

# WEST SAN CARLOS STREET & SOUTH BASCOM AVENUE URBAN VILLAGES

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The City of San Jose is preparing urban village plans for West San Carlos Street and South Bascom Avenue. This provides a unique opportunity to create a vision that meets the community's needs—with walkable neighborhoods, access to parks, robust transit, a thriving business district, and homes for all—through an inclusive, community-driven process that ensures benefits are shared by the public throughout these neighborhoods.

**This is the community's platform.**

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## PARKS

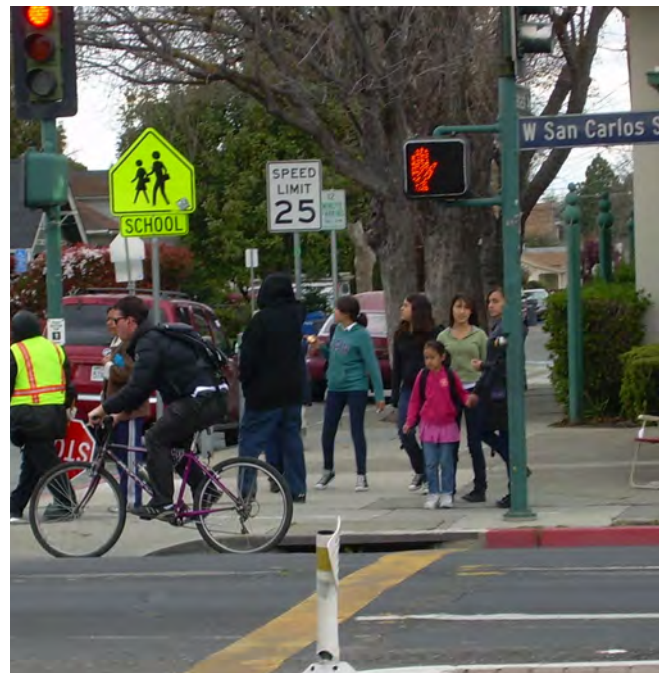
The neighborhoods along West San Carlos and South Bascom are park deficient, yet densely populated, including a large low-income community. A critical component of a thriving, healthy neighborhood is strong connections and access to parks, creeks and trails. Park space must be programmed to respond to the area's demographics and more areas for respite and relaxation must be created, such as parklets along West San Carlos.

Already identified vacant and underutilized lots for parks must be acted upon. This includes delivering on promised parks by seeking funding for their operations and maintenance as well as resolving conflicts between urban village plans and Greenprint policies. Completion of Del Monte Park is a community priority. Partnering with the community on creative ways to design and build new parks and green connections will help achieve this vision. Better signage for parks and linear parks through neighborhoods is a community goal. Privately owned-public open spaces (POPOS) should be pursued.

## WALKABLE, BIKE-FRIENDLY STREETS

Many people walk, ride their bike and/or take transit along West San Carlos and South Bascom, despite these roads being hostile to non-auto users. Adding wide sidewalks and bike lanes, accompanied by traffic calming measures will encourage workers and residents to explore this area on foot, greatly reducing traffic congestion and increasing safety. This will also enhance opportunities for those without cars, including students and seniors, to play a more active role in their neighborhood.

Development standards, like shade trees and pedestrian scaled lighting, create great places for people. A reduction in surface parking lots enlivens the street and helps fill holes in the urban fabric. Priorities include completing the Scott Street bikeway, completing the class II bike lane on Park Avenue, creating pedestrian and bike safety zones around Luther Burbank Elementary, Lincoln High School and Del Mar High School and creating a pedestrian paseo on Basile Avenue near the Burbank Theatre. Other hotspots that need attention include around the Santa Clara Valley Blind Center, Bascom Community Center, Meridian/Douglas intersection, and Dick's Center.



## TRANSIT

West San Carlos is a busy bus route between DeAnza College and Downtown San Jose as well as an important connection to Diridon Station, a multi-modal transit hub. Viable, frequent transit is essential for the success of urban villages. Effective collaboration between the City of San Jose and the Santa Clara County Valley Transportation Authority will help realize Bus Rapid Transit along West San Carlos Street. Priorities include locating bus stations at key nodes, such as near Buena Vista Avenue, and completing critical connections, such as to Diridon Station.

Another transit priority is to evaluate the Northbound Bascom bus stop at West San Carlos for improvements, providing an additional opportunity for cross-jurisdictional cooperation, this time between VTA and San Jose Water Company.

## PLACE-MAKING

Creating a sense of place that honors the history, culture and character of a neighborhood strengthens community identity and is an economic generator. The integration of uses into complete places that are designed around people, promote sidewalk activity and provide eyes on the street are essential elements of an urban village.

Dead walls, such as at the Midtown Safeway and Bascom Library, can and should be addressed by adding murals. Building frontages along these two streets must be transparent. Windows, ground floor retail, front stoops, art work and sidewalk furniture can create an attractive street wall. An oft-mentioned community asset in the rough is the Burbank Theatre. San Jose should create an historical designation for the theatre to allow it to take off and thrive and become a community focal point.



## HOMES

The West San Carlos and South Bascom urban villages are home to a diverse community, including a low-income, multi-ethnic and multi-generational population. As properties redevelop, pressure on those living in more affordable homes increases, leading to displacement when people are forced to move due to no longer being able to afford their rent. Establish and enforce renter protection policies, such as just cause/fair rent laws. Maintain existing homes that are affordable to low-income households by preserving deed restricted housing and increasing the stock of permanently affordable housing through acquisition and rehab of market rate units. Identify new sites for attractive affordable homes, especially for students and seniors. Condo conversions should be limited, but if approved, existing tenants must be given first right of refusal to purchase the condo.

As new homes are built, it is critical that the quality of life for current residents increases as a result. This can be guaranteed when community amenities are provided at the same time new homes are built. This can be

achieved by seizing opportunities to build new parks and create more walkable streets. Transition zones between new development and existing neighborhoods must be incorporated.

### **THRIVING BUSINESS DISTRICT**

Support the eclectic mix of businesses and restaurants along West San Carlos and South Bascom as improvements are made along both corridors. Preserve local businesses, especially those owned and operated by community residents, so that public and private investments do not displace or drive them out of business in favor of companies that are not based or invested in the community over the long-term. Developing walkable nodes of activity along each street, in sync with BRT stations, can create neighborhood destinations. This requires coordination between the City and VTA. San Jose must pay special attention to development activity at opportunity sites such as Business Circle, Dick's Center and 1015 South Bascom to ensure that urban design features encourage walking and meeting.

Strong urban design principles can make a place a destination. Enhancing this area's assets, such as promoting Antiques Row, restoring historic buildings and signs, and allowing the Burbank Theatre to thrive, can give these two corridors a strong sense of identity that is good for business. Another priority for the community is improving access to affordable fresh food outlets. Helping the existing Mercado on South Bascom expand and grow is one way to achieve this goal. Adding lights at Business Circle makes that strategic corner safer and more accessible, thereby supporting local businesses. The proliferation of medical marijuana outlets is a problem that must be remedied.

### **ZONING AND IMPLEMENTATION**

Zoning must be an absolute, and key policies must be non-negotiable. Re-zoning will be based on a community-designed urban village plan and any changes initiated by developers must be discouraged. Developers will need to ask permission for any zoning changes and this should be seen as an opportunity to leverage community benefits. Short-term profits should not come at the cost of the long-term vision of this plan or long-promised community amenities. First projects out of the gate must set a positive tone for the urban villages. 1015 South Bascom is one such opportunity that can create an activity node near the Bascom Library.

Creative financing mechanisms must be identified to ensure amenities are built. Public Benefits zoning and a parking benefits district can generate money to fund amenities such as parks, public art, façade improvements, landscaping and pedestrian features such as benches and lighting. San Jose's various departments- Planning, Transportation, Public Works, Code Enforcement- must work together to ensure that any city-involved activity along these corridors reflects the community's vision. The City of San Jose and County of Santa Clara must consider pursuing annexation of county pockets to realize plan elements.

#### **Buena Vista Neighborhood Association**

*Joe Carpenter, President, BVNA*

#### **Shasta Hanchett Park Neighborhood Association**

*Eloy Wouters, President, SHPNA*

#### **West San Carlos Street Neighborhood Business Association**

*Bonnie Kraynick, President, Owner, Sterling's Barbers and Stylists*

*Craig Trimble, Treasurer, Owner, Antiques Colony*

*Kathy Robertson, Owner, Sterlings Barbers and Stylists*

#### **Residents and Community Members**

*Marisol Verdugo, Resident, Burbank Community*

*Shirley Chan, Resident, Burbank Community*

