaces, urban greening can alleviate urban heat, better manage more frequent rain events, improve air quality, and make streets safer and more appealing for bicyclists and pedestrians.

Improvements like these benefit public health and enhance the quality of life within neighborhoods, which is more important than ever as people stay close to home and rely on their immediate surroundings for recreation during the Covid-19 pandemic.

San Jose's current green stormwater infrastructure plan relies almost exclusively on underground regional projects that provide necessary water quality improvements but fail to deliver any of these additional resilience benefits that above-ground urban greening provides.

Therefore, we urge the council to adopt a comprehensive urban greening strategy and implementation plan as a city council priority.



In doing so, the council should direct staff to incorporate urban greening elements into all roadway improvement projects wherever feasible and make urban greening a default – not just suggested or optional – component of the city's various infrastructure planning documents, such as Vision Zero, Better Bike 2025, the Community Forest Management Plan, and the Urban Villages. This approach will accelerate the city's climate resilience and make these plans more successful and appealing to city residents.

The risks to our communities from climate change are not the same in all parts of the city. Air pollution and urban heat tend to be higher in lower income communities. By making urban greening a council priority, you can ensure that these important resilience strategies are equitably distributed throughout the city and reach the neighborhoods that need them the most.

Sincerely,



Alice Kaufman Legislative Advocacy Director, Green Foothills



November 17, 2020

San Jose City Council 200 E. Santa Clara Street San Jose, CA 95113

Mayor Liccardo, and members of the Council:

For over 60 years, Greenbelt Alliance has helped create cities and neighborhoods that make the Bay Area a better place to live - healthy places where people can walk and bike; communities with parks, shops, transportation options; homes that are affordable - and defend the Bay Area's natural and agricultural landscapes from sprawl development. Greenbelt Alliance's new <u>strategic plan</u> envisions a Bay Area of healthy, thriving, resilient communities made of lands and people that are safe during climate disasters and recover quickly from wildfire, floods, and drought, where everyone is living with nature in new and powerful ways for generations to come.

This year has demonstrated that the long-predicted impacts of climate change are already becoming our daily reality. More frequent and devastating wildfires, persistent drought, record-setting urban heat, and compromised air quality are becoming common, and these challenges will soon be compounded by flooding at the shoreline and inland, from sea level rise and more frequent storms.

Nature-based solutions like urban greening – including rain gardens, swales, and native urban tree canopy – help manage stormwater and improve water quality in the Bay. They also provide a host of climate adaptation benefits that are urgently needed. By incorporating more trees and vegetation into roadway designs and public spaces, urban greening can alleviate urban heat, support native habitat, better manage more frequent rain events, improve air quality, and make streets safer and more appealing for bicyclists and pedestrians.

That's why we support making a comprehensive urban greening strategy and implementation plan a Council priority.

A comprehensive urban greening strategy can enhance other citywide planning projects, like Vision Zero, Better Bike 2025, the Community Forest Management Plan, and the Urban Villages. And since climate impacts are not distributed equitably, this approach would ensure that the areas of San Jose that are already being impacted disproportionately by a changing climate benefit from these resilience strategies.

Prioritizing urban greening will not only accelerate the City's move toward climate resilience but will ultimately make San Jose a more appealing place to live, work, and play.

Sincerely,

Justin Wang Advocacy Manager



January 11, 2021

San Jose City Council 200 E. Santa Clara Street San Jose, CA 95113

Re: Urban Greening Strategy and Implementation Plan Prioritization – SUPPORT

Mayor Liccardo, and Members of the City Council:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority in strong support of City Council adoption of a comprehensive urban greening strategy and implementation plan as a City priority.

The Open Space Authority is a public, independent special district created by the California State Legislature in 1993 at the urging of community leaders who saw the importance of maintaining the ecological integrity of the region. The Authority conserves the natural environment, supports agriculture, and connects people to nature by protecting open spaces, natural areas, and working farms and ranches for future generations.

The City of San Jose continues to demonstrate significant climate leadership through its implementation of Climate Smart San Jose and work on the development of Climate Smart San Jose's Natural and Working Lands Element which considers the climate adaptation and mitigation benefits and GHG avoidance benefits of protecting and enhancing greenspaces like lands in Coyote Valley.

Consistent with this climate leadership, one of the most effective steps that the City can take to ensure realization of these bold planning efforts is to create a comprehensive strategy to implement nature-based solutions in urban areas. Nature-based solutions like urban greening – including rain gardens, swales, and urban tree canopy – help manage stormwater and improve water quality in San Francisco Bay, and they also provide a host of climate adaptation benefits that are urgently needed. By incorporating more vegetation into roadway designs and public spaces, urban greening can alleviate the urban heat island effect, better manage more frequent rain events, improve air quality, and make streets safer and more appealing for bicyclists and pedestrians. Andrea Mackenzie, General Manager Alex Kennett, District 1 Mike Flaugher, District 2 Helen Chapman, District 3 Dorsey Moore, District 4 Shay Franco-Clausen, District 5 Mike Potter, District 6 Kalvin Gill, District 7

33 Las Colinas Lane San Jose, CA 95119 408.224.7476 T 408.224.7548 F openspaceauthority.org Improvements like these also benefit public health, often in communities where there are great health inequities, which are especially prevalent during a public health crisis like a pandemic. However, these benefits are important to San Jose's residents and improve their quality of life under non-crisis conditions as well.

Recent publications like Making Nature's City and Integrated Planning with Nature, both available on the San Francisco Estuary Institute's website, underscore the importance of strategic urban greening efforts in prioritizing and siting green infrastructure investments that buffer the City from the extreme weather effects of climate change while improving access to nature in underserved communities.

The City Council should direct staff to incorporate urban greening elements into all roadway improvement projects wherever feasible and make urban greening a default – not just suggested or optional – component of the city's various infrastructure planning documents, such as Vision Zero, Better Bike 2025, the Community Forest Management Plan, and the Urban Villages. This approach will accelerate the city's climate resilience and make these plans more successful and appealing to city residents.

We urge prioritization of an urban greening strategy and implementation plan in the City's annual priority setting process that would build on the City's record of climate leadership.

Sincerely,



Andrea Mackenzie General Manager

Cc: Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority Board of Directors

San Francisco | San Jose | Oakland

January 22, 2021

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

Dear Mayor Liccardo, Vice Mayor Jones and Councilmembers,

As the council continues to monitor progress on Climate Smart San José, SPUR would like to urge the city to embrace climate adaptation alongside the plan's goals to reduce greenhouse gas emission and promote resource conservation. While Climate Smart San José shows bold leadership on climate mitigation, it leaves adaption and resilience strategies as topics for future consideration. We no longer have the luxury of waiting to adapt our communities to be resilient to the changing climate and acting now can provide multiple benefits for the city's people and wildlife.

One of the most effective steps that the city can take is to prioritize and coordinate a comprehensive strategy to expand urban greening.

As global temperatures rise, temperatures in San José are likewise projected to increase, and rainfall is projected to become more sporadic. These climatic shifts will result in several indirect climate risks, including increasingly intense droughts, floods, extreme heat events, and wildfires; declining air quality; and possible crop failure on agricultural lands. There is also the potential that gray infrastructure used to mitigate climate risk will further increase emissions, such as pumps used to deal with flooding or air conditioning during extreme heat events. These impacts are projected to disproportionately impact disadvantaged communities; achieving climate resilience will require addressing this inequity.

Last year SPUR released a report, *Integrating Planning with Nature*, in partnership with the San Francisco Estuary Institute and the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority on building climate resilience across the urban-to-rural gradient through nature-based solutions. Nature-based solutions like urban greening – including rain gardens, swales, and urban tree canopy – help manage stormwater and improve water quality in the Bay, and they also provide a host of climate adaptation benefits that are urgently needed.

San José's current green stormwater infrastructure plan relies almost exclusively on underground regional projects that provide necessary water quality improvements but fail to deliver any of these additional resilience benefits that above-ground urban greening provides.

Therefore, we urge the council to adopt a comprehensive urban greening strategy and implementation plan as a city council priority. We also believe that such urban greening strategies should be accompanied by anti-displacement strategies to prevent the unintended consequence of greening leading to gentrification.

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In doing so, the council should direct staff to incorporate urban greening elements into all roadway improvement projects wherever feasible and make urban greening a default – not just suggested or optional – component of the city's various infrastructure planning documents, such as Vision Zero, Better Bike 2025, the Community Forest Management Plan, and the Urban Villages. This approach will accelerate the city's climate resilience and make these plans more successful and appealing to city residents.

The risks to our communities from climate change are not the same in all parts of the city. Air pollution and urban heat tend to be higher in lower income communities. By making urban greening a council priority, you can ensure that these important resilience strategies are equitably distributed throughout the city and reach the neighborhoods that need them the most.

Sincerely,

Michelle Huttenhoff Planning Policy Director SPUR