

New downtown San Jose residential project would include affordable units and homes for disabled people





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Kelsey Ayer Station residential and commercial mixed-use development, visual. A big new San Jose residential complex is being eyed for the city's downtown and would include affordable units and homes for people with developmental disabilities.

By [George Avalos](#) | gavalos@bayareanewsgroup.com | Bay Area News Group
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SAN JOSE — A new San Jose residential complex is being eyed for the city's downtown and would include affordable units and homes for people with developmental disabilities, an executive with the non-profit behind the project said Thursday.

San Francisco-based non-profit The Kelsey is leading the development efforts for a mixed-use residential and commercial project at 447 N. First St.

“This development is primarily focused on housing for people with different abilities and people with a mix of incomes,” said Micaela Connery, chief executive officer and founder of The Kelsey.

The proposed project, consisting of 111 apartment units, would be built on a light rail line within a few stops of the Diridon train station and both of the future downtown BART stations.

“We’re really excited about a development like this that is in a central urban center and transit-oriented location, with a strong community and great services nearby,” Connery said.

The development would include a mix of market-rate units, as well as units that would be set aside for people with incomes both under and well below the average median income for the region. Units also would be set aside for people who are developmentally disabled.

“Terraces, rooftop gardens, and a community room on each residential floor” would be part of the development, according to information posted on the project’s web page. The web page also stated, “On the ground level, a cafe will serve neighbors and passersby by day and would operate as a communal dining area by night.”

The project also could benefit from Google’s plans for a huge transit-oriented community near the Diridon train station in downtown San Jose consisting of office buildings, retail, homes, restaurants and open spaces where 25,000 people could work, including 15,000 to 20,000 of the search giant’s employees.

“We are excited by projects like Google’s proposal that would bring more jobs downtown and create the opportunity for more community partners,” Connery said.

Located a short distance from the Ayer light rail station, people living in the development would have ready access to transit connections throughout the region.

The precise mix of market rate and below-market-rate dwellings, as well as apartments for those with developmental disabilities, isn’t known yet and will be subject to economic realities such as financing requirements and market conditions.

“We also want to include market-rate housing, because there are a lot of young professionals and people who want to live in an urban setting in diverse communities,” Connery said.

San Mateo-based Sares Regis Group of Northern California is working with The Kelsey as the principal developer of the project. Sares Regis has bought or developed roughly 19,000 multi-family and residential housing units and 14 million square feet of commercial and civic properties.

“This is going to be our first project, but it is not a one and done for us,” Connery said. “There is a shortage of inclusive housing across the country.”