

From: [Sean Collins](#)
To: [Steve Le](#)
Subject: 451 El Camino Real Development Project - SCU Comments
Date: Monday, August 31, 2026 3:46:11 PM

Dear Steve,

On behalf of Santa Clara University, I am writing in response to the list of Conditions of Approval (COAs) regarding traffic signal improvements at the intersections of El Camino Real and Franklin St./Palm Drive, and El Camino Real and Campbell Ave./Accolti Way for the development project at 451 El Camino Real.

The University supports projects that add critical housing to the area and has no objections to this project, provided the identified intersection and traffic enhancements are made. This includes incorporating left-turn phasing for the east- and west-facing lights at both intersections, among other listed enhancements.

Regards,

Sean Collins



Sean Collins

Associate Vice President
University Operations

500 El Camino Real, Santa Clara, CA 95053

phone | [REDACTED]

email | [REDACTED]

May 27, 2025

Eric Morley
Morley Bros.
236 N. Santa Cruz Ave.
Suite 106-A
Los Gatos, CA 95030

RE: Proposed University Station Project in Santa Clara

Dear Eric,

Thank you for sharing Bixby Land Company's proposal for University Station in Santa Clara to the Catalyze SV Project Advocacy Committee on April 23, 2025. We appreciate being among the first community members to get to see the project. As we understand it, University Station is a proposal for a new residential neighborhood on a 10-acre site located at 451 El Camino Real, across the street from Santa Clara University and adjacent to Santa Clara Station. The project comprises multiple buildings, including a 5-story 298-unit apartment building and 111 3-story for-sale townhomes, for a total of 408 units. The 5-story multi-family building will have 359 vehicle and 100 bicycle parking spaces, while each townhome will have a two-car garage. Residents of the proposed project would have access to 76,000 square feet of common open space and 9,600 square feet of private open space.

Standout Elements:



Legacy

Legacy is not a category we and our members typically score, but it is important to highlight the efforts being made to ground this project in the area's history. Although the project does not involve adaptive reuse of existing structures, our members commend the developer's intention to honor the site's history as a cannery owned by the DiNapoli family. The architectural design includes brick elements and other industrial design features intended to allude to the site's past life as a cannery. While well-received among our members, some suggest further enhancing these elements, particularly through additional public art or making the design look even more like San José canneries that have been preserved and undergone adaptive reuse.



Affordability

Our members appreciate that the project meets the City of Santa Clara's 15% affordability requirement and that affordable units will be dispersed throughout both the apartment building and townhomes. Affordable for-sale units are rare, and our members

appreciate that the developer will include for-sale units alongside the rental component. However, many members feel the project meets only the minimum requirements and could do more to address affordability, particularly given the location near Santa Clara University, where a need for student and faculty housing exists. Members also express concern regarding the affordability levels, noting that moderate-income units at 110% or 120% AMI may not truly address affordability needs in the area. This may be especially relevant in the wake of the [Bay Area News Group reporting](#) showing how affordable homes at the highest AMI levels are hard to fill and thus sit vacant. While appreciating the integration of affordable units throughout the development, our members encourage deeper affordability levels and a higher percentage of affordable units.

Elements to Improve:



Community

Our members appreciate the developer's efforts to engage with community stakeholders, such as meeting with the Old Quad and immediate neighbors. However, members feel that the community engagement is relatively standard and could be expanded to include more diverse stakeholders. Several members recommend that the developer broaden their outreach to include future residents and the wider community. We understand the project is fairly early in the outreach process, and we encourage the developer to hold additional public meetings and engage with underrepresented voices in the community to gather more comprehensive feedback. Such low-hanging fruit could yield easy ways to increase this project's score.



Vibrancy

University Station will benefit significantly from its close proximity to Santa Clara University and Santa Clara Station. To take full advantage of its location, our members want to encourage the developer to knit the project into the existing and promising future urban fabric. Suggestions to ensure the project meshes with the existing neighborhood include opening the paseo up to the public and extending it down Lane A to connect with Santa Clara Station. Our members do not support fencing off the paseo. Additionally, members express concern regarding the activation of the street front. Multiple members note that the resident-serving amenity space doesn't provide sufficient street-level interaction. Since the developer owns the existing adjacent retail site, members suggest enhancing the pedestrian connections between these sites with landscaping or plaza-like elements along Lane C. Other suggested public realm improvements include incorporating more green and open spaces, as well as potentially creating a community room that could be open to the neighborhood or rented out to nonprofits. Although not currently on the table, an ideal scenario would be for

Bixby to concurrently redevelop the adjacent site too by placing housing on top of the existing commercial enterprises.



Transportation

Our members recognize the project's proximity to the Santa Clara Station as a significant transportation asset. However, several members expressed concerns about walkability and the project's connection to the train station from Lane A. It's unclear from the plans if the proposed sidewalk will continue past the project frontage along Lane A toward Franklin Street to the northwest. If this connection is not currently planned, we recommend that the developer implement some enhanced pedestrian and bicycle connections along Lane A. Other suggestions unrelated to Lane A include promoting alternative non-car transportation by providing University Station residents with transit passes. Options for transit passes include [Caltrain's GoPass](#) program and [VTA's SmartPass](#) program. These transit passes would allow the project's owner to purchase passes for residents in bulk at a reduced price.



Sustainability

Members of Catalyze SV do not feel we have sufficient information to evaluate the project's sustainability features based on the information shared by the property owner's representative. We will rescore this category at a later date as the developer continues to refine and develop more concrete sustainability measures.



Intensity/Zoning

With a proposed density of 39.5 dwelling units per acre, our members have significant concerns regarding the project's density, particularly given its proximity to a major transit center. Our members are dissatisfied with the inclusion of townhomes adjacent to Santa Clara Station—a current Caltrain station and future BART stop. Members emphasize that building townhomes will lock in a low-density land use for many decades, and that transit-adjacent locations should prioritize higher densities. While our members understand the financial constraints raised by the developer, we staunchly support and encourage maximizing density, especially so close to major transit centers such as this. Land adjacent to high-quality transit is very limited, and using it to build townhomes does not represent a sustainable use of this scarce resource.

We wish you luck on your May 29th community meeting. We plan to be there to represent the views of our members.

Sincerely,

Catalyze SV's staff and Project Advocacy Committee members

CC: Mayor Lisa M. Gillmor (lgillmor@santaclaraca.gov)

CATALYZE SV

www.CatalyzeSiliconValley.org

Albert Gonzalez (agonzalez@santaclara.gov)
Raj Chahal (rchahal@santaclaraca.gov)
Kathy Watanabe (kwatanabe@santaclaraca.gov)
Kevin Park (kpark@santaclaraca.gov)
Sudhanshu Jain (sjain@santaclaraca.gov)
Kelly G. Cox (kcox@santaclara.gov)
Steve Le (sle@santaclaraca.gov)
Jason Baker, Caltrain (bakerj@caltrain.com)
Navi Dhaliwali, Caltrain (dhaliwaln@caltrain.com)
VTA (plan.review@vta.org)
Jason Lee (jason.lee@sanjoseca.gov)
Jonathon Evans, Old Quad Residents Association (jonathon.evans@gmail.com,
contactogra@gmail.com)
Alison Cingolani, SV@Home (alison@siliconvalleyathome.org)
Victorina Arvelo, Greenbelt Alliance (varvelo@greenbelt.org)
Ali Sapirman, Housing Action Coalition (ali@sfhac.org)
Ray Bramson, Destination: Home (ray@destinationhomesv.org)
South Bay YIMBY (hello@southbayyimby.org)

About Catalyze SV

Catalyze SV's Project Advocacy Committee is comprised of community members who identify, evaluate, & lead advocacy efforts around specific development projects.