



City of San José Neighborhood Services and Education Committee:  
Chair Arenas, Vice Chair Carrasco, and Members Esparza, Cohen, and Jimenez  
200 E Santa Clara Street  
San José, CA 95113  
via email, sent December 2, 2022

re: Dec. 8th NSE Agenda Item (d)-3: “Urban Confluence Silicon Valley Project Status Report”

Dear Committee Members,

The District 6 Neighborhood Leaders Group (D6NLG) is an association of officers, board members and involved community representatives from the multitude of neighborhood associations across District 6 in San José. We have been involved for years in advocating for developing San José into a more attractive, sustainable, equitable, and inviting city – and for years we have been following the various proposals for “a city icon.” With redistricting, we now have members from Downtown and downtown frame neighborhoods such as Gardner, Delmas Park, and Rosemary Gardens.

We urge the Neighborhood Services and Education Committee (NSE) to recommend to the City Council the **termination** of the City’s relationship with the project entitled “Breeze of Innovation” proposed by Urban Confluence Silicon Valley LLC.

The project’s managers have determined that the originally proposed Arena Green site is infeasible, and they have announced that they are moving downtown to the Plaza de Cesar Chavez site. Their announcement referenced an undefined “hybrid” of their Breeze of Innovation structure with something to honor Cesar Chavez. We oppose any such project for the following reasons:

- The Plaza de Cesar Chavez 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 long complained that they need more space, and PRNS is studying the feasibility of expansion of the park to meet their needs. The new Breeze of Innovation hybrid would take space away from these events. We worry that “Breeze” would not attract enough additional visitors to compensate for the visitors lost due to reduced event capacity or to cancelled (or relocated) events.
- The new location and the new hybrid design objectives will require significant redesign of the project. Competitors in the original International Design Competition may argue, in court, that they too should be allowed to submit revised designs appropriate for the new site or else receive compensation. The City’s exposure to such litigation as a project partner is unclear.
- There are several other local projects competing for the same philanthropic dollars, such as the Cesar Chavez Family Home, the Levitt Pavilion in St. James Park, and the Guadalupe River Park Conservancy. We note that other similar large-scale projects have stalled in their fundraising, e.g. the Climate Clock (Organograph)<sup>1</sup> near Diridon Station and Museum of Modern Art Tower.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.organograph-sj.org/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://sjclocktower.org/index.html>



The “Breeze” supporters have never provided the requested fundraising plan that would articulate more than “there are large companies” and “family foundations.”

- We are troubled by Urban Confluence Silicon Valley LLC’s misleading written announcement that suggested they already had Council approval for this site change. We are also concerned that, just prior to the announcement, all board members resigned and have been replaced. Initial donors who vigorously supported a “light tower” homage may be less enthusiastic about this new site.

We recommend the **termination** of the proposed Urban Confluence Silicon Valley project. We would welcome exploring ways to honor Cesar Chavez more fully at the Plaza while still providing capacity for downtown events. We hope that a new non-profit will form with this purpose – and without the burden of the Urban Confluence Silicon Valley LLC’s “Breeze” design, contracts, and risk of litigation. And a Cesar Chavez-focused project may even find synergistic opportunities with the fundraising efforts of Amigos de Guadalupe and other groups supporting the Cesar Chavez Family home.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Dr. Lawrence Ames'.

Dr. Lawrence Ames, Chair, D6NLG

cc: Mayor Sam Liccardo and Councilmembers;  
Councilmembers-elect Rosemary Kamei, Omar Torres, Bien Doan;  
City Clerk; Jon Cicirelli, PRNS; Angel Rios, CMO; Nanci Klein, OED