

San Jose Downtown Transportation Plan

Phase 1 Engagement Approach FINAL

August 30, 2020

1. Introduction

Social distancing has made it necessary to pivot to a more flexible, phase-based approach to engagement. Three mini-plans will be drafted, one for each phase of engagement, specifying engagement activities. This is the approach for the first phase.

2. Engagement Context

The purpose of outreach during this initial phase is to spread information and interest in the plan and to gather broad community input on high-level priorities and concerns. The primary focus at this time will be to lower barriers to participation in order to maximize participation numbers and aggregate high-level input.

Given the limitations on in-person outreach in this time of COVID-19 and social distancing, the focus of initial engagement will be to:

- Create a focus on **equity** though building relationships with key partners and stakeholders by establishing the Equity Council and bringing on board Community-Based Organization (CBO) Partners.
- Create and implement a **speakers series** with thought leaders in transportation, urban planning, placemaking, and other related fields that showcases model projects, highlights best practices and provide a forum for conversation with City staff, community members, key partners and stakeholders in order to spur innovative thinking and ultimately to set the Downtown Transportation Plan on a more inspired trajectory.
- Build a robust and custom **digital web tool** with significant capabilities and potential. This will include launching a website for the project, designing innovative methods for collecting input, and hosting digital workshops and/or office hours. We will also hold online meetings with community and neighborhood groups and build a social media presence, leveraging partners' channels to begin to engage the community and encourage people to visit the online tool.

Input received during this phase of outreach will focus on gathering more general information about travel patterns and needs in the downtown area. We will be addressing questions such as:

- What works well with your travel in and around downtown?
- What public spaces are important to you?
- What destinations do you want to reach?

- What barriers are there to your travel in and around downtown?
- How could your trips in and around downtown work better?

3. Technical Advisory Committee

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) will include the City, project CBO partners, VTA, BART, Caltrans, and other government agency stakeholders who have an interest in the Downtown Transportation Plan. These partners will be invited to serve on the Technical Advisory Committee where they will be consulted at key project milestones.

The TAC will meet six (6) times, with the first meeting on July 7th.

Meeting #	Key topics for discussion and input
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing conditions • Equity process • Outreach phase 1 • Project schedule

4. Equity

Six *Equity Principles* will guide the team’s approach to engagement:

1. **Involve the community** at every stage of the Plan, including getting direct feedback from community partners on the Plan at the beginning of the engagement process.
2. Empowering and resourcing **community organizations** - CBOs as engagement leaders and storytellers bringing messages in their own language to their own communities.
3. CBO partners will come together to form an **Equity Council**.
4. A strong public process involves both **focused outreach** to key stakeholders but also **breaking down silos** of communication between different demographics and interests.
5. **Equitable engagement takes time**, moving at the speed of trust, and building empathy and understanding between city and community partners, leaders and residents.
6. Equitable, effective, and transparent public processes include a **feedback loop** that clearly conveys how community input and recommendations are incorporated into the Draft and Final Plan. Among the input the City shall seek is whether stakeholders ultimately feel heard throughout the public input process.

CBO Partners

3 CBO partners will play a large role in engagement. These will be groups with strong communication infrastructure to support relationships with community members. They will have capacity to give input, meet regularly, to make connections with other CBOs and neighborhood groups, to advise and provide content for online and in person messaging, and to do direct in person outreach and engagement in their communities. The CBOs will each receive a \$6K stipend.

Selection of CBOs

The CBOs selected should represent the cultural, income, and lifestyle diversity of downtown stakeholders. A group doesn't necessarily need to be located downtown to qualify as a downtown stakeholder, but it should have participated in work affecting downtown in the last 12 months.

The project team has identified the following **key considerations** to prioritize potential CBO partners to potentially partner with:

1. Diverse representation (4 points max)
 - a. Latino, African American, and/or Asian/Pacific Islander populations
 - b. Active with Limited English proficiency (LEP) populations
 - c. Low-income populations
 - d. People with disabilities and/or senior populations
2. Anticipated reach in the current/anticipated COVID environment in the downtown area (4 points max)
3. Existing or prior experience in transportation, land-use, homelessness, and/or tenant's rights issues (2 points max)

After these considerations are used to narrow down a subset of potential CBO partners, groups will be selected based on alignment with the following criteria:

- Can your organization act as ambassadors for your specific community? Do you have community trust and respect? Can you get people to participate?
- Do you have a focus or interest in downtown San José? Do you conduct programs in downtown or otherwise meaningfully engage downtown residents and/or businesses?
- How many members/constituents do you have in San José and in the downtown? Who is your base, geographically, and demographically (low income, unhoused, LEP, disabilities, ages, genders)?
- Do you have capacity to participate in a meaningful way? Is there a staff person/volunteer who is available to be the point person on this project and put forth a meaningful number of hours? What schedule constraints would they have (i.e. are they available weekdays, evenings, weekends)?
 - What languages can your staff communicate in (in-person and written translation)?
 - How are your staff's interpersonal skills, facilitation skills, etc.?
- What are your communication channels including, but not limited to, having established email listservs or an active social media following? How big is your mailing list? How

many social media followers do you have? Do you have capacity for contacting constituents or members by phone?

- Are you interested in working with us and working on transportation issues? Have you collaborated effectively with the City in the past?

Role of CBOs in Engagement

Below is an overview of roles we anticipate CBOs will contribute to in this engagement plan. As we are beginning this planning process at a time of great uncertainty specific tasks may change over the course of this engagement. Required tasks are those that will be a part of this engagement, and the remainder are subject to change depending on how possible it is to gather community members in person over the time of this project.

Required Tasks

Equity Council Gatherings

The CBO partners will attend an online kick-off meeting which will provide an opportunity for everyone to learn about project goals, share what type of work each CBO partner is involved with, give an overview of their communities, and provide perspectives on the City planning process. Future Equity Council Gatherings will be planned after the CBO groups have had an opportunity to give input into this plan and process. Each CBO partner may be required to attend up to three Equity Council (EC) meetings.

Review Draft Materials

Each CBO partner will proactively share thoughts on the Community Engagement Plan Phase 1 strategy document and the Speaker Series approach as soon as CBO partner agreements are finalized. There will be some more documents to review throughout the project including: Phase 2 and 3 Engagement Plans, community outreach materials, agendas and materials before meetings, and reviewing draft plans and other documents.

Social Media and E-blasts

Each CBO partner will include social media links and e-blast content with online engagement for this project. We will work with each CBO partner to ensure that content is relevant to their community members. For those that do not have large, active web-based communication networks, other information sharing strategies will be identified, including text message and phone based approaches.

Help with Translation

CBO partner will help with reviewing and revising translated documents, where applicable (for example, correcting mistakes we make, making sure the tone is appropriate, etc.).

Additional Tasks, Subject to Change

Public Workshops/Community Leadership Council

The purpose of workshops is to provide a central mechanism for sharing project information with the public and ensuring community voices are heard. These meetings are open to the public, and each CBO partner will be asked to reach out to their community members to encourage

public participation in these meetings. CBOs will have the option of co-hosting a workshop in collaboration with the City and tailoring the content to their constituents.

Host Pop-Up Events

This can take many forms depending on social-distancing requirements, and CBOs are encouraged to explore ideas for an event that would reflect the interests of their constituents, and/or be combined with an existing, planned event that would help get more people sharing their ideas about the future of transportation in San José.

Provide Introductions

We may ask for introductions to other community members in the next few months, such as groups that might be that may be an appropriate audience for City presentation on the Downtown Transportation Plan (for example, at a neighborhood meeting, etc.). We may also ask for introductions to community members with trust and stature in their communities who are able to participate in project outreach as relatable faces and storytellers in communications with their communities.

Phone Interviews

We may conduct telephone interviews with community members, in lieu of in-person outreach. This may be combined with existing activities and programming the CBO partner is conducting.

Equity Council

To create a process that focuses on inclusion and humanizes the project for individuals who may otherwise feel excluded or be particularly affected by changes, this effort will include an Equity Council (EC). Initial members of the Equity Council will be CBO partners. The EC may become multi-project at some point.

Equity Framework

We will collaborate with our CBO partners to create a common understanding of what equity means in downtown San José. Working collaboratively with the EC we will determine an Equity Framework for the plan, by exploring questions such as:

- What does it mean to embrace diversity within this project in its entirety?
- How can we create a downtown for everybody?
- How can people at the margins meaningfully participate in this planning process?
- How can we adjust our Engagement Strategy to have more meaningful participation from a broader cross section of the people invested in downtown?
- How will our choices affect and benefit people at the margins?

In addition to determining the Equity Framework, the EC will help the project team understand local context and reach stakeholders who historically faced a variety of social, economic, and cultural barriers to participation. The EC will help ensure that project information, talking points, and invitations are culturally appropriate and disseminated through the most effective channels. EC members will receive stipends to cover their time, expenses, and expertise.

5. Speaker Series

As the San José Downtown Plan engagement is kicking off, the project team will coordinate a speakers series with thought leaders in transportation, urban planning, placemaking, and other related fields that showcases model projects, highlights best practices that are relevant to the transportation and city building in San Jose. The intent of the series is to provide a forum for conversation with City staff, community members, key partners and stakeholders, in order to spur innovative thinking and ultimately to set the Downtown Transportation Plan on a more inspired trajectory. This speaker series will frame a set of generative discussions about topics germane to the Downtown Plan such as mode shift, equity, placemaking, congestion pricing, and other topics.

We will work with the CBO partners to identify topics and speakers who will connect with the needs of their communities to engage their constituencies. Community leaders from the CBO Partner organizations may be part of the panels, in conversation with topic experts from other cities.

A more detailed Speaker Series proposal will be included in a separate document for discussion.

6. Online Engagement

The project team will create a robust and custom online content management system (CMS) with significant capabilities and potential to disseminate information throughout the course of the project. This will be complemented by social media and will include website postings and a user-friendly online survey tool. The survey tool can be designed as a “webmap” that will allow respondents to provide geographic input on key issue and opportunity locations throughout downtown. The project team will also provide social media content.

All aspects of the digital web tool will be fully accessible (compliant with the most stringent Federal accessibility standards) and will be easily utilized from both computers and various mobile devices. Content will be available in English, Spanish, and Vietnamese.

Optional demographic surveys will allow the project team to assess who is interacting with the online engagement tools and use this information to make decisions regarding additional targeted outreach.

7. General Stakeholder Outreach

Press Release

The project team will author a press release for the City to send out to its existing media list, including local radio stations and Mr. Roadshow. The intention will be to attract listeners/readers to the project website and online survey tool.

Online Listening Sessions

City staff from multiple departments are holding a series of listening sessions for the community to share their thoughts on a range of topics including **Equity, Getting Around Downtown, Housing, Building Heights, and Parks and Public Space**. These listening sessions are intended to collect ideas from the public including thoughts on existing conditions, aspirations, and concerns within the greater Downtown and Diridon Station Areas. Participants will sign up in advance, and participation is limited to 25 people for each session. New sessions will be added based on expressed interest.

Business Focus Groups

Downtown businesses have a unique investment in downtown's success, and the team will convene 2-3 focus groups during Phase 1 to discuss various aspects of the project with the greater downtown San José business community. These meetings will strengthen relationships and build a shared vision for downtown's future through targeted listening, education, and collaboration. The topics of the focus groups may include the relationships between transportation and business success, strengthening public life and public safety, and how appropriate parking management can benefit downtown businesses. Initial meetings will involve SJDA and the Japantown Business Association.

Workshop Series

Many groups actively work to enhance activity, livability, equity, and mobility within downtown San José. The team will invite representatives of these groups to a workshop series. The public will also be invited to attend workshops, which will be recorded and posted on the project website.

The first workshop (anticipated in Oct) will be a fairly informal visioning exercise involving:

- Sharing vision and key principles, asking "Is this right? Are we missing anything?"
- What does downtown look like in 20 years? (And consider including some of the other questions under development.)
- Introduce high level scenarios for downtown's future
- Breakout groups on key themes (looking at 20 years from now): culture, streets, sidewalks, plazas, parks, transit, parking, local business, housing - how these elements might work within the scenarios

The team will work to identify a draft list of potential workshop invitees in September. This list will be shared with D3 for potential additions or changes. At this time the meeting schedule will also be identified.

Presentations to Neighborhood Groups

A limited number of Zoom presentations will be given to select neighborhood groups by City Staff, to inform stakeholders about the project process and goals. Presentations will also provide a unique opportunity for community members to have follow up sessions with City staff on topics discussed at the workshops. Phase 1 of outreach can include up to 5 presentations, as needed. The majority of downtown stakeholders should be engaged as part of the workshops.

Posters

Multilingual posters will be developed and temporarily placed on A-frames, in retail windows, in parking garages, and other locations that are heavily trafficked (San Pedro Farmers Market, grocery store lines, trailheads, etc.). Posters will include information on the project and a QR code that will link individuals to the project's survey. They may also include a phone number to leave messages or to text a comment to. For phase 1 we will target at least 20 locations for posters and assess their effectiveness for future phases.

Potential Pop-Ups

If CBO partners determine that initial digital outreach efforts are unsuccessful in reaching a cross section of target communities, the consultant team and CBO partners will continue to explore ways to host in-person pop-up events. These can take many forms depending on social-distancing requirements, and CBOs are encouraged to explore ideas for an event that would reflect the interests of their constituents, and/or be combined with an existing, planned event that would help get more people sharing their ideas about the future of transportation in San José. The current state of the pandemic and social distancing guidelines will play a major role in the decision to host an in-person pop-up event.