

**My vision for community healing and economic recovery** is no different than my public vision for San José since first taking office, that *San José is a safe and diverse city where everyone can afford to live, find dignified work, and engage in community*. The challenges we had before COVID-19 did not simply disappear, but rather have only been further exacerbated - calling for us to recommit more fervently than ever to do better for our City.

**“Where Everyone Can Afford To Live”**. As a City, the risk of displacement and increased homelessness is greater than ever due to economic loss. We must first ensure that those who are at risk of losing their homes are given the tools and resources to keep a roof over their heads, especially as the job market recovers. This includes rental assistance, continued moratorium on rent increases and evictions, and ensuring tenants’ right to mediate past due rent payments through payment plans. Second, we must double down with the County to address our existing homeless crisis through increasing resources needed for stability, such as job training and mental health services. Finally, our affordable housing stock remains overwhelmingly low. We must work to not only increase affordable housing in every part of our city, including permanent supportive housing, but also maintain what currently exists.

**“Find Dignified Work”**. Our local small businesses have suffered horribly, many having been forced to shut their doors for good. Per the Greater DTSJ Economic Recovery Task Force<sup>1</sup>, we have heard loud and clear that business owners simply want more than just to survive, they want to thrive again. As we begin to safely reopen and are contending with a trending work-from-home culture, we must help restore consumer confidence, reimagine our public spaces, and reduce barriers for our local small businesses so they may flourish, ultimately bringing job growth for all. Rather than terminate creative opportunities like outdoor dining and street closures we should make them permanent and further enhance those efforts. Furthermore, among the sectors that have suffered, none have suffered more than our Arts community which were the first to close and will be likely the last to reopen. Whether it be through financial assistance, or leveraging private-public partnerships, we must do all we can to restore and enhance our once vibrant arts and cultural life. Finally, one silver lining from this pandemic has been the boom of home-based entrepreneurship, rooted in the need for economic survival. We should foster this exciting burst of microbusiness ventures and support its growth.

**“Engage in Community”**. We cannot deny that we are emerging from the pandemic as a different world. Not just from the public health impacts but from the civil and social movements that skyrocketed over the past year, launching our city into a deep reflection on where we stand on racial and social equity - a conversation that myself and my colleagues have pushed long before the pandemic. Our new Office of Racial Equity (ORE) has the opportunity to level the field for our communities that have been historically overlooked and guide us towards achieving a more equitable city. We have had tough conversations and need to continue to have them if we are to build a better San José for our children. Additionally, as we move forward, we should look at elevating our City’s voice in the Public Health arena by exploring the creation of the City’s own Public Health Office. As the tenth largest city in the nation, we have complied with Federal, State, and County mandates while struggling to have our community concerns addressed - often hitting a wall. A city-dedicated Public Health Officer would not only safeguard our City’s public health and safety interests, but would ensure that San José’s voice is equitably heard and amplified.

**My vision is shaped** with the understanding that it takes all of us, from our residents to the business community to our non-profit organizations, to truly bring healing and recovery to fruition and it will take time and more than just a few initiatives to do so. In the years ahead, we need to continue listening thoughtfully to those we serve, and act accordingly in their best interest. Together, we can rebuild, restore, and revitalize!

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<sup>1</sup> Greater Downtown San José Economic Recovery Task Force. (December 2020). *Phase II Recommendations*. Retrieved at: <https://sjd3.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/CITY-Task-Force-Phase-II-Recommendations.pdf>