



CATALYZE SV **SAVE THE BAY**



San Jose City Hall
200 E Santa Clara St
San Jose, CA 95113

RE: 6/14 City Council Item. Adopting a Comprehensive Parking Policy and TDM Ordinance

Dear San Jose City Council

Thank you for your bold leadership on enacting change that will help San Jose reach ambitious climate goals, including becoming carbon neutral by 2030. Transportation accounts for nearly 50% of greenhouse gas emissions in San Jose so to reach this goal we must do more to promote transportation choices, walkability and affordable homes near transit.

That is why Greenbelt Alliance, TransForm, Catalyze SV, Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition, Urban Environmentalists, SPUR, Housing Action Coalition, SV@Home, TransForm, Veggielution, the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), and Save the Bay would like to urge you to **adopt the staff recommendation to prepare an ordinance that:**

- **Removes mandatory minimum parking limits;**

- **Updates the City’s Transportation Demand Management (TDM) requirements to apply to all projects meeting a certain size threshold;**
- **Develops a program for ongoing monitoring and compliance for the citywide TDM program.**

San Jose has adopted an ambitious plan to be carbon neutral by 2030. It is hard to reach that when so much of the city is dedicated to the storage of vehicles: with over 1.9 million spaces here already, it is past time for major reform. In addition to helping meet climate goals, this parking and TDM ordinance will help in these ways:

- **Environment:** More parking means more cars on the road, which degrades the environment by increasing traffic and local air and water pollution. Parking lots are large paved areas that increase polluted stormwater runoff, negatively impacting water quality in San Jose’s creeks, rivers, and the Bay. Excessive parking decreases walkability and reduces the livability of cities, taking up space that could better serve the community. San Jose is seeking to be a leader in climate action, but if the City is still subsidizing parking, it will not be able to meet its climate goals.
- **Affordability:** The average cost for one parking space on a surface lot is **\$30,000** and for an **underground parking lot is \$75,000** per parking space¹. A 2016 study found that parking requirements increase housing costs for renter households by 17 percent—even for people without a car. We could build significantly more affordable housing if parking provision were based on market demand rather than arbitrary regulation². By eliminating parking minimums, we can decrease the cost of housing built near transit corridors.
- **Equity:** The Transportation Demand Management (TDM) policies are a critical way to increase access to transportation and reduce the need for reliance on cars, allowing people more affordable transportation options. When the TDM package includes a VTA SmartPass it can save a two-person household nearly \$2,000 per year while supporting VTA’s financial sustainability and ridership. VTA’s ridership is predominantly people of color (75% in the June 2020 survey were non-white) and low and middle-income. Replacing requirements for excess parking with a program that subsidizes passes will help stabilize VTA. It will also lower the joint costs for transportation and housing for the people who need it most, helping stabilize our community. It is one of the most important actions you can take to promote social equity and economic security.

Your council has been a climate leader and we hope that you continue to take bold action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and increase housing affordability. San Jose’s groundbreaking

1

<https://www.spur.org/news/2020-04-27/sheltering-place-reveals-how-much-parking-dominates-our-cities-and-lives>

² Gabbe, C. J., & Pierce, G. (2016). Hidden Costs and Deadweight Losses: Bundled Parking and Residential Rents in the Metropolitan United States. *Housing Policy Debate*, 27(2), 217–229. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10511482.2016.1205647>

laws to require all-electric energy in new construction and EV charging stations at residential buildings will still not get us to our climate goals if we continue to incentivize driving by requiring excess parking.

San Jose has an opportunity to re-envision how to plan for and accommodate new development in a growing city and to base car storage on market demand, not outdated parking mandates. **We urge you to think of our climate and housing crises and vote in support of this comprehensive ordinance.**

Tackling the combined crises of housing affordability, inequality, and climate change in all their complexity requires structural and cultural change. An important piece of the puzzle is to modernize legacy policies that prevent cities from building more equitable, affordable, and sustainable communities.

Sincerely,

Ali Saperman
South Bay Organizer
Housing Action Coalition

Matthew Reed
Director of Policy
SV@Home

Kendra Ma
Housing Policy Analyst
TransForm

Alex Shoor
Executive Director
Catalyze SV

South Bay YIMBY
Adam Buchbinder
Aaron Eckhouse
Regional Policy Director
California YIMBY

Zoe Siegel
Director of Climate Resilience
Greenbelt Alliance

David Lewis
Executive Director
Save The Bay

Joanna Gubman
Executive Director
Urban Environmentalists

Shiloh Ballard
Executive Director
Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition

Emily Schwing
Public Affairs Director
Veggielution

Erika Pinto
San José Planning Policy
Manager
SPUR