

VISION FOR COMMUNITY HEALING AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY

I want to sincerely thank everyone who has joined in this process of healing and recovery. Recognizing the amount of work we have in front of us to rebuild San José can be daunting, and I applaud those who assist and persist in molding our community to become one that we can all be proud of. We are faced with an ambitious and challenging task to reimagine what is "normal". We must rethink the systems that led to the widespread suffering exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic because we cannot return to how things were. These systems are unsustainable.

With the somber anniversary of our very own Patricia Cabello Dowd's passing this Saturday, I want us to pay our respects to the members of the community whose lives have drastically changed. Some face economic instability and food insecurity, while others are sheltering in place with an abusive partner. Some took on new roles as teachers and mentors; meanwhile, 15,000 of our children were disconnected from virtual learning at a time so critical in their development. Some continue to face rent and utility debt, while some have turned to or relapsed into substance abuse. The pandemic exacerbated the fear of becoming homeless in the most expensive real-estate market in the country. And of course, COVID-19 took the lives of many of our loved ones. And now, the disparities are more glaring than ever – for some, the pandemic has been merely an inconvenience.

One year into this pandemic, Latinos still make up 51.1% of COVID-19 cases while accounting for only 25.8% of the total population in Santa Clara County. There is a clear and distinct disparity in how the pandemic has affected a community based on their zip code. Let this document memorialize the disproportional challenges people have faced in 95127, 95122, 95116, 95111, and 95112. These communities have felt the most significant economic, social, and educational losses. For them, it's waiting for death to come knocking on their door.

Eastside wills itself to survive, to keep moving forward and make space in a hostile environment. While that is a badge of honor in our resilience, we shouldn't have to wear it. How we recover must focus primarily on these communities who have lost the most. They were the ones who couldn't afford to lose any more and still lost everything. If not for the pride and persistence of our community, the pandemic would have been the straw that broke the camel's back.

Our duty as fellow San Joséans is that we strive to mitigate that which is in our control. Our communities are reeling from years of pain. There is no better time to address the inequities caused by intentional decisions that have resulted in generations of underinvestment and playing the blame-game. We must address with intention symbolic barriers such as Highway 101 that keep us from economic stability and upward mobility that divide a city, East/West, and manifests through a lack of resources and opportunities.

Although we have made ground on securing COVID-19 paid sick leave, non-profit partnerships to facilitate testing and vaccine states, and ensuring accessibility for isolation and quarantine resources, these are not long-term solutions. My vision for healing and recovery focuses on:

1. **COVID-19 & Emergency Responses**— especially cruel to the most vulnerable among us.
 - Preparing for the next emergency, be it pandemic, flood, fire, storm, earthquake, or power outages.
 - Reinforcing the existing infrastructure of our most vulnerable communities is imperative.
2. **Career Pathways** – ensuring financial security.
 - Leading the economy by securing beyond a livable wage for all San Joséans regardless of their career.
 - Creating a new norm that focuses on THRIVING, not just surviving.
3. **Homeownership** – building generational wealth.
 - Providing comprehensive and inclusive pathways to homeownership that combats redlining, environmental racism, and gentrification.
 - Building capacity so you can invest in yourself and your family’s wealth versus contributing to someone else’s portfolio.
4. **Education** – removing institutional barriers.
 - Simplifying avenues to higher education by addressing the price tag, investing in mentorship programs, building capacity and closing the opportunity gap for community college students.
5. **Childcare and Preschool** – supporting the next generation.
 - Creating universal childcare that is affordable, safe, and reliable to ensure early childhood development, so children from low-income backgrounds are not left behind.
 - Fostering a family-friendly San José that empowers women to participate in the workforce and close the gender gap in employment, exacerbated by the pandemic.
6. **Environmental Justice** – addressing inaccessibility in environmental sustainability.
 - Acknowledging the financial barriers low-income communities face that prevent from buying more sustainable products, from cars to groceries.
 - Take on the urban heat island inequity across San José.
7. **San José Safety-Net** – honoring our marginalized communities.
 - Creating a San José where women, children, and the LGBTQIA+ community can build confidence and develop and express themselves.
 - Ensuring freedom of existence without being targeted by violence.

While we continue to face the tremendous challenges of the pandemic, I wanted to offer words of unity from Booker T. Washington to guide our recovery process: “In all things that are purely social we can be as separate as the fingers, yet one as the hand in all things essential to mutual progress.”

Yours in service,



Councilmember Magdalena Carrasco