

10/26/23

San Jose City Council
200 E Santa Clara St.
San Jose, CA 95113

RE: Proposed development of the former Pleasant Hills Golf Course site

Dear Mayor Mahan and City Council,

The land use plan for the former Pleasant Hills Golf Course site is a unique opportunity for the City of San Jose to envision a development strategy in partnership with its residents. This is an unusually large, empty site that is very rare in our community. Its redevelopment comes in the midst of major regional issues such as a statewide housing crisis, global warming, rising homelessness, and a diminished tree canopy in San Jose. Community input early in the process will provide the City and developer with valuable insight into needed and valued resources in the area.

Statement of Principles on What We Want to See from Pleasant Hills Golf Course:

1. **Abundant housing.** Our city currently faces a deep shortage of housing, reflected in some of the highest housing costs in the nation and leading to a state mandate to plan for more than 62,000 homes over the next eight years. Development proposed at the site should prioritize a large number of new homes within a mix of uses.
2. **Priority for affordable housing.** Affordable homes are the greatest housing need, reflected in high rates of displacement of families and widespread housing instability. To make this new neighborhood inclusive, diverse, equitable, and integrated, the new housing must include a large percentage of affordable homes, including for people at the lowest levels of area median income. This neighborhood of San Jose has a lower median income than other parts of San Jose, so homes for residents with lower incomes are essential to help prevent displacement.
3. **Higher densities.** To achieve the number of homes needed to reduce displacement and increase feasibility, housing across the site should be at densities high enough to enable both on-site inclusionary and 100% affordable housing. This will allow for a variety of housing types on the site to provide housing choices and meet diverse housing needs. Denser development also generates sufficient revenue to cover the cost of city services. Higher-density buildings also use the land more efficiently to allow the development to dedicate more greenspace and space for public uses.
4. **A mix of uses that includes jobs, high-quality public space, and green space.** One of the keys to building vibrant, dynamic neighborhoods, as well as reducing peoples' need to drive everywhere, is to build mixed-use neighborhoods around transit. So while a large number of housing units should be the highest priority on this site, it is also imperative that the development includes a mix of jobs, public gathering space, and green space. This should include activation

that is centered in and for the neighborhood. This would include services like retail, childcare, health and wellness, and nonprofit space for those living closest to the site.

5. **A mix of transportation options.** We recognize this site isn't as transit-accessible as others. There is an overwhelming need in our community for more frequent, accessible transit options that provide alternatives to car use. San José has a long history of low-density, sprawl development over an area of over 180 square miles. This inefficient and unsustainable land use development pattern has had terrible repercussions for housing equity and affordability, traffic circulation, vehicle miles traveled, and walkability. The community needs a mix of transportation options that will directly benefit the residents of East San José and be responsive to their needs and aspirations, by building healthier and more just communities that make the streets safe and accessible for everyone.
6. **Plan for resilience to climate change.** Ensure new and existing community members are prepared for the impacts of climate change by including green stormwater infrastructure and tree canopy in order to reduce flooding and heat island effect.
7. **Include significant amounts of parkland and green space.** With the development of this site, the surrounding community will lose the cooling effect and stormwater absorption capability of what is currently 115 acres of open space and tree canopy. To mitigate the impacts of this loss, development on this site should include significant acreage of publicly accessible parkland and green space, and should prioritize native plants to maximize biodiversity and habitat value.
8. **An inclusive community engagement process that considers the needs of our entire Valley.** The city's planned outreach should include residents within the location zip code, district residents, and other San Jose residents who stand to benefit from a comprehensive land use vision; not only nearby residents who are within the required half-mile notice radius. Outreach efforts should be inclusive and accessible to encourage participation from under-represented residents who may not be as likely to engage in a traditional city event, such as non-native English speakers, renters, people of color, young adults, and women. An effective community engagement process provides valuable insight into the values, priorities, and concerns of community members who will be impacted by the development; not only existing neighbors, but possible future residents too. Special efforts should be made to create a collaborative visioning process that captures community voices.

Sincerely,

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