

VISION FOR COMMUNITY HEALING AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY

As a nation we are in a moment like never before. We have witnessed months of protests after centuries of racism, while simultaneously navigating a pandemic that has affected every corner of our country. It is clear that we must work together to create a collective vision for San José that will help us heal and recover as a community.

Statement of Principles

Many in our community are experiencing deep-seated anger, despair, and distrust of the system and our government, for legitimate reasons. It is my belief that in order to see true community healing there must first be action. Along with tangible action must be the creation of an environment of trust, respect, and civility. Strong and bold action combined with love and kindness will create social progress and community healing simultaneously.

Racial and Social Justice

Systemic racism, racial bias, and institutional racism are uncomfortable topics to discuss, but I trust that this Council is up for the challenge, especially considering all of the work already underway with our equity initiatives. As part of the process, I would like to include equitable access to transit, targeted outreach for below market rate housing and communities of color, more affordable housing units, and job training targeted to disadvantaged communities and displaced workers.

Re-imagine Community Safety

Since June, Council has proposed numerous public safety reforms that were adopted by the SJPd, creating thoughtful reform to our re-imagining community safety and police initiative. A successful “Re-imagine Community Safety” process should include ideas from both community members and law enforcement to create more transparency and accountability, which remains the core of my proposals on this topic. For that reason, I would like to see the Independent Police Auditor revive the IPA Advisory Council, based on a community centric platform. This will encourage a robust and engaged dialog that can lead to additional reforms and community healing.

Small Business/Disadvantaged Business

As we forge ahead under the County and State’s reopening plan it is critical that we consider recommendations of the Silicon Valley Economic Recovery Roundtable and place a priority on San Jose’s small businesses, supporting them as they recover and adjust to the “new normal,” particularly in employment trends, workplace safety, technical support, and equitable procurement opportunities for our small minority and women owned businesses. Through grants, loans, support services, and access to contracting opportunities, we can assist our small, minority, and women-owned businesses to not only survive the pandemic in the short term, but to grow, expand, and thrive in the long term. To effectively achieve this, I believe it is time for the City to reinstate a Small Business Commission that can provide a forum for input into issues and policies affecting San José’s small businesses.

Economic Opportunity for All

Most will agree that economic opportunity corresponds to the realization of one’s personal potential. If a child is faced with an inadequate school system, their struggle to realize their intellectual and economic potential is greater. For this reason, I see the importance of expanding and ensuring continued access to Wi-Fi across the City, strengthening the collaboration with County and State organizations to capitalize on their services, and expanding on workforce development and apprenticeship programs.

Conclusion

The year 2020, between the COVID-19 pandemic and civil unrest as a result of the murder of George Floyd, created unprecedented health and social challenges in its enormous wake. This is felt at unparalleled rates by those most vulnerable in our community. Whether we openly admit to it, we are all healing from the past year. We have the opportunity to pave a new path this new year through growth, reform, understanding and healing. I am incredibly proud of the strides we have taken thus far and there is no doubt in my mind that we will continue to change the narrative of San José in a meaningful way.