

Coalition for a Downtown Hospital

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Andrew Crabtree
City of San Jose Planning Department
200 East Santa Clara Street
San Jose, CA 95112

Re: Proposed recommendation for land use designation

Since the threat of, and subsequent closure of San Jose Medical Center, the Coalition for a Downtown Hospital (previously Save San Jose Medical Center Coalition) has been actively pursuing appropriate necessary healthcare access for the increasing San Jose downtown community including new residents, workers, 100's of attendees at special events such as Cinequest, conventions, etc. Our research has indicated that Greater Downtown is the single area of greatest medical need in the county with the highest infant mortality rate, highest concentration of medically at risk senior citizens and highest percent of low income residents.

When the 2004 San Jose Medical Center Closure Impact Study (funded by the City and County) was updated in 2007, the author Dr. Henry Zaretsky reiterated the likely need for a 200 bed hospital by 2020, but modified his earlier recommendation to make it clear that a future hospital should meet the demographics of the expected population growth Downtown and in North San Jose by 2020.

CoDH makes the following recommendation for the future sites.

We propose the following areas where all sites can be designated within a category that includes hospital with specific exceptions such as residential and light and heavy industry – up North First Street from Taylor on the south to the 101 overpass on the north extending approximately two blocks east and west of First Street, to include from First Street to Highway 87 between Taylor and Hedding.

Although representatives of the Downtown and North San Jose groups would prefer sites within their respective areas, it is acknowledged that this “middle ground” best balances the needs of each area for reasonable access to a hospital. However, both Greater Downtown and North San Jose should not be precluded from the possibility of a future hospital. Planning and land use tools should allow for appropriate sites to be rezoned based on the future demographics of the two areas and the future market needs of a proposed hospital. We wish to identify preferred sites along the Santa Clara Street and First Street Corridors through Downtown as well as other Downtown sites with good transportation access. Consequently the Downtown should be designated within a category that includes hospital with specific exceptions such as light and heavy industry. (Note, residential is not included in the specific exceptions for Downtown.)

CoDH has made the “middle ground” recommendation also based on the City's need for reserving adequate larger sites for its economic development/tax base efforts. A potentially large set-aside in the heart of San Jose Golden Triangle could adversely affect the City's merged project area revenues and thereby compromise its ability to address other critical needs of the citizenry, e.g. affordable housing, SNI, etc.

Sincerely,

Rosylin (Roz) Dean, Steering Committee Member