

**TRENDING:** Big fire near Coalinga Ricky Pearsall shooting Legacy admissions ban 3 classic rock shows Fisherman stabs windsurfer

**BREAKING NEWS** 4 killed in Georgia high school shooting



BUSINESS > REAL ESTATE • News

# Google unveils dramatic vision for downtown San Jose village

Search giant is continuing to push its plans despite the coronavirus pandemic



Artist conceptual rendering, subject to change

Google LLC

1 of 10

Gateway Plaza section of Google's Downtown West transit village in downtown San Jose, showing public and open spaces near the historic San Jose Water Co. building along West Santa Clara Street, concept. Google unveiled on Wednesday its most detailed vision to date for a transit-oriented neighborhood in downtown San Jose, a game-changing development that bids to reshape the west edges of the city's urban core yet at the same time mix in with adjacent communities.



By **GEORGE AVALOS** | gavalos@bayareanewsgroup.com | Bay Area News Group

UPDATED: October 9, 2020 at 10:41 a.m.



Listen to this article



SAN JOSE — Google unveiled on Wednesday its most detailed vision yet for a transit-oriented neighborhood in downtown San Jose, a game-changing development that bids to reshape the west edges of the city's urban core while still blending in with adjacent communities.

The Downtown West plan also underscores the tech behemoth's continued commitment to its San Jose plans at a time when businesses around the world are rethinking the future of office space amid the work-from-home era brought on by the coronavirus pandemic.

"We embrace this vision not because it's Google's, but because it encompasses the aspirations for a vibrant, dynamic downtown that our community has long held, as generations of San Joseans have sought to create a regional destination reflective of our

For Sale For Rent New Homes  
 Open Homes Commercial

**FIND YOUR NEW HOME**

Location

### MOST POPULAR

- 1 Dear Abby: Our door latch has become a huge issue, and I'm ready to leave my marriage
- 2 Dear Abby: My husband's mother shows up for our date nights
- 3 Asking Eric: I let the car thief take the fall for my drugs. All these years later, can I fix things?
- 4 Harriette Cole: My friend's hints about our vacation are unsettling
- 5 Review: Classic rock icon delivers most visually stunning show of the year
- 6 Asking Eric: Should we go to the wedding even though we're Californians?
- 7 Artem Chigvintsev has left Napa home as Nicki Garcia talks to divorce lawyers
- 8 Miss Manners: Nobody acknowledges that it's a very intrusive question
- 9 Vote now: Bay Area News Group boys athlete of the week
- 10 'It's complicated': Old Farmer's Almanac predicts wet, mild winter, but meteorologists question forecast

### TRENDING NATIONALLY

authentic, diverse character,” San Jose Mayor Sam Liccardo said.

Google's village would add 7.3 million square feet of offices, 4,000 homes, shops, restaurants, a hotel, 10 parks, cultural and entertainment hubs, and immersive and interactive educational elements near downtown San Jose's Diridon train hub.

A city within a city, Downtown West also will pave the way for a big increase in affordable housing and green development. Google could employ up to 25,000 on the site.

“We're excited about this next step in our project, which incorporates feedback from thousands of people over the last two years and provides another opportunity for community input,” said Alexa Arena, Google's development director for San Jose.

“This is the next level of development for San Jose,” said Scott Knies, executive director of the San Jose Downtown Association. “You have the housing, the affordable housing, and certainly the offices are there. But you also have the extraordinary combination of open spaces and cultural uses that makes it really unique.”

Google will work with the city to ensure that 25% of the homes would be affordable in the Diridon Station area.

“We continue to hear that housing and preserving affordability is a priority for San Jose, and our proposal offers more affordable housing, job pathways and community spaces for San Joseans,” Arena said.

The 4,000 residences that Google aims to develop in the project will be made affordable to people at all income levels, Google said.

Google filed two major documents with the city Wednesday. One is a 1,350-page draft environmental impact report that sketches out the project's effects. The other details design guidelines and how buildings would be massed.

The document filings kick off an intensive review and approval process that will include public hearings and formal votes.

“The pandemic has made the biggest concerns from the community about this project — preventing displacement, adding affordable housing, and ensuring quality jobs for working families and communities of color — even more critical,” said Maria Noel Fernandez, campaign director with Silicon Valley Rising, a community group that's critical of Downtown West.

Downtown West's footprint is 80 acres, of which 55 acres can be developed. Of the 55 acres, about 30 acres will be set aside for housing and public spaces.

Google says the project will not create any net additions in greenhouse gases.

The tech titan intends for the new buildings to be nearly completely electric. About 65 percent of the site's trips would occur via mass transit, bicycling and walking. Just 35 percent would be people driving alone. Plus, Downtown West would generate 7.8 megawatts of on-site solar energy and feature a local microgrid. Google also will buy carbon offsets.

“At a time when so much in our world is on pause due to COVID, it's heartening to know that San Jose's most significant long-term urban development project is on track and hitting a key milestone” with the filings, Deputy City Manager Kim Walesh said. “Google is moving forward with Downtown West, its extraordinary project and investment in San Jose.”

Google aims for a development that doesn't present a walled-off look and feel.

“Downtown West is designed to be a true part of the city, the opposite of a traditional corporate campus,” said Laura Crescimano, founder of SITELAB urban studio, the project's lead urban designer. “The draft design standards and guidelines published today set out the roadmap for a resilient and connected Downtown West.”

Historic buildings and natural features such as the Guadalupe River and Los Gatos Creek will be incorporated.

“Our team worked with Google to draw on the uniqueness of the location to propose a place where urban life and nature can coexist,” Crescimano said. “We've brought together new and historic buildings, opportunities for arts and culture, playful spaces, and moments

- 1** Federal judge rules Illinois' concealed carry law can't prohibit holders from having guns on public transportation
- 2** 83-year-old Colorado fisherman is back, defiant, seeking arrest and support in fight for freedom to wade in state's rivers
- 3** Here's what the next two weeks of hurricane season should look like, according to experts
- 4** Massachusetts welfare dollars spent in Hawaii, Virgin Islands, Alaska
- 5** 'It's complicated': Old Farmer's Almanac predicts wet, mild winter, but meteorologists question forecast

of respite along the Creek.”

Building heights will range from 40 feet to 290 feet, a Google spokesperson said.

**RELATED ARTICLES**

**Big affordable housing development might sprout near downtown San Jose**

**Big East Bay office building topples into loan default as market flops**

**Oakland housing tower is grabbed by lender over failed property loan**

**Hundreds of affordable homes might sprout on vacant lot in San Jose**

**San Jose approves permits for boutique hotel near Santana Row**

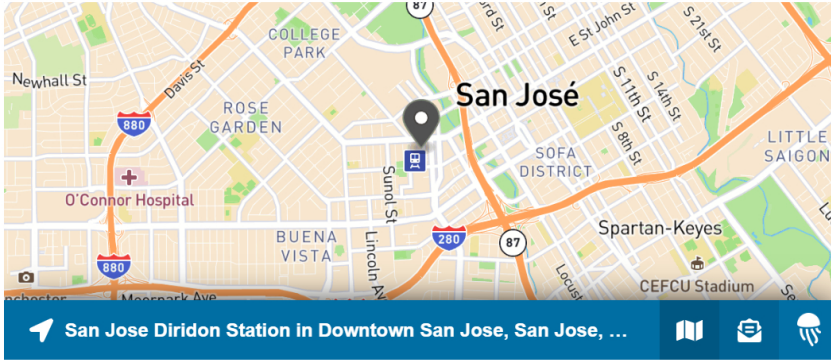
“This is an important milestone for the development of San Jose, for the city’s future economic stability, and its growth as a major U.S. city,” said land-use expert and consultant Bob Staedler.

Google believes the project can transition smoothly into bordering neighborhoods and different parts of the village.

One example released by Google is a concept of the project’s Gateway Plaza section along West Santa Clara Street near the San Jose Water building, which will remain as part of the development.

The concept depicts a mix of office buildings, homes, gathering areas, educational sites, an ecology learning station, and active and immersive features to engage residents, workers, neighbors and visitors.

“This is like a city within the city,” Knies said. “Downtown West will not be a forest of high buildings. It’s darn impressive.”



Originally Published: October 7, 2020 at 3:03 p.m.



The Trust Project

**MORE IN REAL ESTATE**



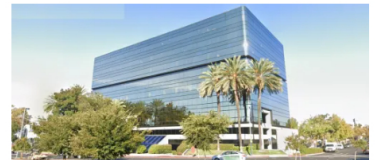
**Oakland’s completed sale to Black-led development group marks new beginning for Coliseum**



**SUBSCRIBER ONLY**  
**Big affordable housing development might sprout near downtown San Jose**



**California homebuyer contract bill heads to Gov. Newsom’s desk**



**SUBSCRIBER ONLY**  
**Big East Bay office building topples into loan default as market flops**

## NEWS ALERTS

[Email Newsletters](#)

[Today's e-Edition](#)

[Mobile Apps](#)

[Site Map](#)

---

## MARKETPLACE

[Place an Obituary](#)

[Place a Real Estate Ad](#)

[Lottery](#)

## CONTACT US

[Digital Access FAQ](#)

[Join our Team](#)

[Special Sections](#)

[Sponsor a Group](#)

[Get Sponsored Access](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Accessibility](#)

## ADVERTISE WITH US

[Network Advertising](#)

[Daily Ads](#)

[Place a Legal Notice](#)

[Public Notices](#)

[Monster.com](#)

## SUBSCRIBE

[Member Services](#)

[Manage Subscriptions](#)

[The Mercury News Store](#)

[Archive Search](#)

[Reprints](#)

---

[SUBSCRIBE NOW](#)