



# City of Sunnyvale

## Agenda Item-No Attachments (PDF)

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### REPORT TO SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

#### **SUBJECT**

**SPECIFIC PLAN AMENDMENT:** Amend the Downtown Sunnyvale Specific Plan

**Location:** Downtown Sunnyvale

**File #:** 2017-8047

**Zoning:** DSP

**Applicant/Owner:** City of Sunnyvale

**Environmental Review** (SCH # 2018052020): Adopt a resolution to make findings required by CEQA, certify the Environmental Impact Report (EIR), and adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.

**Project Planner:** Michelle King, (408) 730-7463, mking@sunnyvale.ca.gov

#### **REPORT IN BRIEF**

**General Plan:** Downtown Specific Plan (DSP)

**Existing Site Conditions:** The DSP area includes multiple parcels and property owners. The area is developed with a mix of local and regional uses, residential units in multi-family buildings and single-family detached, office buildings and open spaces including Plaza Del Sol and Redwood Square.

**DSP Boundary:** The Downtown Specific Plan is generally bounded by Charles Avenue to the west, Sunnyvale Avenue to the east, the Caltrain tracks to the north, and Olive Avenue to the south (and to El Camino Real along the east side of Mathilda Avenue).

**Issues:** Allowing additional development intensity and height within the Commercial Core district Block 18, Block 1a and Block 22, for the provision of community benefits, transitions from the Downtown Core to adjacent lower intensity development, ensuring future development supports a cohesive public realm and contributes to a pedestrian-friendly Downtown.

**Staff Recommendation:** Sustainability Commission recommend that the City Council Approve the amended Downtown Specific Plan (see link to draft staff reports and related studies in Attachment 1).

#### **BACKGROUND**

The Downtown Specific Plan (DSP) is a long-term planning document to reinforce a vibrant and traditional downtown that serves the local community with a desirable mix of retailers, restaurants, corporate tenants, residents, and is a regional destination providing a unique and highly active environment. The DSP contains goals, policies, design strategies and guidelines, land use and development intensities and standards to guide development in the DSP area. The City has developed an update to the existing DSP to better address current market trends and future project design. See the draft Planning Commission staff report for detailed information regarding the proposed update (link in Attachment 1). The proposed updates result in an increase in the number of allowed residential units and commercial and office floor area.

Detailed information about the related actions in the Downtown are provided in four draft reports to

the Planning Commission (see link in Attachment 1). The report that addresses the Downtown Specific Plan and EIR is the primary report that the Sustainability Commission should review to make a recommendation on the DSP to the City Council; the entire set of reports may provide a greater context to understand proposed development in the Downtown and the projects that initiated the review and update of the Downtown Specific Plan. The Sustainability Commission is being asked to review and comment on the DSP as it relates to sustainability issues. Though the Commission may comment on the EIR, the Commission is only required to make a recommendation on the DSP.

The draft Planning Commission staff reports will be updated to include additional correspondence received prior to the public hearing. Time permitting, the recommendations of the other commissions will be added to the Planning Commission report; otherwise, an oral update will be provided at the hearing.

The **Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Commission** will review the DSP update on July 16, 2020 and make a recommendation to the City Council.

The **Sustainability Commission** will review the DSP update on July 20, 2020 and make a recommendation to the City Council.

The **Heritage Preservation Commission** will review the EIR and DSP Update on July 22, 2020 and make a recommendation to the City Council.

The **Planning Commission** will review on July 27, 2020 and make a recommendation to the City Council on the following: 1) Downtown Parking Study; 2) Final EIR, DSP Update, Zoning amendments; 3) Development Agreement with STC Venture; and, 4) Development Agreement with Kasik.

The **City Council** is scheduled to consider this item on August 11, 2020.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW**

Environmental Review (SCH # 2018052020): City Council to adopt a resolution to make findings required by CEQA, certify the Environmental Impact Report (EIR), and adopt a Statement of Overriding Considerations and Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires that all state and local government agencies consider the environmental consequences of projects for which they have discretionary authority. An initial study was prepared for the proposed changes to the DSP, which indicated the project had potential impacts that could not be fully mitigated. Therefore, a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) has been prepared and circulated for this project November 22, 2019 to January 6, 2020. The Final EIR (FEIR) was released for public review on July 10, 2020. The Sustainability Commission is not required to take an action on the EIR, however information in the EIR may assist the Commission in making a recommendation on the DSP.

## **DISCUSSION**

The City Council initiated the amendments to the DSP (authorized the studies to consider amending the plan) and provided direction on a number of items to be studied and considered. None of these directives directly relate to the Sustainability Commission's purview; however, citywide policies on

sustainability were considered in the update to the plan and policies, and guidelines throughout the document relate to the City's commitment to sustainability.

One directive was to study flexible parking design; this item is discussed in more detail in the draft report to the Planning Commission. The Sustainability Commission may be interested in this principle:

- *Pre-wiring parking facilities to add or expand electric vehicle charging stations*

The DSP update includes goals, policies and design guidelines relating to sustainable design features in:

- Open space and landscaping (GG-F.5 Sustainable design features that are associated with utilizing renewable energy, reducing the heat island effect, and adopting low impact development (LID) stormwater strategies are highly encouraged), water efficient landscaping and permeable paving
- Building design and infrastructure (as a model for other districts in the City)
- Pedestrian-oriented environment
- Circulation and parking
- Balanced transportation system (promote a balanced transportation system to meet the needs of alternative methods of travel)

The DSP also acknowledges the need for Green Infrastructure (Chapter 8) and that Silicon Valley Clean Energy (SVCE) is the electricity provider for Sunnyvale (Chapter 8) - noting the two service options of "GreenStart" and "GreenPrime."

## **PUBLIC CONTACT**

Public contact was made by posting the agenda on the City's official-notice bulletin board outside City Hall and on the City's website. Notice of the hearing was also published in the Sun newspaper and notices mailed to property owners and tenants within 2,000 feet of the Downtown Specific Plan. Detailed information about public contact is listed in the draft report to the Planning Commission on the Downtown Specific Plan, EIR and Zoning amendments.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

1. Recommend to the City Council to Approve the amended Downtown Specific Plan as it relates to sustainability.
2. Recommend to the City Council to approve the amended Downtown Specific Plan, as it relates to sustainability, with modifications.
3. Recommend to the City Council not to approve the amended Downtown Specific Plan and provide feedback on where sustainability is not adequately considered.

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Alternative 1, Recommend to the City Council to Approve the amended Downtown Specific Plan as it relates to sustainability.

The updated DSP builds on a solid foundation of Goals and Policies in the General Plan Land Use and Transportation Element and the Climate Action Playbook. The 2017 LUTE has 12 guiding principles, five of which closely relate to sustainability, including:

- Complete Community

- Neighborhood and Transit-Oriented Place-Making
- Environmental Sustainability
- Multi-modal Transportation
- Healthy Living

The updated DSP builds on these principles by allowing higher densities near transit, encouraging mixed uses, promoting the use of the incentive programs such as the green building incentive, and includes additional emphasis on creating a walkable downtown through updated policies and design guidelines.

Prepared by: Trudi Ryan, Director, CDD

Reviewed by: Teri Silva, Assistant City Manager

Approved by: Kent Steffens, City Manager

### **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Link to Downtown Related Planning Commission Staff Reports, July 27, 2020  
<https://sunnyvale.ca.gov/news/topics/dsp/default.htm>