

January 28, 2019

Re: Item CC 18-419 on January 28, 2019 Community & Economic Development Committee

Chair Khamis and Councilmembers:

On behalf of SPUR, I am writing to support the completed Downtown Airspace and Development Capacity Study and **recommend acceptance of Scenario 4, which would use the Federal Aviation Administration's own safety standards to determine maximum building height limits in the Downtown Core and Diridon Station Area.**

For the past couple of years, [SPUR has actively looked at the possibilities](#) to increase height limits in downtown and the Diridon Station Area. Over the next ten years the downtown and station area will become large transit hubs for BART, Caltrain, high-speed rail and VTA light rail. It is imperative that these future projects be coupled with world-class mixed-use developments that generate transit riders.

Maximizing the amount of jobs and housing within walking distance of the station will connect lots of residents and workers to high-quality transit and help to alleviate the congestion of workers flowing north by creating a regional job center for the South Bay. With \$10 billion of public investment going into these transit improvements, we must ensure they have the ridership to support them.

Perhaps more importantly, maximizing development will generate more fees to support the creation of thousands of affordable housing units as well as community benefitting amenities, such as parks.

That's why a cross-sector committee of business, labor and civic organizations sought to examine downtown airspace and development capacity in the first place. With the technical support of the city's own aviation consultant, Landrum and Brown, we evaluated several possible scenarios that would allow for increased floor area ratio (FAR) in downtown with the least negative impact on airport operations.

By removing the economic—not safety—procedures followed by airlines, development within the Downtown Core and Diridon Station Area will be able to build at a height allowance that will help us achieve our commercial and residential growth numbers and community development goals.

After more than a year of intensive research, coordination with airlines and consideration on how to maximize community benefit, SPUR strongly supports adopting Scenario 4 and urges the City Council to allow this new policy to go into effect immediately to spur development within these two districts.

As this policy is further developed, we believe the city has the opportunity, and responsibility, to capture the value of these height increases. The incentive for increased FAR should require that development be of world class urban design. Commercial and residential properties should incorporate privately-owned public open spaces (POPOS) and ensure access for all of San Jose. New development should use this density bonus to invest deeply in blue and green infrastructure and create a model eco-district that helps further the city's ambitious and vitally important climate aspirations.

We strongly believe that a healthy and vibrant downtown along with a well-operated and growing regional airport will further the success of San Jose. This is our opportunity to bring our vision for the future into action today.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this item.

Sincerely,



Teresa Alvarado
San José Director