

The Honorable Matt Mahan, Mayor of San José
and Members of the San José City Council
June 5, 2024

re: June 18, 2024, Council Agenda, Item 8.2: “Downtown Residential High-Rise Program”

Dear Mayor Mahan and Councilmembers,

The San José Parks and Recreation Commission respectfully requests on Item 8.2 that you reject both Staff Recommendation (c) to discount the Parkland In-Lieu Fee for residential high-rise projects within the Downtown Planned Growth Area; and Staff Recommendation (d) to study extending the discount program to beyond Downtown and to additional categories of multi-family residential structures.

Housing and Parks are both important parts of a city: together, they provide for the personal and communal good by providing the places for us to live and the places for us to get outdoors for exercise, relaxation, and to meet our fellow residents. We *can't* have a city without housing, but also we *won't* have a city that can attract economic investment without quality parks.

Giving a few thousand dollar discount in the park fee won't offset a half-million-dollar-per-unit imbalance to make housing profitable now, but the discounts would severely impact the park system in the future. The high-rise discounts now proposed for the 4,078 units downtown totals over \$20 million, which could be used to make significant improvements to a number of nearby regional parks. It could, for example, make Guadalupe River Park a jewel, improve the vibrancy of Plaza de Cesar Chavez, and install recreational amenities at Arena Green. ***The way to encourage downtown residential development is to make downtown living more attractive by providing enticing nearby parks!***

Parks are an integral part of our city – they are even in the very charter of the city! When parks are not supported, they degrade and make a place less desirable. High quality, well maintained parks attract economic investment which in turn attracts more economic investment and new residents. Investment in our parks make our downtown and our urban villages thriving places.

Please reject Staff Recommendations (c) and (d).

Support our housing market by keeping San José an attractive and vibrant city by supporting our parks!

PRC voted (5, 3, 2, 1; Nos: Brennan, Nguyen, & Snider; Absent: Campbell & Morrow; Abstained: Barocio) to support this letter.



Commissioner Lawrence Ames
Vice Chair
Parks and Recreation Commission