



Honorable Mayor Matt Mahan, City of San José  
and Members of the City Council,  
200 E Santa Clara Street, San José, CA 95113  
via email, sent April 12, 2023

re: Agenda Item 7.2: the Urban Confluence Silicon Valley Breeze of Innovation Project.

Dear Mayor and Councilmembers,

We in the District 6 Neighborhood Leaders Group (D6NLG) advocate for equitably and sustainably preserving and enhancing the quality of life in San José, and for years<sup>1</sup> we've been following the plans of Urban Confluence Silicon Valley LLC. We feel that their plan to put a giant structure in Cesar Chavez Plaza would cause severe cultural and economic impacts to the Downtown area and to the City as a whole. Please put a stop to this nonsense.

San José is already recognized as the Capital of Silicon Valley and for our iconic City Hall and Rotunda Plaza. We don't need Urban Confluence to give us an "icon" as a "gift" – a gift that comes at a significant cost:

- **It would take public land.** Cesar Chavez Plaza is already a well-used and much-loved plaza. It is a community place-making asset – the heart of the city. The Plaza is critical for the success of downtown outdoor programming ranging from Christmas in the Park to the San José Jazz Festival – events that draw large crowds which are critical to the downtown core. Event organizers have pleaded for more space, and PRNS is studying the feasibility of expanding the park to meet their needs. Putting the Breeze of Innovation there would take space away from these events. Please require Urban Confluence to do an economic and cultural analysis (at their expense) to see if their proposed art-piece could possibly attract enough visitors to make up for the losses from reduced event capacity and cancelled (or relocated) events. Also, Urban Confluence needs to do better outreach: the community is an asset with which to collaborate, not a barrier to overcome.
- **It would take money:** hundreds of millions of dollars. Urban Confluence says that this is a "gift," but they are seeking major contributions from private foundations. (Have they shown they know how to do this? Do they even have a plan?) These foundations do not have unlimited funds to donate, and money given for this means less money that can be given to other causes, such as community hands-on art projects and downtown cultural events. Then there's the cost of ongoing maintenance and repair, and also the not-insignificant cost of decommissioning and removal the structure at its end-of-life. Finding hundreds of millions of dollars is not a trivial task: groups have not yet succeeded in finding a much smaller sum for the planned Levitt Pavilion at St. James Park, and even San Francisco is struggling to find the money to keep the lights on on the Bay Bridge.

As we've said before, "Thanks, but no thanks!" We urge the City Council **terminate** the City's relationship with Urban Confluence, say "no!" to the "Breeze of Innovation" – and stop wasting everyone's time.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'Lawrence Ames', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Dr. Lawrence Ames, Chair, D6NLG

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<sup>1</sup> see letters dated 5/3/21, 6/8/22, and 12/2/22, archived online at [www.calsj.org/D6/](http://www.calsj.org/D6/)