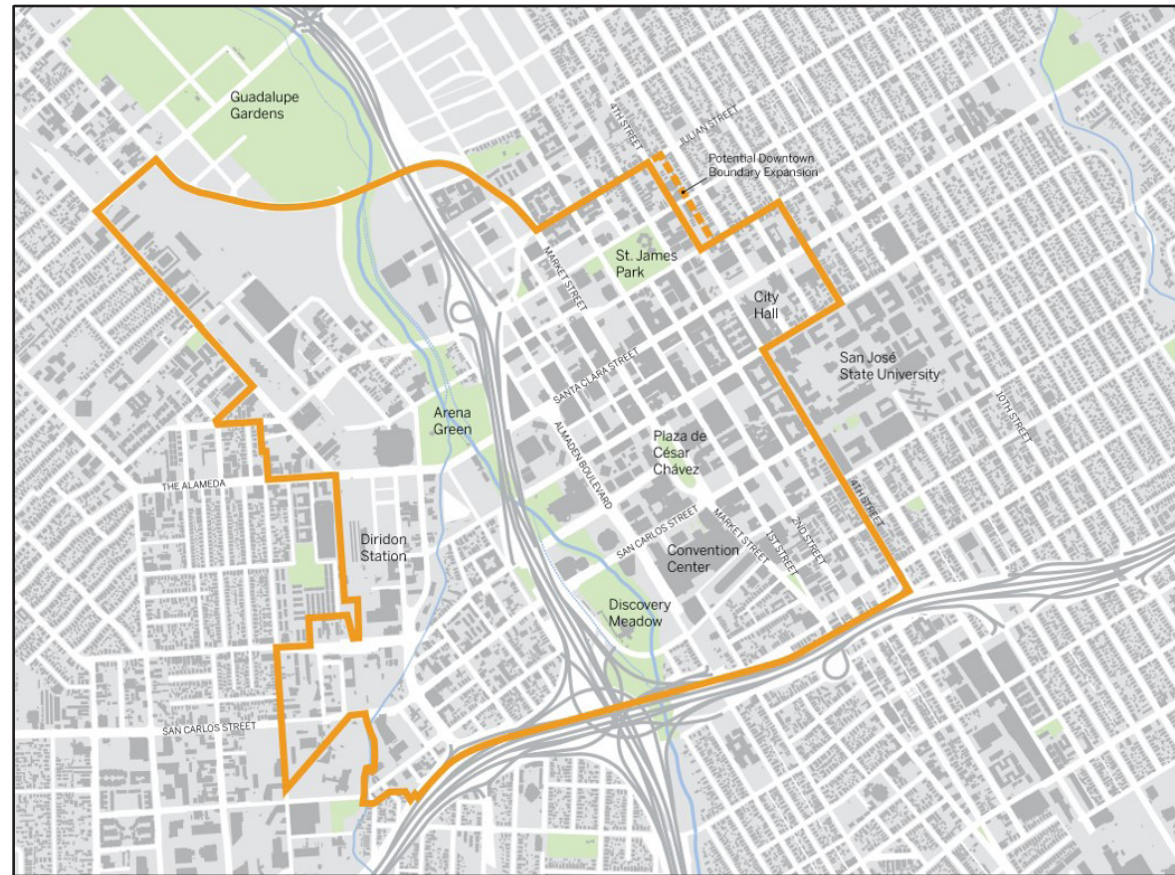


Downtown/Diridon Station Area

Design Guidelines Update Community Meeting Workshop



City of San Jose

Planning Division

Department of Planning, Building, and Code Enforcement

April 19, 2018

6:00pm - 7:45pm

Workshop Overview

The Community Workshop for the **Downtown/Diridon Station Area Design Guidelines Update** was held on April 19, 2018 at the Martin Luther King Library in room 225. There was a total of about 40 participants, including residents, local business and property owners, and historic and open space preservation advocates all with different input about the future of Downtown/Diridon Area. The workshop included a presentation, two activities, and open discussions.

The public input that was gathered during this workshop helped the Planning Department move forward in updating the Downtown/Diridon Station Area Design Guidelines.

Agenda

6:00-6:10pm—Welcome and Description

6:10-6:35pm—Project Description

- What are the urban design guidelines?
- Why update them?
- Who are they for?
- What is the project boundary?
- Timeline?
- Community/stakeholder engagement process?

6:35-7:30pm—Activities

7:30-7:45pm--Questions

City of San Jose Project Manager, Leila Hakimizadeh, began the workshop at 6:00pm with opening remarks and a description of the project, followed by councilmembers Dev Davis and Raul Peralez. Tim Rood, Principal Planner; Rosalynn Hughey, Planning Director; and Juan Borelli, Small Business Ally, assisted in facilitating the workshop.



Project Description

What are the Urban Design Guidelines ?



Urban Design Guidelines are a set of design principles that work to reinforce existing policies, goals, and values; promote design excellence and compatibility; improve the process for everyone by creating a common language; address how a building impacts and supports the character of the existing Downtown fabric; and reflect contemporary best practices.

Project Description

Why update them ?

These guidelines are updated for several reasons, including **Priority, Responsiveness, Clarity and Consistency**, and for **Better Placemaking**.

- Priority means conforming to the Envision San Jose 2040 General Plan, and prioritizing the council.
- Responsiveness works to address, or respond, to current and anticipated building types, and SPUR recommendations, as well as supporting the city's Public Life Strategy.
- Clarity and Consistency helps to provide more clarity for neighbors, designers, applicants, and staff. It also facilitates a more consistent design review process.
- Better Placemaking is important because of its ability to promote health and wellness, connectivity, a sense of community, sustainability, and identity. It works to provide higher quality places with a mix of uses and amenities, while also enhancing public realms and spaces.



Project Description

Who are they for ?



The Design Guidelines are for a couple groups including: residents, neighborhood and business groups, designers and architects, developers and project applicants, and city staff. As well as the decision makers in the Planning Commission, City Council, Historic Landmark Commission, etc.

Project Description

What is the project boundary?

The design guidelines are applied in the Downtown Area of San Jose and the Diridon Station Area.

The scope of the project:

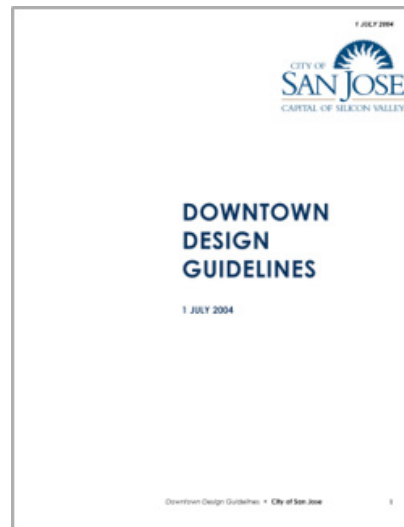
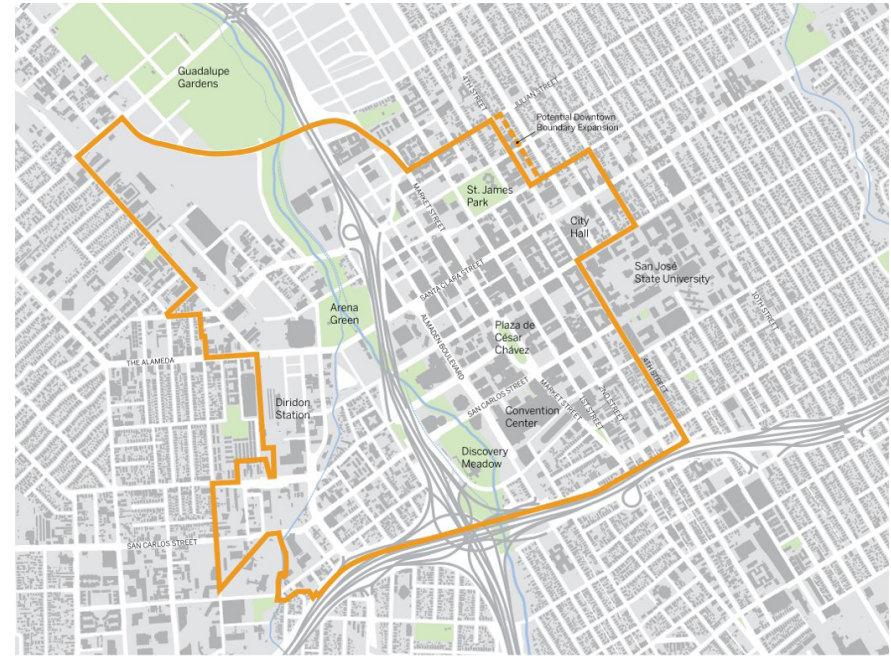
- To integrate the 2004 Downtown Design Guidelines and the 2014 Diridon Station Area Plan Design Guidelines.

It does not include:

- Downtown Historic Design Guidelines

There are no changes to:

- Zoning
- Land use
- Density
- Growth
- Height
- Parking requirements
- Transportation policies



Project Description

What is the timeline ?

February-March

- Select and engage consultant

March-May

- Outreach to city staff, community, and various stakeholders

April

- Draft outline of integrated Downtown guidelines

August

- Draft Urban Design Guidelines

September

- Open House/Stakeholder Engagement

Fall 2018

- Planning Commission and City Council public hearings



Project Description

What is the community/stakeholder engagement process ?

Workshop 1

- Informational and listening session
- April 19, 2018

Workshop 2

- Draft Guidelines
- August/September 2018

Public Hearings

- Planning Commission and City Council hearings
- November/December 2018

Website

- City staff is in process of creating a website
- May 2018

Engaging stakeholders/experts

- San Jose Downtown Association
- SPUR
- Staff from various City departments
- American Institute of Architects (AIA)
- Preservation Action Council of San Jose (PAC SJ)
- Knight Foundation
- Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA)/Caltran
- San Jose State University (SJSU)
- SAP Center/Developers and Construction Industry
- City of San Jose Station Area Advisory Group (SAAG)
- Others

Studying/Comparing existing City documents

- For Values, Guiding Principles, Design Guidelines

Researching best practices

- Bay Area, National, International

Activity 1: Brainstorming

Question 1

The first question during the community meeting asked participants to **name 3 of their favorite places and the elements from those places that they would like to see possibly implemented into San Jose**. Among the most popular included larger cities like San Francisco, San Jose, Manhattan, and Chicago. Other cities chosen consisted of places from here in the United States and all the way across the globe in cities like Paris, Hong Kong, Amsterdam, and Sienna. All these places, no matter how close or far from San Jose they are, all have a few things in common. Walkability, marketplaces, parks, historical buildings, public transit, and views were all popular aspects that users enjoyed. A few of the other places chosen only had one or two aspects that people recognized, and most of the time they are unrealistic because of the vast difference in location between San Jose and the chosen city. Cities like Santorini, Greece; Curry Village, Yosemite; and Napa Valley, California, all have aspects pertaining to more specific views and land uses like, views of the ocean, agriculture, and nature, that would be hard to implicate into a City like San Jose whose vibe is most related to a bustling and concrete city.

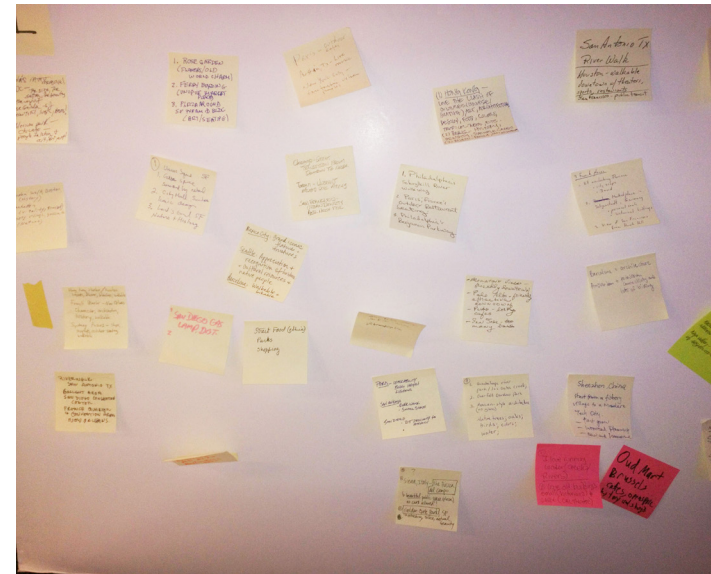
Cities: San Francisco, San Jose, Manhattan, Paris, San Antonio, Boston, San Diego, Chicago, Philadelphia, New Orleans, Berkeley, Hong Kong, Barcelona, Palo Alto, San Luis Obispo, China, Singapore, Shenzhen, Tokyo, Boulder, Oakland, Sienna, Napa Valley, Amsterdam, Berlin, Madrid, Austin, Santorini, Atlanta, Chicago, Houston, Washington DC; Curry Village, Yosemite; Miami, Sydney, Mexico City, Seattle, Toronto, Mountain View; Seligenstadt, Germany; Florence, and Los Gatos Creek.

Aspects (most requested to least): Creating a walkable environment, preserving historical features and educating users about the historical significance, adding more public parks, learning the significance of public plazas, creating vibrant and inviting storefronts/shopping, accentuating stunning architecture and creating new eye-appealing buildings, having a pedestrian friendly city, providing an abundance of easy to navigate public transit, having plenty of restaurants to choose from, holding public markets and marketplaces, displaying and encouraging public art and music, supporting the idea of urban density and the neighborhood feel, preserving and creating new views for the city, providing adamant lighting to encourage night time uses, enhancing a city's character, making a place bike-friendly, exploring and incorporating new cultures, and encouraging the public to be outdoors with more outdoor activities and meeting spaces.

Activity 1: Brainstorming

Question 2

Question two asked participants to **list 3 ways they would describe the Downtown/Diridon Station Area**. Of course there was a laundry-list that was created by the participants and of course, there were positives and negatives that were used to describe the areas dedicated to the study. In the end, the negatives out-listed the positives of the city (in the eyes of the participants). The most common descriptors included the downtown being dirty, rundown, underutilized, sparse, under landscaped, boring, as well as lacking culture, parks, gathering places, and a prominent central downtown. Users also said there was an overabundance of parking lots and homeless people. On the positive end of the conversation, participants listed Downtown as having lots of opportunities, potential, and hidden assets. In addition to being walkable, bustling, up-and-coming, and auto oriented, they claimed downtown had a good enough level of excitement to still be considered one of the top cities.



Activity 1: Brainstorming

Question 3

The last question asked the participants to [give 3 suggestions of how they would like downtown to be](#). This is like the first question but it gets down to the more specific desired features of the users that would work well with the area of study. Another laundry-list of demands was curated from both the notes of attendees and conversations that took place during the meeting.

1) The desire for a greener, outdoor city with more public space was voiced most loudly.

- More parks, fountain features, landscaping/greenery, public open spaces, and integrated nature into urban design.
- Organic materials like bricks, and natural habitats like creeks and trails.

(2) Another category included the city becoming more vibrant, lively, historic, and people-centric.

- Lighting for a pleasant pedestrian experience, inviting storefronts, and public art/interactive art (festivals, avoid tagging).
- Preserved historical buildings, and modern, unique building designs.

(3) Working towards being a more inclusive city.

- Accessible to all levels of income (affordable housing).
- As well as being socially equitable, and diversified in its cultures.

(4) Becoming more walkable/bikeable, with more access and connections.

- More bike paths, transit, convenient parking, public realms, and walkways that are safe for pedestrians.
- Some areas are not inviting, or too difficult to access via transit

(5) Creating a larger variety of activities for the public.

- More restaurants, entertainment in downtown area, retail, housing, day and night activities, high-rise buildings, outdoor areas, and paseos.
- Better defined entrances help users navigate easier and naturally draw more people to that area.
- Adamant lighting encourages users to explore downtown all day and night, not just during daylight hours.

Activity 2: Draft Values/Guiding Principles Discussion

Prosperity

- Enhance the local, city, and regional economy.
- Prosperity for all and valuing the people of a city.
- Prosperity is needed at all levels; it is currently missing in the middle and low income people of San Jose.

Innovate and Support Creativity

- Look at the city as a whole; shared parking, reclaimed water, shared bike paths, and smarter connections.
- Code problems include not being able to live where you work; we should allow live/work spaces for residents.
- Incorporating what the city has to offer; like interpreting modern uses to existing buildings

Promote High Quality Architecture

- Encourage identity, history, and preservation of historic architecture.

Focus on the Ground Floor

- Innovative approaches to activate ground floors, including solutions for temporary, permanent, and long term design (flex ground floor design).

Mix Uses and Activities

- San Jose does not do well with mixed use activities; it is either residential or jobs.
- San Jose is also the only major city whose population is greater at night, so we should work on building a better daytime base.
- Encouraging mixed use along the Alameda and San Carlos areas will give critical support where there is lots of pedestrian traffic.

Health

- Promote human and environmental health

Be Sustainable

- Cutting-edge technology and alternative energy, reduced water usage, solar panels, LEED, and passive energy as a model.
- Create sustainable residential; passive heating, cooling, lighting, and solar.

Activity 2: Draft Values/Guiding Principles Discussion

Focus on People

- Downtown should not be designed just for the people of downtown.
- Think bigger and work towards including all people including surround neighborhoods.
- Some safety aspects are missing; more police and rangers to build a deterrent downtown.

Create Connection and Accessibility

- San Jose State University (SJSU) should be walkable to Diridon Station.
- It needs a convenient path that ties both places together.

Generate Resilience

- Incorporate more green nature like green roofs and parks, native nature like creeks and its birds, and beautified open spaces, parks, with other wildlife.
- This helps a city increase its chances of being more resilient.

Identity

- Accentuate the area's uniqueness and character.

Create Legibility

- Encourage street hierarchy for identity; the same goes for districts.
- Character must be legible and identifiable.

Create a Memorable Destination

- One unique, iconic tower on San Jose's skyline (bird safe).
- San Jose is the first state capitol and we should work to highlight that fact.

Be of San Jose

- The people of San Jose are what makes it a great city.

Welcome All of San Jose

- Emphasize on our Spanish, Mexican, and Native American population
- We should celebrate and integrate a dynamic community by being attune to the diverse cultures of San Jose.

Workshop Summary

Overall, the workshop was a success. It worked in addressing all the needs of the public participants, and made sure of getting a various amount of different, as well as similar opinions about the current and future state of San Jose.

