

Memorandum

**TO: PARKS AND RECREATION
COMMISSION**

FROM: Nicolle Burnham

SUBJECT: SEE BELOW

DATE: February 22, 2021

Approved

Date:

**SUBJECT: OPEN SPACE CONCEPT OF THE DOWNTOWN WEST DESIGN
STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES**

RECOMMENDATION

Recommend to City Council approval of the open space concept of the Downtown West Design Standards and Guidelines.

OUTCOME

Approval of this recommendation will inform the City Council's decision regarding the Downtown West Mixed-Use Project.

BACKGROUND

The City of San José ("City") is currently reviewing a development proposal by Google called the Downtown West Mixed-Use Plan (the Project). The Project area extends approximately one mile from north to south and is bounded by:

- Lenzen Avenue and the Union Pacific Railroad tracks to the north;
- North Montgomery Street, Los Gatos Creek, the Guadalupe River, State Route 87, Barack Obama Boulevard (formerly South Autumn Street), and Royal Avenue to the east;
- Auzerais Avenue to the south; and
- The Caltrain rail corridor to the west.

In October 2019, Google submitted a planning application for the Project. In October 2020, Google released updated plans, the Draft Downtown West Design Standards and Guidelines

(DWDSG), and other documents for public comment. On November 18, 2020, the proposal for parks and open space within Downtown West was presented to the Parks and Recreation Commission (the Commission) as an informational item and to receive feedback. Since then, the parks and open spaces within Downtown West and the DWDSG have been revised and is scheduled for release on March 1, 2021. The revised DWDSG will be posted for public review on the Google San Jose Project¹ website. The Project, including its parks and open spaces, will be considered by City Council spring 2021.

Project Scope

The Project site covers approximately 80 acres of land near the Diridon Station (see Attachment A). It sets forth a long-term vision that includes a mix of residential and commercial development, including office space and active uses. Specifically, the application proposes the construction of up to:

- 7,300,000 gross square feet of office space;
- 4,000 units of new housing units (studying up to 5,900 housing units);
- 500,000 gross square feet of active uses, which may include retail, cultural, arts, etc.;
- 100,000 gross square feet of event space, hotel use (up to 300 rooms), and limited-term corporate accommodations (up to 800 rooms); and
- 15 acres of open space, comprised of 4.8 acres of City-dedicated parks and trails and 10.2 acres of project-sponsored open space.

The application also includes plans for transportation and utilities. The Project will require an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), General Plan and Diridon Station Area Plan amendments, Planned Development Zoning, Vesting Tentative Map(s), Planned Development Permit, which includes the DWDSG, and a Development Agreement, among other permits and approvals. If approved, the Project would take multiple phases over a number of years to fully build all elements of the Project.

Downtown West Design Standards and Guidelines

The DWDSG were developed to support and provide the framework that will guide design of the Project and ensure consistency with the Project's vision. If approved, the DWDSG will define the vision, intent, allowable uses, and character of the Project.

The DWDSG will include chapters that provide design direction for land use, mobility (roads and transit), buildings, open space (including City-dedicated parks and trails), sustainability, and lighting and signage within the Project area.

The DWDSG defines performance-based Standards and Guidelines. The *Standards* are considered requirements that must be followed. Compliance with the Standards is mandatory and assured with measurable design criteria. The *Guidelines* are typically more subjective and establish design intent, design expectations, and encouraged or discouraged features.

¹ More information found at: www.sanjoseca.gov/GoogleProject

The DWDSG built upon the Downtown Design Standards and Guidelines developed for Downtown San José but would apply specifically to the Project within the Downtown West area. In case of conflict between the two documents, the DWDSG will be followed.

If the project is approved, Staff would review specific building designs and site plans for conformance with the DWDSG. In the open space portion of the Project, staff of the Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Department (the Department) would assist the Director of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement in reviewing specific building designs and open space site plans for conformance with the DWDSG.

The Diridon Station Area Plan (DSAP): The Downtown West Project proposes to implement the vision of the DSAP. The City originally adopted the DSAP in 2014 to guide the planning of a 240- acre area surrounding the Diridon Station. The 2014 DSAP envisions the transformation of the station area into a dynamic mixed-use urban neighborhood. Since its adoption, several key planning assumptions have changed in addition to Google submitting a development application.

Downtown West also includes a project-specific DSAP amendment that will be approved concurrently with the DWDSG and other approval documents. The City also is currently considering various amendments to the DSAP as part of a separate planning effort.

Park Impact and Parkland Dedication Ordinances (PIO/PDO): These ordinances require residential developers to dedicate parkland, improve parkland, pay in-lieu fee, or a combination of the three options. Developers, including Google, can dedicate and improve the same trail and parkland to meet their parkland obligation.

ANALYSIS

Overall Open Space Context

The key features in the open space system have not changed substantially since last presented to the Commission on November 18, 2020. The Project continues to propose approximately 15-acres of open space distributed throughout the approximately 80-acre site. The 15-acres of open spaces will be comprised of 4.8 acres of City-dedicated improved parkland and trails and 10.2 acres of Project sponsor-owned open space. The Project sponsor-owned open space will generally be publicly accessible and will not receive any credit against the Project's parkland obligation in the PDO/PIO.

The open spaces' design and character will match the surrounding area, from nature based open spaces along the creek to a hardscaped plaza welcoming people from Downtown to grassy parks along Los Gatos Creek and north of SAP.

The Project proposes the following six types of open spaces in ten distinct spaces.

1. City-Dedicated Parks, which are publicly accessible open space that will be improved and dedicated to the City.
2. Los Gatos Creek Multi-Use Trail, which will be improved and dedicated to the City in two trail segments from West San Carlos Street to Park Avenue and from West San Fernando Street to West Santa Clara Street.
3. Privately-owned Public Parks, which are open spaces that are accessible to the public, and will generally operate in a manner similar to public parks.
4. The Los Gatos Creek Riparian Setback and the Los Gatos Creek Riparian Corridor within the project.
5. Mid-block Passages, which allow for pedestrian circulation between buildings in the public realm and an extension of City-dedicated parks and privately-owned public parks, and
6. Semi-Public Open Spaces, which are Project sponsor-owned open spaces adjacent to City and privately-owned public parks. These may be used for commercial activities, such as outdoor seating for restaurants and/or landscaping buffers. Semi-public open spaces may have access restrictions or more limited hours than the Park to which they are adjacent.

A break down of the types of open spaces in the ten spaces are shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1– Open Space Acreage in the Downtown West Project Area

Working Titles*	City Dedicated Park	Los Gatos Creek Multi-Use Trail	Privately-owned Public Park	Los Gatos Creek Riparian Corridor	Los Gatos Creek Riparian Setback	Mid-block Passages	Semi-Public Open Space	Total
Los Gatos Creek Connector	0.91				0.33	0.11	0.03	1.38
Los Gatos Creek Park	0.37	0.28	0.56	0.17	0.86		0.26	2.50
The Meander			0.87			0.64	0.52	2.03
Social Heart	0.57						0.15	0.72
Creekside Walk			0.59	0.11	0.53		0.20	1.43
Los Gatos Creek East		0.25	0.26	0.11	0.73	0.06		1.41
Gateway Plaza			1.01				0.08	1.09
St. John Triangle	1.53					0.30	0.10	1.93

North Montgomery Pocket Park						0.26	0.35	0.61
Northend Park	0.89		0.88				0.13	1.90
Total	4.27	0.53	4.17	0.39	2.45	1.37	1.82	15.00

* Note: All working titles are for identification purposes only. There will be community outreach for naming City-dedicated open space in accordance with City Policy 7-5.

City-Dedicated Spaces

Google is proposing to dedicate to the City and improve 4.8 acres of parks or trails in six locations. These areas are shown in Table 2 and a map is shown in Attachment B. Of the 4.8 acres, 4.27 acres will be publicly owned parks and 0.53 acres will be publicly owned trails, allowing the extension of Los Gatos Creek Trail by approximately 0.27 miles through this densely developed area. The Project is meeting its parkland obligation from the PDO/PIO through the dedication and improvement of these 4.8 acres, affordable housing fee reductions, and possibly through private recreation credits. The City of San José will own, operate and maintain these public parks and trails.

While the proposed plan could change before the development is presented to City Council in Spring 2021, staff does not anticipate significant changes to the open space concept. During design development there could be slight changes in these dedication areas. If such changes occur the dedication will be adjusted accordingly to insure the project’s parkland obligation is met and 4.8 acres of City-dedicated open space are provided.

TABLE 2 – City-Dedicated Parks and Trails

Working Title*	City-Dedicated Parks Area	Los Gatos Creek Multi-Use Trail Area
Los Gatos Creek Connector	0.91 acres	
Los Gatos Creek Park	0.37 acres	0.28 acres (approximately 0.14 miles)
Social Heart	0.57 acres	
Los Gatos Creek East	-	0.25 acres (approximately 0.13 miles)
St. John Triangle	1.53 acres	
Northend Park	0.89 acres	
Total	4.27 acres	0.53 acres (approximately 0.27 miles)

* Note: All working titles are for identification purposes only. There will be community outreach and a Parks and Recreation Commission meeting to determine each park’s name in conformance with Council Policy 7-5.

Los Gatos Creek Multi-Use Trail Area through Downtown West

The 0.53 acres of public trails will provide two important off-road alignments of the Los Gatos Creek Multi-Use Trail, from West San Carlos Street to Park Avenue and from the VTA Light Rail crossing at Autumn Street to West Santa Clara Street. Off-road alignment is a priority of the trail program and the dedication of this land and construction of these trail segments represent important advances toward the City's goal of a 100-mile off street trail network. As an interim measure, the trail will be on-street from Park Avenue to the VTA Light Rail crossing of Barack Obama Boulevard (formerly South Autumn Street). Staff will continue to advocate for future property acquisition to complete the off-road alignment at this location.

The trail will be owned, managed and maintained by the City. It will be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week for public use. The design and alignment generally conforms with the Los Gatos Creek Master Plan for this area.

Project Sponsor-Owned Open Spaces in Restrictive Covenant

The Project sponsor-owned open spaces will be owned, managed, and maintained by Google. Of the 10.2 acres of Project sponsor-owned open space, approximately seven acres (the privately-owned public parks, riparian setback, and riparian corridor sub-types) will be subject to a recorded restrictive covenant. The spaces may be permitted to be reconfigured in the future, if necessary to support changes in the surrounding development, so long as the overall square footage of the privately-owned public parks that are subject to the covenant remains the same. Project sponsor-owned open space is provided as a project feature and will not count towards satisfying the Project's parkland obligation.

Project sponsor-owned open spaces will have operating hours, temporary closure criteria and standards, reservable areas, and rules defined in the Development Agreement. Generally speaking, these terms and criteria are similar to what is allowed at San José parks with limitations on how frequently the spaces can be used for project sponsor-owned open space events.

While the riparian corridor cannot have public access, it does play an important role in the urban open space network. The riparian setback will allow passive recreation. While not traditional park space, the riparian corridor and setback do provide value as open space and support the Department's goals of preserving, protecting and promoting nature.

Other Project Sponsor-Owned Open Space

Mid-block passages and semi-public open spaces account for approximately 3.19 acres of the proposed project sponsor-owned open space. These spaces will be owned and managed by Google. Some of these are controlled spaces, such as might be used for restaurant seating. Mid-block passages would be similar in function to Paseo de San Antonio that connects Plaza de Cesar Chavez to San José State University. While not park space, these two land use

classifications are an important component of the open space network. They will help activate to nearby City-dedicated and privately-owned public parks.

Attachment C shows the overall 15 acres open space proposal, which includes City-dedicated parks, the Los Gatos Creek Multi-Use Trail, project sponsor-owned open spaces in restrictive covenant midblock passages, and semi-public open space.

Downtown West Design Standards and Guidelines

The DWDSG (described in the background section) include Standards, Guidelines and illustrative diagrams for each of the open spaces. The DWDSG will guide the park design; however, these spaces are not fully designed now. The design of the City-dedicated open spaces will be the subject of three community meetings, during which members of the public will have the opportunity to provide comments on the design. One of the three meetings will be in the form of a public hearing at the PRC.

The DWDSG does provide certain nomenclature around park design that is different than a typical developer process. Specifically, the DWDSG calls for a Conformance Review process that is lead by Planning, Building and Code Enforcement Staff. The Department and the Department of Public Works staff will support and participate in the Conformance Review. Prior to submitting an application for Conformance Review, staff, with support from the Google team, will conduct a community meeting to garner additional input on the design beyond what was used to create the DWDSG. Park naming will also be discussed during this outreach process.

During the Conformance Review process, Google will host one community meeting for each City-dedicated park. For City-owned parks, the design will be presented to the PRC for review and also for park naming recommendations after the second community meeting. Design of all open spaces (City-Owned and Project-Sponsored) will be subject to a Conformance Review Hearing where the Director of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement will review the Open Space Conformance Review application. Following Conformance Review the City-owned spaces will also be subject to detailed design review by PW and the Department, as is the case with all proposed parks that enter into our “Turnkey” delivery program.

Conclusion

Staff is currently finalizing review of the Downtown West proposal for consistency with Parkland Ordinances and will present to the City Council for consideration spring 2021. For more information about the Project including the DWDSG, the proposed open space and Development Agreement, visit www.sanjoseca.gov/GoogleProject.

/s/

Nicolle Burnham

Deputy Director of Parks,

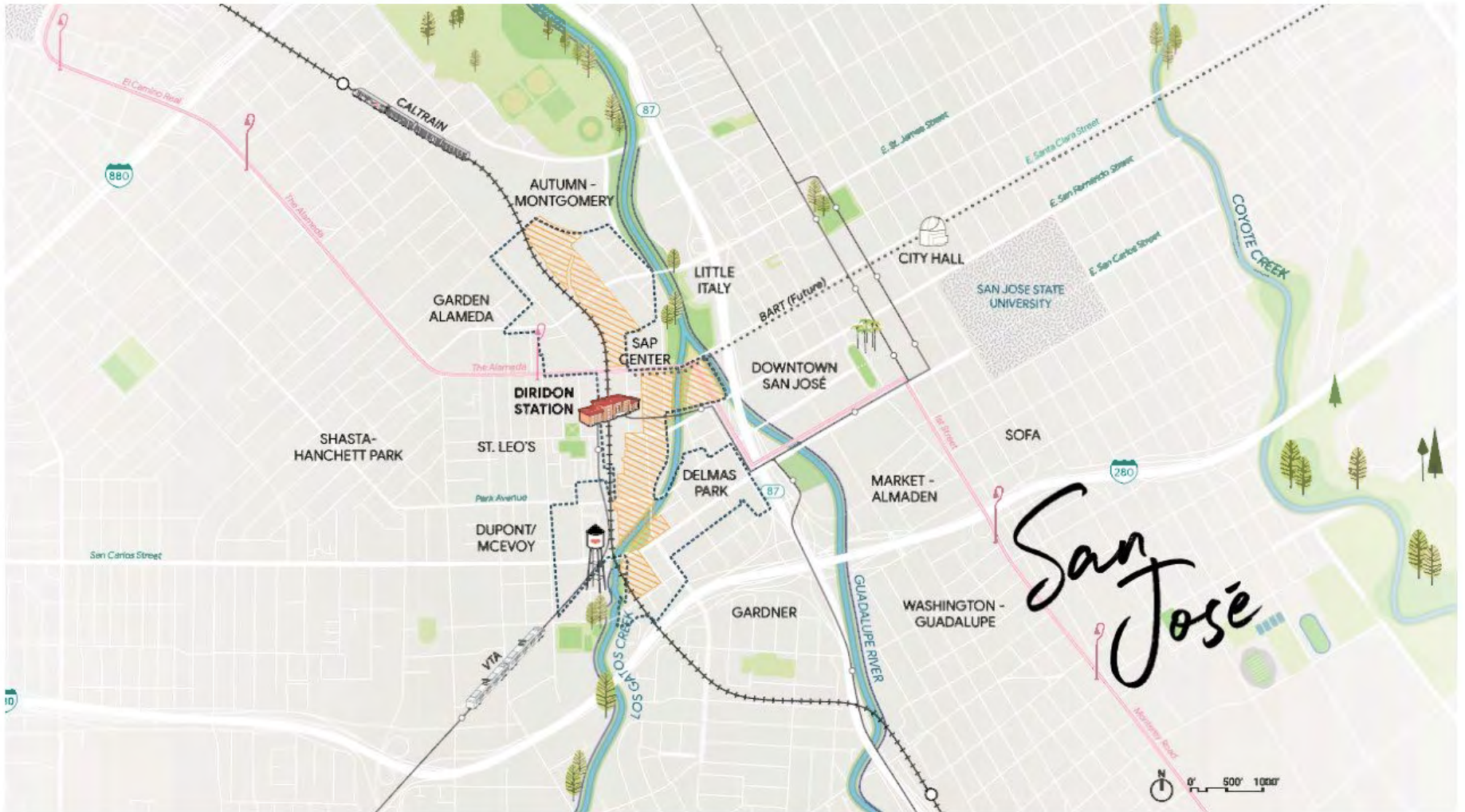
Recreation and Neighborhood Services

For questions please contact Nicolle Burnham, Deputy Director at nicolle.burnham@sanjoseca.gov.

Attachments:

- A. The Project and DSAP Boundary
- B. Proposed City-Dedicated Parks and Los Gatos Creek Multi-Use Trail
- C. Proposed Parks and Open Space Concept in the DWDSG

Attachment A -- The Project and Amended DSAP Boundary



Developed by SiteLab Urban Studio

Attachment B -- Proposed City-Dedicated Parks and Los Gatos Creek Multi-Use Trail



Developed by SiteLab Urban Studio

Attachment C – Proposed Parks and Open Space Concept in the DWDSG



Developed by SiteLab Urban Studio

Proposed Downtown West Parks and Open Space

Parks and Recreation Commission

March 8, 2021

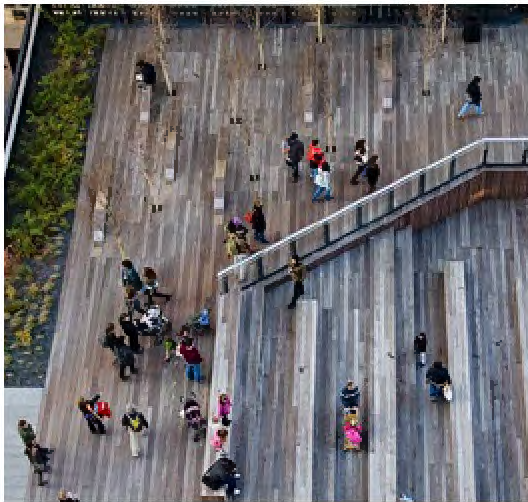
Presented by

Deputy Director – Nicolle Burnham: nicolle.burnham@sanjoseca.gov

Interim Planner I – Larissa Sanderfer: larissa.sanderfer@sanjoseca.gov

Purpose of Presentation

- Update on Downtown West Project
- Seek recommendation from Parks and Recreation Commission for the City Council to approve the open space concept as part of the Downtown West Design Standards and Guidelines



Barrett Dohery

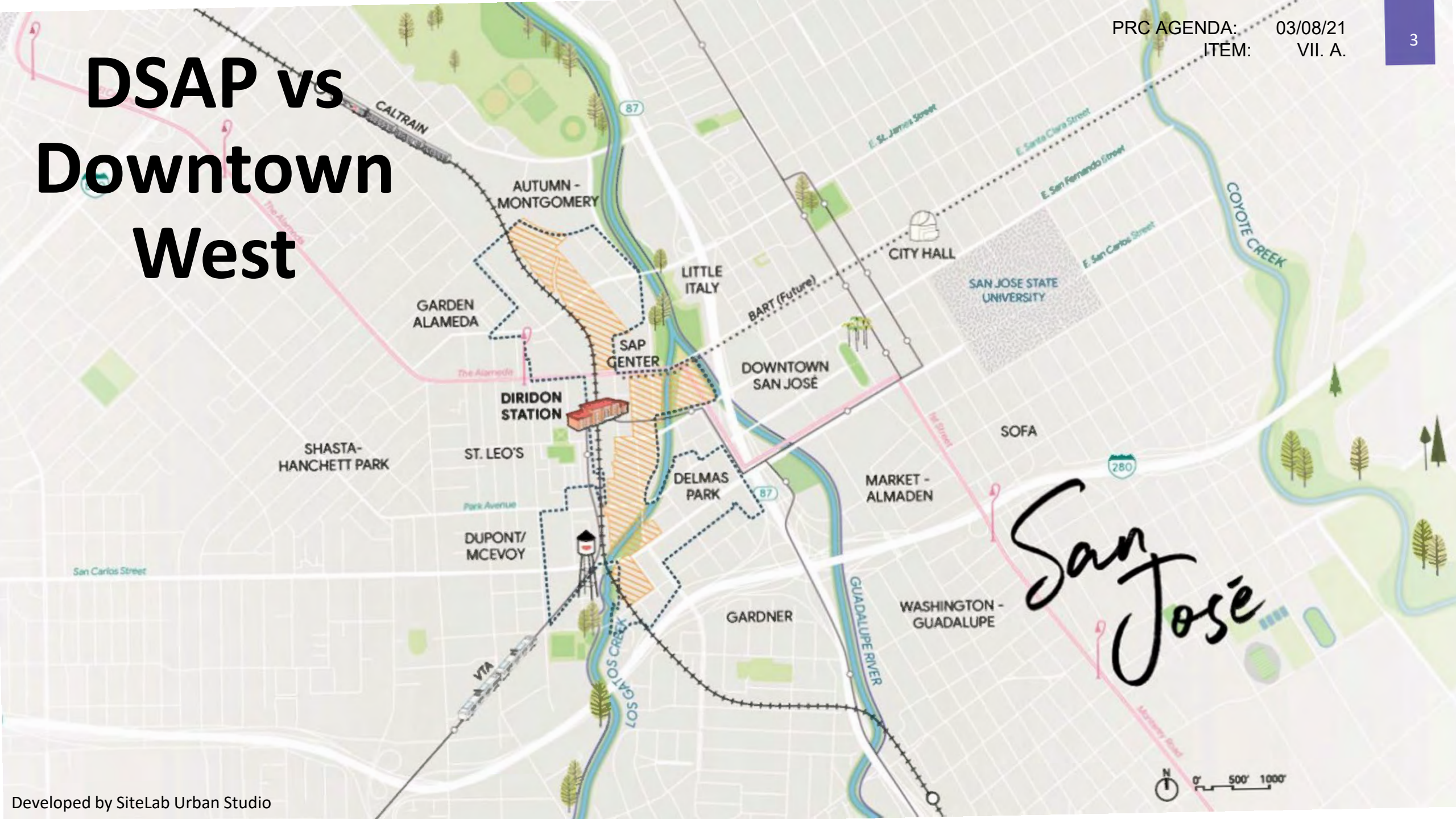


Barrett Dohery

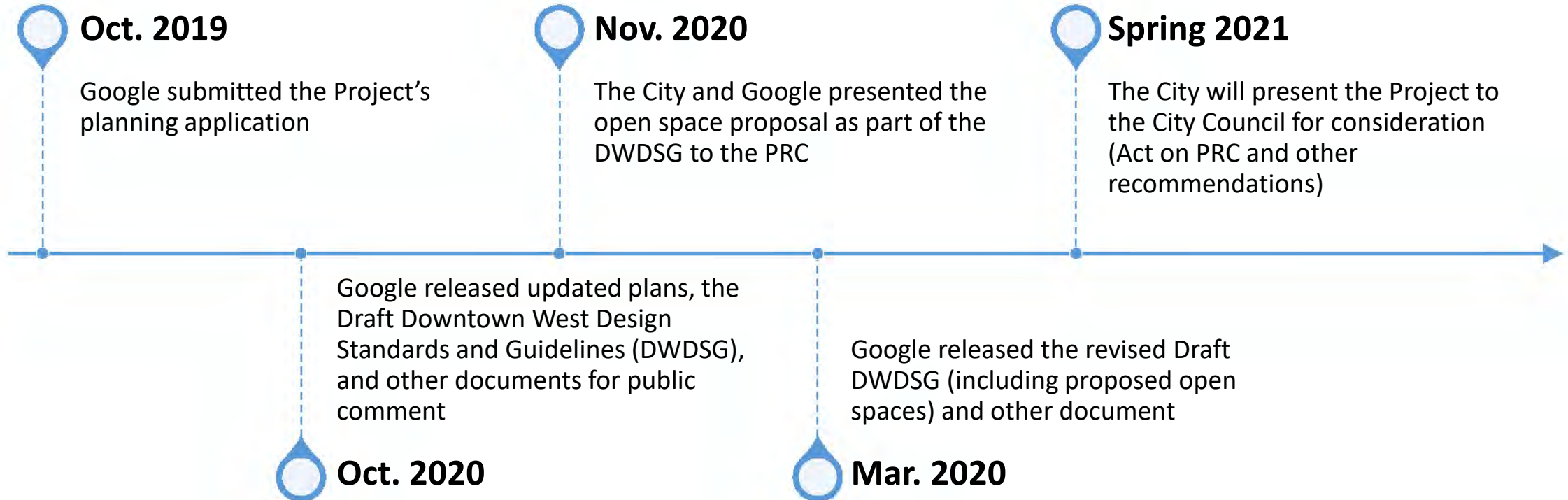


Michael Brooks

DSAP vs Downtown West



Downtown West Timeline



Downtown West Overview



Type of Land Use	Proposed in Project
Residential	4,000 units (Studying up to 5,900 units)
Office	Up to 7.3 million gsf
Active Uses (Retail, restaurant, arts, cultural, etc.)	Up to 500,000 gsf
Hotel	Up to 300 rooms
Limited-Term Corporate Accommodation	Up to 800 rooms
Event/Conference Centers	Up to 100,000 gsf
Open Space	15 acres
City-Dedicated	4.8 acres
Project Sponsor-Owned Open Space (PSO)	10.2 acres
PSO in Restrictive Covenant	7.0 acres
PSO not in Restrictive Covenant	3.2 acres

Downtown West Open Space Outreach

- December 2019: Open Space Design Engagement Workshop
- January 2020: Open Space and Streets Design Engagement Workshop
- February 2020: Open Space, Streets and Building Design Engagement Workshop

Summary of Open Spaces

City Owned Open Spaces

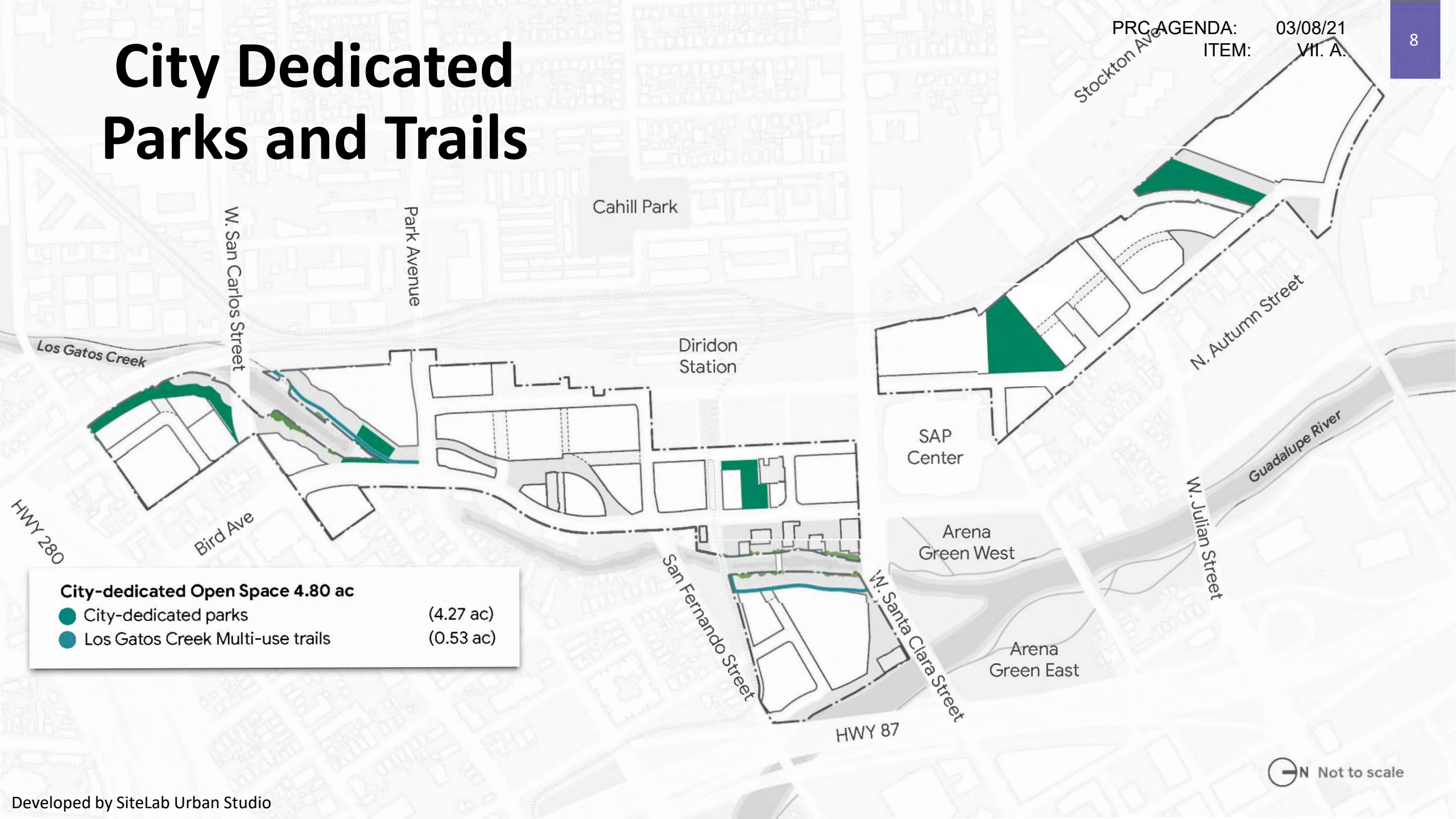
Proposed Space Type	Acreage
City-Dedicated Parks	4.27 acres
Los Gatos Creek Multi-Use Trail	0.53 acres
Total	4.8 acres

Project Sponsor-Owned Open Space¹

Proposed Space Type	Acreage
Privately Owned Public Parks	4.17 acres
Los Gatos Creek Riparian Setback	2.45 acres
Los Gatos Creek Riparian Corridor	0.39 acres
Midblock Passages	1.37 acres
Semi-Public Open Spaces	1.82 acres
Total	10.2 acres

1. Items in bold will be subject to restrictive covenant ensuring open space use

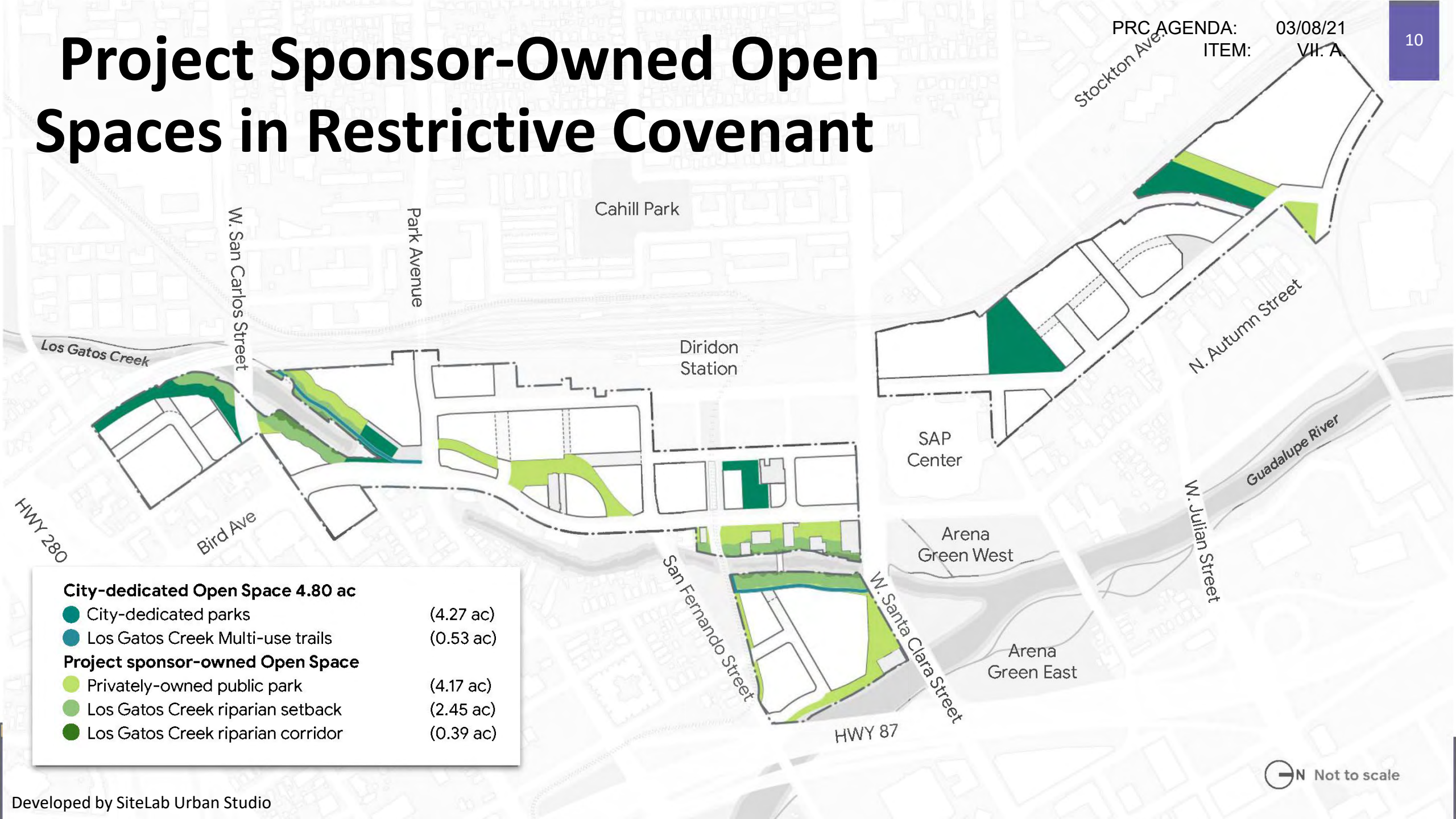
City Dedicated Parks and Trails



City-Dedicated Parks Design Process

- Downtown West Design Standards and Guidelines: Guide the park design
- Two Community Meetings: Gather more community input on park design and name
- Submit open space Conformance Review Application
- PRC Meeting for each City-dedicated Park: Accept the design and name

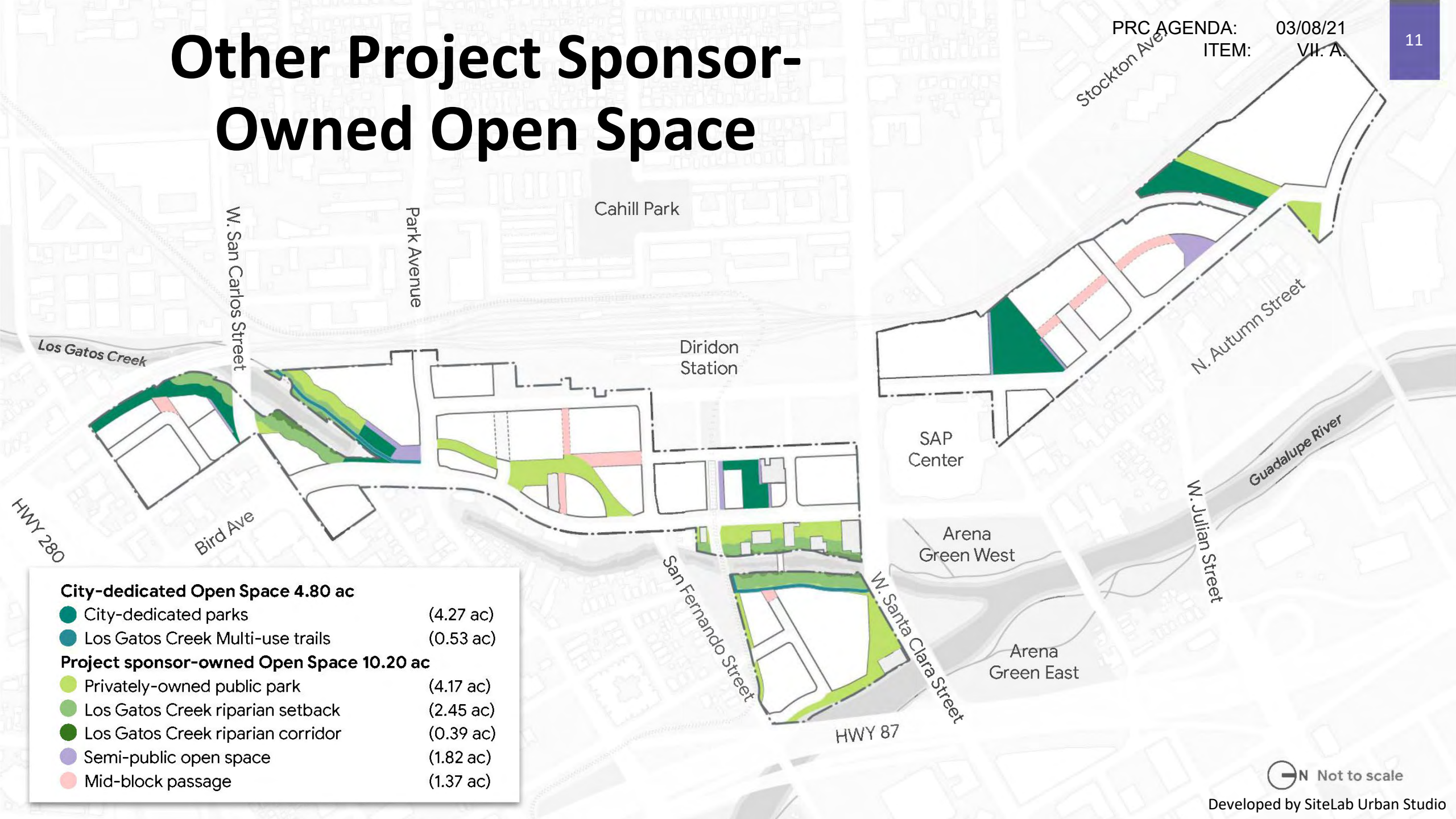
Project Sponsor-Owned Open Spaces in Restrictive Covenant



City-dedicated Open Space 4.80 ac	
● City-dedicated parks	(4.27 ac)
● Los Gatos Creek Multi-use trails	(0.53 ac)
Project sponsor-owned Open Space	
● Privately-owned public park	(4.17 ac)
● Los Gatos Creek riparian setback	(2.45 ac)
● Los Gatos Creek riparian corridor	(0.39 ac)

⊕ N Not to scale

Other Project Sponsor- Owned Open Space



City-dedicated Open Space 4.80 ac	
● City-dedicated parks	(4.27 ac)
● Los Gatos Creek Multi-use trails	(0.53 ac)
Project sponsor-owned Open Space 10.20 ac	
● Privately-owned public park	(4.17 ac)
● Los Gatos Creek riparian setback	(2.45 ac)
● Los Gatos Creek riparian corridor	(0.39 ac)
● Semi-public open space	(1.82 ac)
● Mid-block passage	(1.37 ac)

Staff Recommendation

Recommend approval to City Council of the open space concept as part of the Downtown West Design Standards and Guidelines

Proposed Downtown West Parks and Open Space

Parks and Recreation Commission

March 8, 2021

Presented by

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