Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority

June 16, 2020
2040 General Plan Four-Year Review Task Force
City of San Jose

Re: Continued Discussion on Opportunity Housing

Dear Task Force Chairs, Members & City Staff,

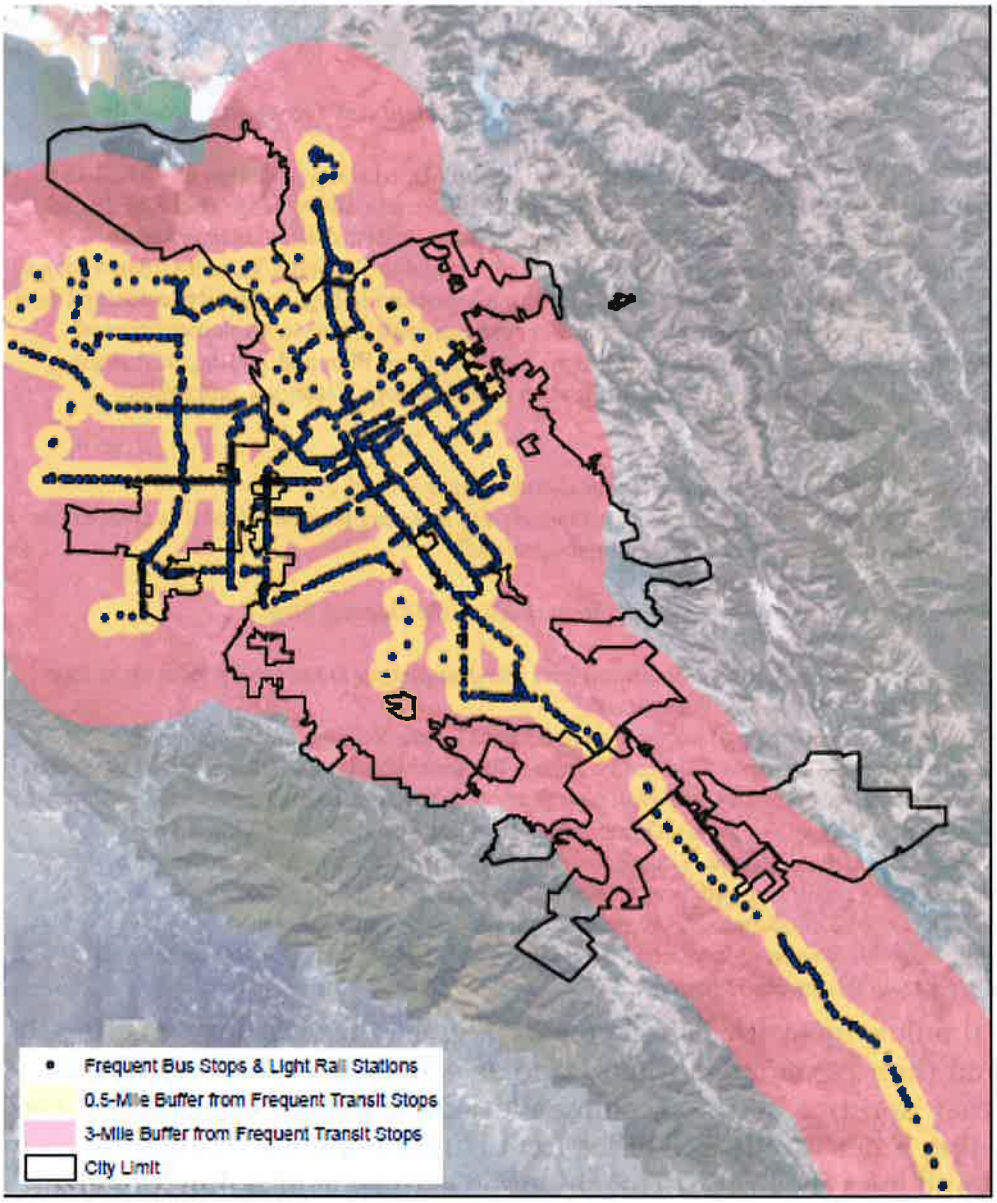
At our first Task Force meeting in December of 2019 our Task Force received a presentation from Daniele Parolek of Opticos Design, Inc. on Missing Middle Housing resulting in enthusiastic response from many Task Force Members. Task Force Staff presented their complementary policy recommendations on Opportunity Housing at the February 27th, 2020 General Plan Task Force Meeting. Staff recommendations included:

> Staff recommends adding two Action Items to Chapter 6, Land Use and Transportation, of the General Plan.
>
> 1. Under Goal LU-10 – Efficient Use of Residential and Mixed Use Lands (pages 15 and 16)
> "LU-10.11 Update the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance to allow designated Residential Neighborhood areas to have up to four units on a parcel, which shall be referred to as Opportunity Housing, in areas within half-mile of a Local or Regional Transit Urban Villages and next to properties with existing and conforming medium to higher density residential uses to provide more housing opportunities for San José residents. Prior to implementation of Opportunity Housing, in addition to revisions to the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance, a displacement risk assessment and identification of mitigations strategies, and design guidelines must be completed."
>
> 2. Under Goal LU-11 – Residential Neighborhoods (pages 16 and 17)
> "LU-11.9 Establish design standards for Opportunity Housing to ensure that it is compatible with the form of existing residential neighborhoods."
>
> Staff recommends adding the following policy framework to the General Plan:
>
> "Allow parcels with a Residential Neighborhood land use designation to redevelop with up to four units per parcel if it meets the following criteria:
>
> 1. The site is within half-mile of a Regional and Local Urban Village boundary.
> 2. If the site is outside of a half-mile radius from a Regional and Local Urban Village boundary, the site must share a property line with a property that has an existing residential development with more than two units or has a General Plan land use designation of Mixed-Use Neighborhood, Urban Village, Transit Residential, Urban Residential, or Downtown.
> 3. The site is not a qualifying property under the Apartment Rent Ordinance.
> 4. The site has not been occupied by renters within the last seven years.
> 5. The site adaptively reuses structures that are on or are eligible for inclusion on the City of San José's Historic Resources Inventory."

I have had several follow-ups with Task Force Staff since the February meeting to further understand their recommendations, and as a Transit professional I was interested in further iteration on the recommendations to include expansion of the recommended radius from ½ mile to 3 miles from High Frequency Transit to capture full walk and bike shed radii. This proposed extension of radius would

significantly expand the reach of Opportunity Housing in the City of San Jose significantly. See additional data provided by Task Force Staff below on potential expanded policy reach for new housing opportunity sites with an expanded radius to the 3 miles from High Frequency Transit:

Scenarios	Qualifying Parcels
Original Proposal	47,500
Within Half-Mile of High Freq Transit Stops	90,500
Within 3 Miles of High Freq Transit	Pretty much citywide
Within 3 Miles of a Transit Urban Village	Pretty much citywide
Citywide	167,000



After careful coordination with Task Force Staff, **I specifically ask that my fellow Task Force members consider the expansion of the Opportunity Housing policy area to include both walk and bike shed, pushing the radius to the three-mile mark from High Frequency Transit.** While we look for solutions to increase housing supply in aim of addressing our Local and State level housing crisis this policy shift allows for increased density in areas with proximity to High Frequency Transit, which is key to moving toward a more sustainable and holistic community.

Let us take the lessons learned from other pioneering Cities on this policy front such as Portland, OR, Durham, NC & Minneapolis, MN and be thoughtful with our practice to ensure that the results of similar policy implementation in San Jose will not result in displacement or harm. Staff has outlined strategies to reduce the potential of displacement by not allowing Opportunity Housing in parcels that are currently subject to the City's Apartment Rent Ordinance or to units or parcels that have been occupied by renters with in the last seven years. These and other anti-displacement strategies need careful consideration throughout the policy implementation process.

This policy advancement is critical now, more than ever as we strive as a community to focus on equity, heeding local and national calls to reform systemic policies of discrimination. Opportunity Housing takes direct aim at ending our City's own historic planning practices which have resulted in discrimination and community inequities. I want to thank and applaud Task Force Staff for its thoughtful approach and careful consideration when presenting their recommendations on Opportunity Housing to this Task Force.

Sincerely,

Jessie O'Malley Solis
General Plan Task Force Member & VTA TOD Manager