



Distributed on:  
JUL 30 2014  
City Manager's Office

# Memorandum

**TO:** HONORABLE MAYOR  
AND CITY COUNCIL

**FROM:** Kim Walesh

**SUBJECT: KNIGHT FOUNDATION  
PARTNERSHIP**

**DATE:** July 29, 2014

Approved

Date

7/30/14

## INFORMATION

This information is being presented to update City Council on several ways the Knight Foundation is supporting the City and community of San José. San José is one of eight cities where newspapers owned by the Knight Brothers previously operated. The Knight Foundation, based in Miami, has recently stepped up their philanthropic support of San José to implement the Downtown Strategy and Envision 2040 growth plan. Specifically, Knight is interested in supporting San José's evolution to a more walkable, bikeable, transit-using community with activated parks and public spaces.

### **San José Delegation Participated in "8-80 Doable Cities Forum"**

The Knight Foundation funded a team of staff from four City departments and eight community organizations to attend the "8-80" Doable Cities Forum in Chicago June 15-18. The "8-80 Forum" was organized by Gil Penalosa, who along with his brother Enrique led the revitalization of Bogotá, Columbia when Enrique was mayor. The organizations represented on the delegation include the Office of Economic Development, Office of Cultural Affairs, Department of Transportation, Parks Recreation and Neighborhood Services, San José Downtown Association, SV Creates, SPUR, The Health Trust, VTA, SJSU, Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition, and San José Bike Party.

The Doable Cities Forum included a network of North American cities that are redesigning themselves along a simple premise: If you create a city that's great for both an 8-year-old and for an 80-year-old, you will create a successful city for everyone.

These "8-80" cities have two key features. First, they focus on ensuring that walking, biking, and public transit provide opportunities for as much dignity, safety, and access as driving a car. Second, their parks and other public spaces are accessible, highly sociable places that encourage people to actively connect to each other. These two features rarely appear naturally, and require a huge amount of intentionality: design, investment, and will. But the cities and neighborhoods that have these features reap proven benefits - environmental, health, economic, safety, and urban vitality.

July 29, 2014

**Subject: Knight Foundation Partnership**

Page 2

The Forum emphasized that more people walking and biking means less road congestion. More calories burned daily through 'active' forms of transportation means less obesity and better health. It provided evidence of positive economic impacts. Homes in neighborhoods that score high on the walkability scale ([www.walkscore.com](http://www.walkscore.com)) command a value premium over those in car-dependent neighborhoods. Well-conceived streetscapes, parks, and public spaces can add tremendous value to private investment. Millennium Park in Chicago is a famous example, but there are many others. New York and Portland have demonstrated that less driving, slower traffic, and more walking and cycling increase local spending and cultivate stronger retail districts. And, to the extent that key demographic groups like young professionals, techies, and empty nesters are seeking out less car-centric, more sociable environments, this kind of place re-making is increasingly essential to attract talent.

The "8-80" Forum affirmed that San José is on the right track with our goal of evolving over time from our original car-oriented, suburban landscape into a more people-oriented, urban-style place. San José's Envision 2040 long-term growth plan is squarely aligned with best practice globally and with significant national shifts in demographics and consumer preferences that are underway.

### **Philanthropic Grants to Advance Downtown San José**

Earlier this month, the Knight Foundation announced more than \$430,000 in grants aimed at building a more vibrant, livable San José through public space and urban planning improvements, as well as engagement opportunities that will bring residents together to improve their city. Three projects are funded at the San José Downtown Association, SPUR San José, and Transform. For more information on each project, see <http://www.knightfoundation.org/press-room/press-release/three-silicon-valley-organizations-help-build-more/>.

In addition, Knight is providing a grant of \$60,000 to PRNS to support the new "Summer in St. James" park activation program, which kicked off in June. Our goal is to transform St. James Park into a park that is safe and fun, with robust engagement of diverse communities. To facilitate this transformation, a St. James Park Revitalization Team has been created. Led by the City of San José's Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services, this team has leadership and participation from Office of Economic Development/Office of Cultural Affairs, Housing, and the San José Police Department. Working community partnerships in this effort include: San José Downtown Association, NeighborWorks, San José Parks Foundation, St. James Park Neighborhood Association, SV Creates, San José State University, UC Berkeley and numerous community volunteers.

So far, the Summer in St. James program has hosted well-attended successful events including: big screen World Cup viewings, Starlight Cinema movie nights, Hump Day Happenings (Wednesday lunchtime yoga, games, food trucks and soccer), and Music in the Park concerts. Park programming for the remainder of the summer and into early fall includes continuation of these types of activities, plus Zoo-to-You and National Night Out. Through the Knight Foundation, the City is offering funding for additional activities and events to community

July 29, 2014

**Subject: Knight Foundation Partnership**

Page 2

applicants that meet grant criteria. Applications for this funding are currently being collected by the San José Parks Foundation and will be reviewed over the next few weeks. Further information on events at St. James Park can be found at <http://www.sanjoseca.gov/prns/>.

### **San José Participate in Livable Cities Study Tour to Copenhagen**

San José recently competed for and won the right to four funded positions on a study tour to Copenhagen, Denmark hosted by the Knight Foundation and the Canadian nonprofit 8-80 Cities August 23-29.

The study tour will provide a first-hand opportunity to see the active bikeways, sidewalks, parks, and other public spaces of Copenhagen, which is often upheld as a model of active, well-designed streets and public spaces. The tour will include a masterclass with Gehl Architects. Jan Gehl is a famous architect and urban designer based in Copenhagen whose career has focused on improving the quality of urban life by focusing on re-orienting streets and public space to the pedestrian and cyclist. See [Gehlarchitects.com](http://www.gehlarchitects.com) and <http://www.knightfoundation.org/blogs/knightblog/2014/7/25/teams-knight-communities-travel-scandinavia-livable-cities-tour/>.

For San José, the experience will expand working knowledge of how world class bicycling and walking facilities are designed and implemented. The City currently has \$40 million to fund 20 capital bicycling, walking and access-to-transit projects in Central San José. The City also has \$1.5 million to implement a comprehensive program to encourage bicycling, walking and transit use. The goal is to use these funds wisely to create an integrated transportation network that increases bicycle, walking, and transit mode share over the next four years.

San José will fill its four slots as follows.

- City staff #1: Paul Smith, Deputy Director, Department of Transportation
- City staff #2: Zahi Khattab Senior Engineer/Geometrician, Department of Transportation
- Councilmember: Johnny Khamis D10, VTA Board Member, Liaison to Parks Commission
- Community/Private leader: Colin Hoene, Deputy Director, Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition

San José appreciates the Knight Foundation as a valued philanthropic partner, as well as their thought leadership on the future of American cities.

/s/

KIM WALESH  
Director of Economic Development  
Chief Strategist

For questions, please contact Kim Welsh, Director of Economic Development, at (408) 535-8177.

