



Building a Better Normal

AUGUST 2020



SILICON VALLEY
Recovery Roundtable

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Letter from the Mayor of San José

The Silicon Valley Recovery Roundtable started with ambitious but critical goals: develop policy recommendations and practical strategies to help get families back to work, provide support for small businesses, and ensure our most vulnerable residents are able to fully participate in our recovery.

As we gathered a cross-sector team from our three-county region, we soon realized we had an even bigger challenge to tackle: ensuring that we would return to a “better normal,” with a more equitable and sustainable economy. Our better normal features more equitable housing opportunities, more commute alternatives to our gridlocked freeways, and ubiquitous access to digital learning, harnessing the incredible innovation for which our valley is known.

Over 100 days, our 59 roundtable members opened their calendars, perfected their remote meeting skills, debated the merits of different ideas, and multiplied our participants through their community networks.

Our co-chairs—Carl Guardino, Lisa Su, Nicole Taylor, Bob Alvarado, and Chuck Robbins—provided keen strategic guidance and challenged us to formulate bold recommendations that are also actionable.

And there was a team behind the team, which included staff from the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, Stanford University, and our unparalleled consultants, Boston Consulting Group. Many nights and weekends were spent during a time when organizations were already stretched to their limits responding to unprecedented needs while coping with dwindling resources.

Thirty-two of my fellow Silicon Valley mayors rolled up their sleeves to engage deeply, wading through reopening protocols, small business support, and job creation programs.

At the beginning of this effort, the magnitude of this crisis was only beginning to unfold. We had yet to grapple with historic unemployment, the reckoning of racial injustice following George Floyd’s murder, and the extended disruption of nearly every facet of our daily lives. These fundamental shifts in our thinking have allowed us to explore ideas previously deemed too bold or unproven. We are no longer bound by what has been tried before.

We are stronger together, and our multisector effort is, in and of itself, a valuable product that will yield long-term results. With great urgency, I am eager to get to work.

In partnership,



Sam Liccardo
Mayor, City of San José

Letter from the SVRR Co-Chairs

The COVID-19 crisis has caused major disruption across Silicon Valley and exacerbated long-standing structural inequities, demanding a strong response. Silicon Valley has never been satisfied with the status quo, so we set our sights higher.

Our Silicon Valley Recovery Roundtable (SVRR) colleagues were tasked with finding ways to emerge from the pandemic into a better, more inclusive, and more equitable region where we could make strides toward resolving long-standing challenges, and address those magnified by COVID-19. We are grateful to the 59 cross-sector leaders who agreed to serve on the SVRR and gave generously of their time, making invaluable contributions to this report. We have been supported in our work by nine focus area co-chairs, who have overseen the development of the recommendations in each of the four focus areas. We particularly want to thank them and the leads of each focus area, who have tirelessly led our efforts to deeply understand the challenges, potential solutions, and formulate the recommendations included in this report. We also want to thank Boston Consulting Group for their efforts in helping us organize, shape the process by which SVRR members worked together, and synthesize key learnings and actions.

We strongly believe that Silicon Valley has the problem-solving capacity to emerge stronger from COVID-19. This is only made possible by designing and implementing solutions that uplift all of Silicon Valley, including our neighbors who are immigrants, communities of color, and undocumented workers.

The challenges we face—whether from COVID-19 or from systemic racism, inequity and injustice—can seem daunting for any single individual, corporation, or community. But with our combined efforts, we can help solve some of these challenges. The process of convening the SVRR has already yielded results, forging connections and building alliances among our members. These bonds will endure, enabling us to amplify our impact by working toward a common purpose.

While we've made great progress, there is still so much more that needs to be done. With your support, we can help shape a better normal. So, we urge you to consider what actions you can take in your organization and community to make many of these ideas and recommendations come to life.

We have an opportunity to come together, bring our collective ideas, and innovate to solve the biggest social and economic challenges in our communities. Together we are stronger, and with our combined efforts, we may remember the COVID-19 pandemic not just as a crisis, but also as a catalyst that caused our society and our communities to work together to create a better future.



Bob Alvarado
Executive Officer,
NorCal Carpenters
Regional Council



Carl Guardino
Former President & CEO,
Silicon Valley
Leadership Group



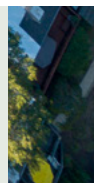
Chuck Robbins
Chairman & CEO,
Cisco



Lisa Su
President & CEO,
AMD



Nicole Taylor
President & CEO, Silicon
Valley Community
Foundation



Silicon Valley¹ Recovery Roundtable

59 members

San José Mayor Sam Liccardo convened the Silicon Valley Recovery Roundtable (SVRR) to define the most pressing challenges facing our community and identify a set of practical and ambitious solutions targeted at local, regional, and state governments and non-governmental stakeholders in the corporate and philanthropic arenas. The Roundtable includes 59 leaders from across 11 sectors. Collectively, we partnered with community members and subject matter experts to assist with Silicon Valley's recovery from COVID-19, while working on solutions to Silicon Valley's biggest problems.

Co-Chairs

Bobby Alvarado: Executive Officer, NorCal Carpenters Regional Council
Carl Guardino: Former President and CEO, Silicon Valley Leadership Group
Chuck Robbins: Chairman and CEO, Cisco
Lisa Su: President and CEO, AMD
Nicole Taylor: President and CEO, Silicon Valley Community Foundation

Workforce/Labor

Oscar De La Torre: Business Manager, Northern California District Council of Laborers
Mike Fox, Jr.: CEO, Goodwill of Silicon Valley
Barrie Hathaway: President & CEO, JobTrain
Maria Marroquin: Executive Director, Day Worker Center of Mountain View
Hermelinda Sapien: CEO, Center for Employment Training

Healthcare

Irene Chavez: Sr. VP and Area Manager, Kaiser
Lizz Vilardo MD: CEO of Foundations, Sutter Health Bay Area

Media

Sharon Ryan: President and Publisher, Bay Area News Group

Retail, Small Business, and Service Providers

Alex Chan: Owner, Lion Supermarkets
Shaun Del Grande: President, Del Grande Dealer Group
Nuria Fernandez: General Manager/CEO, Santa Clara VTA
Jesus Flores: E.D., Latino Business Foundation & President, Alum Rock Business Assn & Tax Preparation
Janet Lamkin: California President, United
Jo Lerma-Lopez: Founder + Natural Chef, Luna Mexican Kitchen
Chuck Hammers: President, Pizza My Heart
June Tran: Owner, 402 Restaurant & Crema Cafe
Jean-Marie Tritant: US President, Unibail-Rodamco-Westfield
John Southwell: General Manager, San José Marriott

Higher Education/Remote Learning

Byron Clift Breland: Chancellor, San José/ Evergreen Community College District
Sal Khan: Founder & CEO, Khan Academy
Father Kevin O'Brien: President, Santa Clara University
Mary Papazian: President, SJSU
Marc Tessier-Lavigne: President, Stanford University

Innovation Economy Employers

Gary Guthart: CEO, Intuitive Surgical
Reid Hoffman: Partner, Greylock; Co-Founder, LinkedIn
Lisa Jackson: Vice President, Environment, Policy & Social Initiatives, Apple
Chris Lehane: Head of Global Policy and Communications, Airbnb
Aaron Levie: CEO, Box
Doug Merritt: CEO, Splunk
Dheeraj Pandey: CEO, Nutanix
Rohan Patel: Senior Director, Global Policy & Business Development, Tesla
Rudy Reyes: CA President, Verizon
Laurie Richardson: Director of Global Affairs, Google

Ted Schlein: Managing/ General Partner, Kleiner Perkins
Dan Schulman: President & CEO, PayPal
Dilawar Syed: CEO, Lumiata
Tom Werner: CEO & Chairman, SunPower
David Wehner: CFO, Facebook
Geetha Vallabhaneni: Founder, Luminix

Financial Institutions

Greg Becker: President & CEO, Silicon Valley Bank
Raquel Gonzalez: Market President, Bank of America

Builders, Developers, and Real Estate

Mike Blach: Chairman, Blach Construction
Drew Hudacek: Chief Investment Officer, Sares Regis
Matt Lituchy: Chief Investment Officer, Jay Paul Co
Phil Mahoney: Executive Vice Chairman, Newmark Knight Frank
Linda Mandolini: President, Eden Housing
Dick Scott: Divisional VP, NorCal PS Business Parks, NAIOP

Professional Services/ Consulting

Ibi Krukrubo: Silicon Valley Managing Partner, EY
Zia Yusuf: Managing Director & Senior Partner, Boston Consulting Group

Business Organizations

Teresa Alvarado: San José Director, SPUR
Russell Hancock: President & CEO, Joint Venture Silicon Valley
Matt Mahood: President & CEO, The Silicon Valley Organization

Philanthropy

Connie Martinez: CEO, SVCCreates
John A. Sobrato: Chairman, Sobrato Family Foundation

¹ By "Silicon Valley" we refer to Santa Clara and San Mateo counties, as well as southern Alameda cities.

Introduction



Silicon Valley, a Global Pandemic, and a Better Normal

Silicon Valley has long been an engine of growth, a hotbed of entrepreneurship, and the world's leading technology hub. The companies founded and headquartered in Silicon Valley have been transforming the world for a century—starting with vacuum tubes in the 1920s and continuing through the decades with defense technology, integrated circuits, personal computers, the internet, and now Web 2.0.

As 2020 began, Silicon Valley was in the midst of its ninth-straight year of economic expansion, driven in large part by a booming innovation economy.² Unemployment stood at a 19-year low of just 2.1%.³ Silicon Valley's long run of growth and prosperity has been well documented, yet even before COVID-19 there were challenges simmering around housing costs and supply, wealth and income inequality, transportation, and environmental sustainability.

Then came COVID-19.

The pandemic has had a devastating public health and economic impact in Silicon Valley, causing the loss of lives, jobs, and homes across our communities.

California was the first state to impose a stay-at-home order, which helped bring the initial wave of COVID-19 infections under control. But as the state reopened starting in May 2020, the virus came roaring back. By August 3, 2020, California was reporting an average of more than 8,500 new cases and 135 deaths per day.⁴

As of August 2020, the situation remains dire, with over 10,000 deaths reported in the state.⁵ Moreover, the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on our most vulnerable communities—people of color and undocumented immigrants—has been striking, reflecting the pandemic's exacerbation of existing systemic inequities and racial injustices. People of color and undocumented workers represent the bulk of the essential workforce. Although many occupy the frontlines of the pandemic, a history of perpetuating structural inequities renders them among the least likely to have access to basic medical services, or sick leave.



Photo courtesy of Mercury News

Santa Clara and San Mateo counties reported

11%*

unemployment rate in June 2020 in comparison to

2-3%
in June 2019)

As of August 2020, the Latinx population in Santa Clara County had accounted for

50%†

of infections despite representing

26%
of the population.⁶

*11%; †50%

Source: Pew Research Center; New York Times; Employment Development Department of the State of California

Unemployment has risen substantially in COVID-19's wake. In Santa Clara, the unemployment rate was 10.7% in June 2020 compared to 2.7% in June 2019; similarly, San Mateo reported 10.8% relative to 2.2% last year.⁷ The trend in Alameda County was no different, with 13.4% unemployed compared to 3.1% in 2019.⁸ Job losses year-over-year amounted to a devastating 93,900 in Santa Clara and San Benito according to a July 2020 report.⁹ Immigrants, undocumented workers, and people of color have been disproportionately affected—as a case in point, 61% of the Latinx community in California report they or someone they know has lost their job, compared with 38% of white individuals.¹⁰

The pandemic continues to change the rhythm of our daily lives in Silicon Valley. It has forced more than 260,000 K–12 students out of school in Santa Clara¹¹ and another 94,000 in San Mateo.¹² It remains uncertain whether these students will be able to return to their campuses for the 2020–21 academic year. COVID-19 has also catalyzed a rise in remote working and remote access to services, trends that may reshape how and where companies and organizations operate in the future.

Furthermore, COVID-19 has exacerbated long-standing challenges plaguing our region. As we act to counter the public health threat of COVID-19 and the associated economic fallout, it is imperative that we make a concerted effort to address these challenges and build a better, more inclusive normal.



Long-Standing Challenges within Silicon Valley

Pervasive income inequality, leading to huge disparities in wealth

The richest 13% of households have more than \$1 million in assets each and collectively hold more than three-quarters of the region's wealth; by contrast, 37% of Silicon Valley households have less than \$25,000 in savings.¹³ Viewing such data from a racial or ethnic lens is also telling. Per capita income is \$77,209 for white residents but just \$22,601 for Hispanic or Latinx community members in Silicon Valley—a greater racial disparity than in California or in the United States overall.¹⁴

An intractable housing crisis

Silicon Valley's housing costs are among the highest in the nation, and the situation has worsened as the pace of job growth has continued to exceed that of housing development; specifically, three times more jobs were created than housing units since 2010,¹⁵ and the median home sales price is over \$1 million.¹⁶ The rental market is no better: Santa Clara rents consume between 54% to 89% of monthly unemployment benefits for workers impacted by COVID-19 job loss, leaving little for other expenses.¹⁷ Even before COVID-19, rents were high and overcrowding severe, especially in neighborhoods with a substantial Black and Latinx presence, including East Palo Alto, North Fair Oaks, and Belle Haven in Menlo Park.¹⁸ The situation is most acute for the over 11,000 homeless individuals in Santa Clara and San Mateo who cannot afford any form of housing at all.¹⁹

Broad challenges with livability and sustainability

Long commutes are a hallmark of Silicon Valley, with average daily times topping 70 minutes (a 21.5% increase from 2010).²⁰ In addition, the cost of doing business in Silicon Valley is among the highest in the country, standing 51% higher than the national average in San Jose. This makes it difficult for small businesses to get traction, particularly those owned by individuals of color who already face the greatest setbacks in getting their businesses funded.^{21,22}





COVID-19 has magnified these problems, but it has also galvanized community stakeholders' engagement—a reflection of the resilience, dynamism, and innovative spirit of the Silicon Valley region. By making a concerted effort to build a more inclusive and equitable Silicon Valley, we can emerge stronger, better, and more sustainable than before. Many philanthropic organizations and companies in our region have already stepped up, generously devoting their time and resources to support this vision of a better Silicon Valley.

Our aspiration in writing this report has been to spur action on the part of three groups of stakeholders: (1) local and regional governments; (2) state government; and (3) non-governmental stakeholders, including companies, unions, universities, and non-governmental organizations, among other parties. We hope that each set of stakeholders will absorb the findings of this report and identify the areas where they are best positioned to lead action, understanding that cross-sectoral collaboration will be the cornerstone of implementation.

We acknowledge the multitude of complementary efforts working toward the same end, including but certainly not limited to Plan Bay Area 2050, the Governor's Task Force on Business and Jobs Recovery, and San Mateo County's Communitywide COVID-19 Long-Term Strategic Plan. It is our hope that this report inspires additional thinking about how we can guide our region's recovery, and the role that Silicon Valley employers, non-profits, educational institutions, unions, and foundations can play to that end.

**As you read this report,
ask yourself:**

**What can I do and what can
my organization do to move
Silicon Valley towards a
better normal?**

Immigrant from Guatemala

Has been in the US for 20 years
House cleaner and caretaker for elderly man

Lost her job as a caretaker due to COVID-19

"I take care full-time of an older man—in March when they started shelter in place, they asked for us to stay home. And they paid me the first month out of the kindness of their hearts, but not the second month, and how am i supposed to ask them for that when I'm not working?"

Landlord accosting her for payments

"Our landlord had our neighbor meet me and my daughter at our front door with a cell phone. My landlord was telling my daughter, 'you need to start working so you can help pay rent' and my daughter was telling her 'I can't work I'm a full-time student in college...'"

Yet, remains hopeful

"But being a single mother, I've tried to pay everything on time. But it's so hard... When the governor said they can give us \$500 I felt hope. I felt seen."

Immigrant from Ethiopia

Has been in the US for 38 years; married for 28 years to high school sweetheart
Ethiopian restaurant owner in San José

Is a community leader and a restaurant owner

"We are one community; we help each other here, that's why we survive." "He brings his food to our film festival and it goes right away. He has this food truck that he drives up... it's the place to try; let me tell you"—another community member speaking about restaurant

Because he is serving his community, he is making personal sacrifices

"Every day I quarantine myself (from my wife) because she has kidney failure and surgery about a month ago and I don't want her to get sick. It's very hard to not go home."

Business is struggling; was not able to apply for PPP loans

"Because we can't survive with a 40% income and pay rent and lights and pay our other expenses, mortgage and all that stuff...we are not connected to banks to get PPP loans; before the ink dried when the president signed the bill, the money was gone."

Focus Groups: Example stories

Student at a local college, originally from Mexico

Studying to be a doctor
Works part-time to pay rent

Has stayed distant from family to keep them safe

"Ever since this started, my uncle and I can't see each other because my grandma lives with him. The rest of my family is in Mexico."

Has had to pull from savings to make ends meet

"I've never really made more than minimum wage. I even pulled from my 401k to keep paying for rent and school."

Concerned of prospect of being unemployed after graduation

"I would love to graduate and would love to find a full-time remote position where I don't have to worry about how I'm going to pay for a studio apartment."

Local artist and community organizer

Serves the Vietnamese community in San José with art classes

Primary revenue stream for small business vanished because of COVID-19

"We normally run on a pretty low budget. But we're no longer able to offer art classes, which has basically zeroed our business."

Was not able to get connected to a bank to apply for PPP

"These banks were only giving loans to people who had loans or accounts with credit... Which is crazy, because if you already had money in the bank with them, why would you need a loan?"

Hopeful about the role that art will play in recovery

"I'm hoping that in this moment that the systems in place might actually understand that arts should be part of the solution. We're deeply rooted in our community."

Building a Better Normal: Our Focus

Our aim in “building a better normal” is to work toward an equitable economic recovery, retain and grow jobs, address the needs of vulnerable communities, and cultivate a supportive and inclusive regional community.

We structured our work around four interrelated focus areas that reflect the critical challenges and opportunities presented by COVID-19.

Reopening and resurgence planning *Focus on immediate needs*

1. How do we reopen safely and productively with minimal risk?

Near-term recovery and resilience *Focus on impact in the next three to twelve months*

2. How do we engineer a recovery that includes and benefits our most vulnerable community members?
3. How do we enable businesses to survive and thrive?

Re-imagine a better normal *Focus on the next three to five years and beyond*

4. How do we innovate to build the foundations of a new, “better normal” future?

First, we acknowledged the persistence of the virus and, as a result, the protracted need to open and close sectors of the economy in future periods of resurgence. This understanding formed the basis of **Focus Area 1** that the SVRR explored, centered on **reopening and resurgence planning**, with the aim of identifying immediate actions that could be taken to support businesses.

Beyond providing immediate support on reopening needs, the SVRR looked for ways to support Silicon Valley’s **near-term recovery and resilience**. We developed solutions to engineer a recovery that would include and benefit our most vulnerable communities (**Focus Area 2**), and help businesses to survive and thrive (**Focus Area 3**). These recommendations range from those that are designed to be pragmatic and actionable in the near-term, to those that are more aspirational but still possible to execute within the next 12 months.

Our final focus area took a longer-term, more expansive view on **reimagining the foundations of a better normal** for Silicon Valley (**Focus Area 4**). The recommendations within Focus Area 4 are by design bold and ambitious, reflecting a desire to rethink what is possible, and to add SVRR’s voice and muscle to overcome historic obstacles to change. While SVRR members recognize that some of these recommendations require significant funding and are politically complex, they have been included to spur debate and as a call-to-action.

Across our work to support near-term recovery and resilience and reimagine a better normal for Silicon Valley (Focus Areas 2 through 4), we honed in on **six priorities for Silicon Valley**, which we believe are critical building blocks toward building a better, more inclusive, and more equitable region as we work to recover from COVID-19. These priorities provided the focus for our recommendations in Focus Areas 2, 3, and 4, and are the “red threads” linking our recommendations across these focus areas. These six priorities are outlined on the next page.

Six priorities for Silicon Valley to support near term recovery and resilience and re-imagine a better normal



1

Strengthen financial stability for individuals and businesses



Provide immediate financial assistance to address urgent needs exacerbated by COVID-19, and create equitable access to banking services, particularly for people of color, undocumented individuals, small businesses, and startups.

2

Drive job creation and support displaced workers to promote economic recovery



Foster an inclusive economic recovery by facilitating job creation, particularly for low-income displaced workers and people of color. Support the recovery of small businesses and startups, who are the primary force behind job creation in our region.

3

Galvanize housing preservation, protection, and production



Break through on the housing crisis in the short-term to stabilize vulnerable populations through preservation and protection. Longer-term, produce more housing, with a particular focus on low-income, very low-income, and extremely low-income individuals and households, including the homeless.²³

4

Reimagine neighborhood districts



Rethink how important commercial, work, and community spaces are built, structured, and connected. Reinvest in our small businesses to spur growth and revive the vibrancy of places that are anchors of our community.

5

Create next-generation transportation



Demonstrate leadership in mobility by building integrated solutions and investing in location-based housing to improve transportation equity and regional access to jobs. Prioritize transformational and strategic investments that include new and legacy platforms, complete streets efforts that facilitate safe carbonless travel, and innovative transportation technology and behavior change programs.

6

Expand digital inclusion for individuals and businesses



Bridge the digital divide and build resilience for future resurgences by equipping individuals and small businesses with stronger digital tools and better connectivity.

Our Recommendations

FOCUS AREA 1: Recovery and Resurgence Planning

Through our work on reopening and resurgence planning, the SVRR, led by the Silicon Valley Leadership Group, has contributed to developing reopening policies and protocols and building an information pipeline for businesses. This work has helped to facilitate the return of tens of thousands of jobs in the manufacturing, construction, and solar industries. New channels of communication across the public and private sector have been established, as well as greater communication and coordination at the mayoral level, through the Mayor's Circle. We have also bolstered testing, tracking, and tracing efforts, and collectively these actions enable Silicon Valley communities to be better prepared to respond to resurgences.



Looking ahead, we face ongoing uncertainty as to the course and duration of the pandemic, creating the possibility of protracted periods of closing and reopening. To create the conditions that would make it easier for businesses to reopen and stay open during future resurgences of COVID-19, we **recommend five initiatives:**

- a. **Establish a private-public sector partnership** with the public health departments of the nine-county Bay Area to compare public health orders
- b. **Continue the contract tracing task force**, partnering with the counties through the Silicon Valley Leadership Group (SVLG)
- c. Call on County governments to **create a team of employees** who can help businesses stand-up their internal contact tracing and testing teams
- d. **Continue the Mayors' Circle** to test best response practices across city lines
- e. **Continue to promote collaboration** between small businesses and hear from them about their evolving challenges, needs, and opportunities

Our Recommendations (cont.)

The table below summarizes our recommendations across Focus Areas 2, 3, and 4. More detail on these recommendations, including potential actions different stakeholders can take to achieve them, are included in each of the focus area chapters.

Near-term recovery and resilience

Re-imagine a better normal

FOCUS AREA 2: How do we make the recovery inclusive for our community's most vulnerable members?

FOCUS AREA 3: Do we enable businesses to survive and thrive?

FOCUS AREA 4: How do we innovate to build the foundation of a better normal?

Strengthen Financial Stability for Individuals and Businesses



2a. Expand emergency financial assistance programs and better enable vulnerable communities to access available support (pg. 31)

2b. Scale equitable financial services to address needs exacerbated by COVID-19 and better communicate availability to vulnerable communities (pg. 32)

2c. Spur large employers to improve living wages and increase adoption of a net disposable income approach (pg. 32)

3a. Double down on SME and startup access to capital to support at-risk small businesses and to enable early stage entrepreneurs to grow and innovate (pg. 42)

Drive Job Creation and Support Displaced Workers to Promote Economic Recovery



2d. Prevent further displacement of low-income workers by galvanizing large employers to halt layoffs/furloughs and prioritize reskilling individuals into new roles (pg. 33)

2e. Bolster job creation and economic mobility to support displaced low-income workers, and scale up wraparound support services (pg. 34)

3b. Create more opportunities for SMEs and startups to capitalize on new waves of innovation by supporting new investments and spurring the public and private sector to prioritize procurement from SMEs (pg. 43)

3c. Streamline regulations and expedite permitting approvals and online inspection services to facilitate new investments and developments that generate new jobs, and ongoing General Fund revenues (pg. 43)

Galvanize Housing Preservation, Protection, and Production



2f. Keep vulnerable communities housed in their current place of residence by extending the eviction moratorium and supporting landlords who are housing low-income residents (pg. 35)

4a. Increase the housing supply by implementing a consistent upzoning and entitlement streamlining framework, with a concerted focus on mixed-use transit, underutilized commercial corridors, and scaling accessory dwelling units (pg. 51)

Galvanize Housing Preservation, Protection, and Production



- 2g.** Rapidly increase affordable housing stock by identifying new opportunities to quickly create affordable residential units, to particularly support vulnerable communities who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness (pg. 35)

- 4b.** Support and advocate for state leaders to pass significant housing legislation by joining existing efforts or forging a new statewide 501(c)(4) or 501(c)(6) organization that brings together a diverse coalition of big-city California mayors, labor leaders, and high-profile corporate and philanthropic leaders to break through political barriers to benefit Silicon Valley (pg. 52)

- 4c.** Ensure that the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) is actively enforced (pg. 52)

- 4d.** Form public-private partnerships that fund housing transformation through shared capital investments (pg. 53)

- 4e.** Develop an emergency COVID-19 housing and prioritized transportation plan for infrastructure funding from federal, state, private, and/or philanthropic sources (pg. 53)

Reimagine Neighborhood Districts



- 3d.** Rethink Main Street and explore new models to revive and redevelop neighborhood business districts and commercial corridors throughout Silicon Valley and adapt to community needs that have changed due to the pandemic (pg. 44)

- 4f.** Prioritize the redevelopment of underutilized commercial corridors into higher-density mixed-use neighborhoods (pg. 54)

Create Next-Generation Transportation



- 4g.** Develop a comprehensive and equity focused new multimodal transport system that connects jobs to housing and includes next-generation technological innovations (pg. 55)

- 4h.** Drive commuter behavior change through city- or employer-provided incentives and disincentives (pg. 55)

Expand Digital Inclusion for Individuals and Businesses



- 3e.** Bolster SME digital capabilities so they can better compete in the e-commerce marketplace (pg. 45)

- 4i.** Promote equitable connectivity through new financial tools that offset costs of internet service and devices for low-income areas and individuals (pg. 56)

- 4j.** Lower device and connectivity barriers with innovative corporate investment or donation programs (pg. 57)

- 4k.** Streamline how local municipalities permit and approve wireless connectivity projects to speed up infrastructure deployment and reinvest cost savings into providing universal connectivity to Silicon Valley residents who do not have access to the internet at home (pg. 57)

Silicon Valley Recovery Roundtable Working Team

The SVRR focused its work on four interrelated Focus Areas. It has been supported by a working team comprised of Focus Area co-chairs and leads for each Focus Area. Each team has sought to unravel the challenges faced by our communities, identify potential solutions, and craft a meaningful set of recommendations with a sharp focus on serving the often-overlooked members of Silicon Valley. Focus Area leads were the primary authors of each chapter of the report, and sought guidance from the Focus Area co-chairs, members of the community and a broad range of experts, and the SVRR members. Additional support was provided by Silicon Valley Leadership Group, Boston Consulting Group, and the San José Mayor's office.

FOCUS AREA 1

How do we reopen safely and productively with minimal risk?



Carl Guardino
Focus Area Co-Chair
Former President & CEO,
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Lizz Vilardo, M.D.
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Matthew Quevedo
Focus Area Lead
Director of
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FOCUS AREA 2

How do we make the recovery inclusive for our community's most vulnerable members?



Nicole Taylor
Focus Area Co-Chair
President & CEO,
Silicon Valley
Community Foundation



Teresa Alvarado
Focus Area Co-Chair
Chief of Local Impact,
SPUR



Gina Dalma
Focus Area Lead
EVP,
Silicon Valley
Community Foundation

FOCUS AREA 3

How do we enable businesses to survive and thrive?



Dilawar Syed
Focus Area Co-Chair
CEO,
Lumiata



Tom Werner
Focus Area Co-Chair
CEO & Chairman
SunPower



Ru Weerakoon
Focus Area Lead
Fmr. Sr. Policy Advisor
for Land Use & Ec Dev,
City of San José

FOCUS AREA 4

How do we innovate to build the foundation of a better normal?



Lisa Su
Focus Area Co-Chair
President and CEO,
AMD



David Wehner
Focus Area Co-Chair
CFO, Facebook



Zia Yusuf
Focus Area Co-Chair
Managing Director
& Senior Partner,
Boston Consulting Group



Karli Stander
Focus Area Lead
Innovations Lead,
Stanford Impact Labs

Mayor's Office Staff

Kelly Kline, Shelley Opsal, Apoorva Pasricha

Co-chair Deputies

Michelle Wright Conn (Cisco), Ruth Cotter (AMD), Gina Dalma (Silicon Valley Community Foundation), Heather Szerlag (NorCal Carpenters)

Silicon Valley Leadership Group

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Our Approach

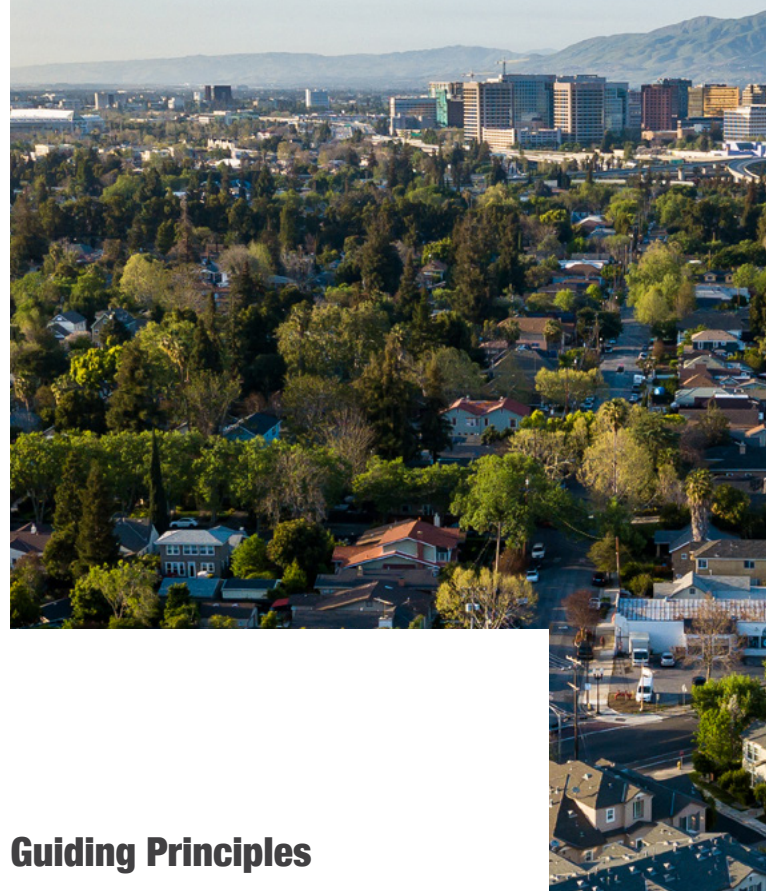
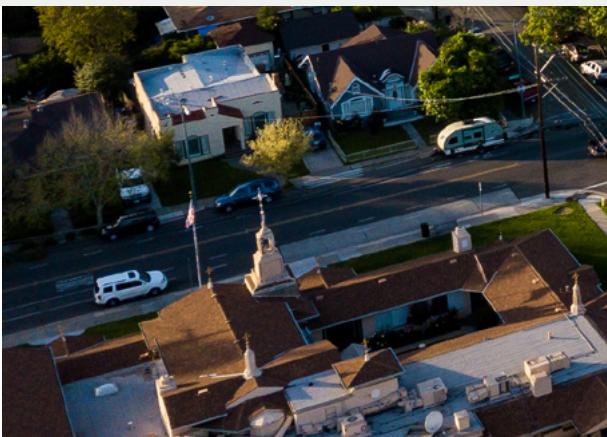
We developed our recommendations to reflect the best ideas of a wide array of stakeholders, including the members of our roundtable, community members, and subject matter experts. It was important for us to ensure that our recommendations reflected lived experiences as told by people in our communities—particularly people of color and undocumented workers. These are the people who have been structurally excluded from Silicon Valley's wealth and opportunity, and who have faced the most severe impacts from COVID-19. We are thankful to the following four groups for their indispensable contributions to this report. They are mentioned by name in this report's Acknowledgments:

The voices, needs, and contributions of **140 community members** who participated in 16 focus groups

Ideas and suggestions from interviews with over **45 experts** who have spent their careers studying exactly those issues we wish to solve here in Silicon Valley

Feedback from over 160 employers in the office space technology, solar installation, and construction industries, which was input into the development of county reopening policies and protocols

The cross-sector expertise of **Silicon Valley Recovery Roundtable members** who held over 15 meetings to explore our four primary Focus Areas, and convened as a whole three times over the course of 100 days to discuss vision and solutions



Guiding Principles

While developing the recommendations in this report, we adhered to the following principles:

- 1 **Gather input** from multiple stakeholders across industries, sectors, and communities
- 2 Take an **equity lens** to center and support vulnerable communities
- 3 **Identify** immediate-, short-, medium- and long-term actions
- 4 Balance bold **vision** with specific, tactical, and practical actions
- 5 Harness Silicon Valley's **innovative spirit** to address challenges

Considering the Costs

It is important to state that we are not proposing that municipalities and other stakeholders take on all of our recommendations; rather, our aim has been to curate a “marketplace of ideas” that we believe will significantly benefit our communities. We also acknowledge that implementing the recommendations in this report will require significant investments both by the public and private sector, at a time when budget and operational pressures and declining revenues are at unprecedented levels.

It will be up to local, regional, and state governments, alongside relevant non-governmental organizations in the private and social sectors, to share responsibility for selecting and implementing those recommendations they feel will have the most impact and are most feasible for them. It will be incumbent upon each of the cities and their private sector and non-profit partners to take the next step of jointly advocating and funding the most strategic of the proposed recommendations that would uniquely support the recovery of their cities and the region as a whole. This will involve seeking future federal and state funding, including from the Economic Development Administration (EDA), various relief funds targeting job preservation, job creation, workforce retraining, and Main Street revitalization. Such funding will leverage the Coronavirus Relief Fund established by the CARES Act, which has already served to provide significant support to Silicon Valley communities.

While selecting among interventions based on shifting priorities, needs, and revenues is a demanding task, we should all recognize that inaction also carries significant costs. When jobs are lost, businesses shut down, and people leave our region; there are real costs for local jurisdictions associated with feeding, housing, and meeting the other basic needs of the newly unemployed.

Municipalities that have sensibly and responsibly planned and prepared to address the recovery needs of their communities will be in the best position to harness future funding opportunities. To the extent that Silicon Valley creates the necessary infrastructure, pilots ideas, and builds meaningful public-private partnerships, we will be in a more competitive position to seek and obtain such funds.

We owe it to our communities not to limit ourselves when formulating solutions to the big challenges we face. That is particularly true in this moment, which requires us to wield Silicon Valley’s unparalleled culture of resilience in service of a better future for everyone in our region.



Focus Area



How Do We Reopen Safely and Productively with Minimal Risk?

This focus area was co-led by Dr. Brian Brennan, SVP of the Silicon Valley Leadership Group (SVLG), and Matthew Quevedo, Director of Transportation, Housing and Community Engagement of SVLG. Carl Guardino, former President and CEO of the SVLG, and Dr. Lizz Vilardo, President and CEO of Foundations Sutter Health Bay Area, served as focus area co-chairs.





Introduction

Over the past 100 days, the SVRR focused on developing forward-looking recommendations to build a better normal for Silicon Valley. **At the same time, we supported business and counties with immediate actions to help support Silicon Valley's businesses with reopening in safe ways through specific protocols.** We acknowledge that we are in a different position now than we had anticipated at the start of 100 days—the COVID-19 threat persists and while some businesses have reopened, we recognize the likely possibility of businesses needing to close and reopen multiple times again in response to future periods of resurgence.²⁴

Even with a single period of shutdown, the COVID-19 health crisis almost immediately sparked an economic crisis.²⁵ This job loss was acutely felt among people of color and undocumented workers. Between February and April 2020, white workers in California experienced an 11% decrease in total jobs in comparison to a 19-20% decrease among Black, Latinx, and Asian workers.²⁶ The resilience of the technology industry lessened the initial blow, but Silicon Valley still suffered extraordinarily high job losses in other sectors staffed mostly by low-income workers²⁷ such as the restaurant and hotel industries.²⁸

To support our communities in the short-term, SVRR joined forces with multiple Bay Area organizations and municipalities to identify immediate actions that could be taken to meet the needs of health care providers, as well as to enable businesses to safely reopen as soon as feasible, to protect and retain jobs. The focus was on actions that could have impact over the first 45 days.

Immediate economic impact from COVID-19

128K[‡]
jobs lost in San José
metro area

6%[†]
of 1,600 businesses in
downtown San José
were fully open

In Santa Clara County,
the restaurant and
hotel industry lost

53%^{*}
of jobs

^{*}53%, May 2020; [†]6%, May 2020; [‡]128K, April 2020
Sources: Mercury News; ABC7 News

Early work of SVRR

As foundational work in the set up of the Silicon Valley Recovery Roundtable, the Silicon Valley Leadership Group took a series of early actions to support Santa Clara county, galvanizing private sector leaders to create tools and resources to support hospital and health clinics:

Launched the Silicon Valley COVID-19 Aid Coalition, which to date has raised over \$8 million for the Valley Medical Center Foundation, to support PPE provision²⁹

Created a Product Specifications team, partnering with doctors and supply chain specialists at hospitals across Silicon Valley to ensure that the proper PPE was purchased for our hospitals

Created a series of Product Guidelines that have gone on to guide purchasing for needed PPE³⁰

Partnered with procurement teams throughout Silicon Valley to identify a list of reliable suppliers who were vetted

To run alongside the SVRR, we convened a Mayor's Circle with representatives from 32 cities across Alameda, San Mateo, and Santa Clara counties, to create a forum for public and private sector communication and action, and an opportunity to socialize and get feedback on the key recommendations developed by SVRR.

This group has been instrumental in providing a new channel of communication between the public and private sectors, and also encouraged an exchange of ideas from city to city.

Support for Businesses to Reopen Safely, and Prepare for Future Resurgences

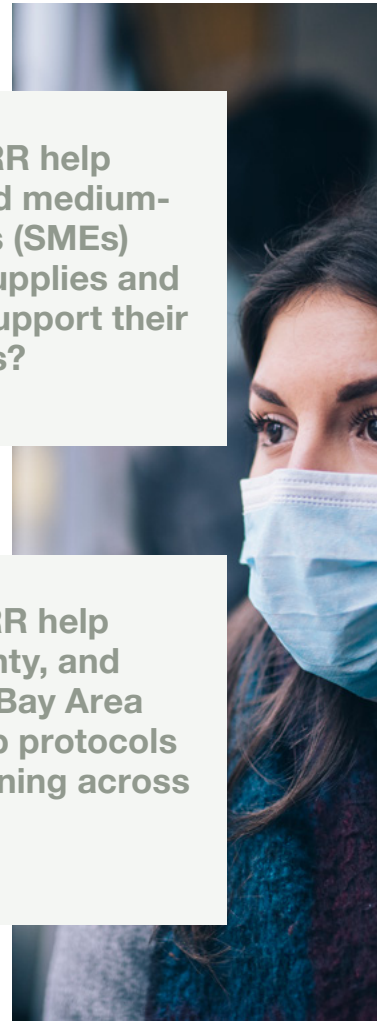
Early on, we heard from our business communities that their most pressing challenges were the uncertainty of reopening and the lack of accessibility of clear and consistent communication on preparing for eventual reopening. Businesses that had closed had limited visibility into when they could reopen. Many companies had to lay off employees or convert temporary furloughs into permanent reductions, and almost all were experiencing new daily challenges with remote modes of living and working.

While navigating through COVID-19, businesses both large and small sought clarity among the many orders coming from different levels of government. The questions asked informed our focus on immediate actions we could take across three questions, to support businesses across the Silicon Valley region. Our initial effort has focused on working with Santa Clara leaders to develop interventions and drive fast, local wins. Our goal is that these are then replicated and scaled across other Bay Area counties:

How can the SVRR help provide small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with access to supplies and information, to support their reopening efforts?

How can the SVRR help to prepare Silicon Valley communities for a resurgence, particularly with testing, tracking, and tracing?

How can the SVRR help Santa Clara County, and in turn the other Bay Area counties, develop protocols to support reopening across key industries?



Summary of Actions Taken to Support Businesses Reopen Safely and Prepare for Resurgences

To mitigate uncertainty and support a clear, safe, and productive reopening, we sought to take actions in four key areas:

Support county protocols

Help counties develop reopening protocols by communicating business needs, especially those of key industries that support Silicon Valley jobs. Our focus was on ensuring that orders coming out of public health departments were clear and understandable, including for SMEs. We relied on the expertise of larger companies who developed professional studies on how to reopen safely and which obstacles to overcome, and we helped to secure a large number of companies to support reopening protocols and inform county leadership on their effectiveness, engaging over 160 employers in office space/tech, manufacturing, solar installations, and construction.

The policies and protocols developed were used to reopen the construction, manufacturing, and solar industries—industries with disproportionately high percentages of people of color.³¹ These policies and protocols brought back many of the 17,500 jobs lost in construction and revived manufacturing, which accounts for 172,400 jobs (15% of the total civilian workforce) in Santa Clara county. The protocols were subsequently expanded to other Bay Area counties.

We also launched a virtual COVID-19 town hall series, led by Santa Clara county board supervisor Cindy Chavez and attended by over 100 private sector leaders, to establish a new channel of communication between the public and private sectors, which served to provide clarity on health orders and ensure critical questions from the business community were heard and answered.

Develop an information pipeline

Support small, cash-strapped businesses with accessing reopening policies and protocols, as well as tools and resources to access PPE suppliers and vendors.

In partnership with the City of San José and Silicon Valley Strong,³² we established a centralized repository of reports and resources from multiple

counties and expanded and scaled the PPE tools and resources we had originally developed to support local hospitals, to also support businesses to purchase supplies for reopening.³³ This information was published on both the Silicon Valley Leadership Group (svlg.org) and Silicon Valley Strong (siliconvalleystrong.org) websites.

As new research and new solutions become available, this resource will continue to grow, and we aim to amplify our outreach and ensure resources are accessible to those most in need.

Preparing for resurgences

Create a task force of private companies to identify actions and resources that support testing, tracking, and tracing.

A resurgence in cases starting in July increased the urgency for the private and public sectors to connect. Building on our work establishing public-private collaboration channels via the Mayor's Circle and the virtual COVID-19 town hall series, we also launched a "Testing and Tracking Task Force." The aim of this group is to foster cross-pollination of ideas, including sharing new technologies, best practices for businesses to manage contact tracing, and identifying opportunities for public-private collaboration on future resurgence preparedness.

In addition, our experience dealing with the first wave of the pandemic has taught us several key lessons that cities and counties can leverage to prepare for any future resurgences.

First, it is important to have strong, consistent communication links so that public officials can leverage the resources of the private sector and learn precisely what employers need to keep their employees safe. Second, we learned that we could minimize confusion and improve consistency by coordinating actions across geographies, industries, and political boundaries, thus making it easier for companies to develop reopening plans. In addition, we discovered the value of quickly convening a broad group of business leaders from across industries and sectors, including traditional competitors who agree to put their differences aside to work for the greater good.

Recommendations

We intentionally focused our efforts on near-term actions to support the reopening needs of our business communities. To continue and build on this work, we put forward a number of recommendations for Silicon Valley municipalities, private companies, and social sector organizations:

Establish a public-private sector partnership with the public health departments of the nine-county Bay Area to compare public health orders

Continue the Testing and Tracking Task Force

Create a team who can help businesses stand-up their internal contact tracing and testing teams

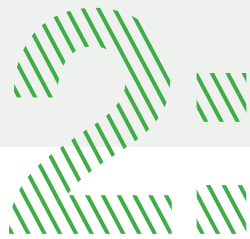
Continue the Mayor's Circle to share best response practices across city lines

Continue collaboration between small businesses

- 1a.** Create a clearinghouse website that compares the public health orders of the San Francisco Bay Area and the State of California, to support counties to standardize protocols or align on state protocols wherever feasible. By expanding the information pipeline, we will improve cross-sector communication, reduce confusion around different health orders, and thereby help employers limit their liability risks and also galvanize support for local contact tracing efforts.
- 1b.** As cases continue to rise amidst the recent resurgence, there needs to be continued strong communication between the public and private sectors. We recommend the task force continue to meet with local counties, with support from the Silicon Valley Leadership Group.
- 1c.** We call on county governments to form this team, composed of experts in contact tracing protocols who can help businesses manage employees diagnosed with COVID-19. The goal would be to support companies to be preemptive rather than reactive in managing spread of the virus in our communities.
- 1d.** The Mayor's Circle is an important partner in this fight against COVID-19, and this active community should be maintained with ongoing volunteer staffing by the Silicon Valley Leadership Group. The mayors should continue to meet and share best practices across city lines on innovative approaches to support businesses—for example, on outdoor dining and shop local campaigns. Also, ongoing projects, such as the “Be a Hero—Wear a Mask” campaign started by the Mayor's Circle, should move forward.
- 1e.** We recommend that local chambers of commerce, ethnic chambers of commerce and business associations serving communities of color unite to continue to hear from SMEs about their evolving challenges, needs, and opportunities. Given the continually changing business environment, we believe that greater collaboration and coordination will benefit our economies and communities.

Over the past 100 days we have managed to support a significant number of small businesses. But not all businesses have been able to reopen, and many still face an uncertain future. Going forward, how do we enable businesses to survive and thrive? Focus Area 3 of this report addresses this question and lays out a set of actions the public and private sector can take to re-think main street, double down on SME and start-up access to capital, drive SME procurement opportunities, foster digital inclusion and streamline regulatory processes to drive recovery.

Focus Area



How Do We Make the Recovery Inclusive for Our Community's Most Vulnerable Members?

This focus area was led by Gina Dalma, EVP of the Silicon Valley Community Foundation. Nicole Taylor, President and CEO of the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, and Teresa Alvarado, Chief of Local Impact, SPUR, served as focus area co-chairs.



Introduction

Silicon Valley is a tapestry of diversity, but immigrants, communities of color, and undocumented workers have been hit the hardest by COVID-19.³⁴ In Silicon Valley,³⁵ more than one-third of residents are immigrants, and almost two-thirds of those younger than 18 years of age are children of immigrants.³⁶ Half of our workforce was born outside the United States.³⁷

Across our two-county region, an estimated 250,000 undocumented immigrants contribute to the health and strength of our communities.³⁸ In California, undocumented immigrants pay about \$6 billion annually in local, state, and federal taxes.³⁹ Our region's prosperity and quality of life depend on our ability to make immigrants feel welcome and create conditions where they can thrive.

COVID-19 Has Impacted Vulnerable Communities Disproportionately



2X +

Rate of COVID-19 infection in lower-income zip codes of Silicon Valley

8%

Undocumented immigrants who have received a one-time \$500 stipend from California government funds

61%

Latinx individuals in California report they or someone they know has lost their job

compared to **38%** of white individuals

Sources: [UC Merced report](#), SF Chronicle, [SC County COVID Dashboard](#); SF Chronicle estimates

Immigrants, communities of color, and undocumented workers have lost the most jobs and also experienced the highest infection rates.⁴⁰ **There are several reasons for this disparity:**

- Immigrants, communities of color, and undocumented workers often work in jobs that provide no job security, paid sick leave, or health care benefits.⁴¹
- They disproportionately work in sectors such as food preparation, food service, construction, and caregiving, that have been impacted most severely by the crisis.⁴²
- Many of those who are still employed have been classified as “essential” workers. These essential jobs typically cannot be performed remotely, which means essential workers must leave the safety of their homes and travel to their workplace. Such frontline work increases their risk of infection from COVID-19.⁴³

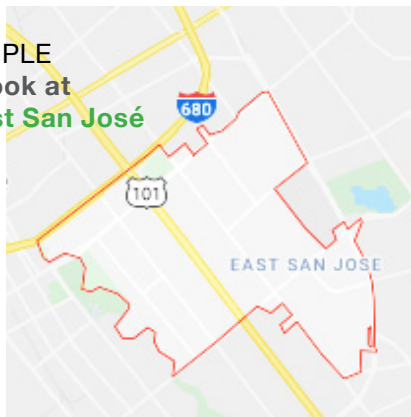
The challenges these communities face can be traced to structurally racist policies, including redlining⁴⁴ and inequitable access to quality jobs⁴⁵ and education,⁴⁶ all of which have stymied their efforts to build wealth.⁴⁷

We have an opportunity to create a better Silicon Valley, one that prioritizes inclusivity and celebrates diversity by lifting up those same communities that have suffered most in the pandemic.

To achieve this vision of a just, sustainable, and inclusive Silicon Valley, we put communities of color, immigrants, and undocumented workers and their families at the core of our work. We conducted ten focus groups and interviewed more than a dozen experts to learn about the foremost challenges facing these communities so that we could develop appropriate solutions. While the challenges are manifold, we witnessed hope and resilience that exemplify the true spirit of Silicon Valley.

In Some Zip Codes of Silicon Valley, Disproportionately Higher Death Rates and Unemployment Rates Have Devastated Neighborhoods

FOR EXAMPLE
A closer look at
95122, East San José



SANTA CLARA
COUNTY AVG.

ZIP CODE
95122*

% low-income (cost-burdened) households

17%

57%

% employment in threatened industries

10%

27%

of COVID-19 confirmed cases per 100,000

288

651

Prior to COVID-19, certain zip codes were already significantly more cost burdened than average...

... and due to COVID-19, a large proportion of individuals are at risk of unemployment...

...and also experiencing higher rates of infection (as of 7/10/20)

4X Death rate in low-income vs. non-low-income zip codes in Santa Clara County

Note: ~20 deaths per 100K residents in zip codes with >10% individuals living below poverty line, compared to 5 deaths per 100K residents in zip codes with <10% individuals living below poverty line.

*95122

Sources: Mercury News, SF Chronicle, City of Santa Clara; ICIC: ArcGIS

Challenges

We identified four main challenges based on insights gathered from our community focus groups:

Loss of income

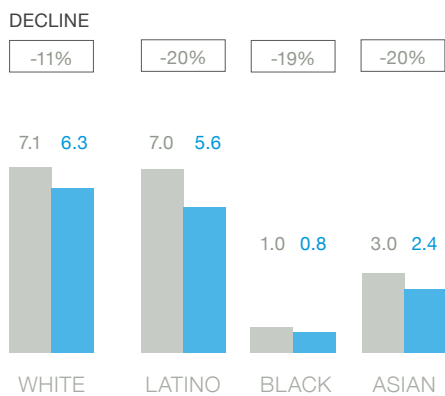
COVID-19 has devastated the Silicon Valley economy. The impact on low-income communities and communities of color and undocumented workers has been disproportionately severe.⁴⁸ For people who have lost jobs and income, alternative employment opportunities are scarce. We spoke with house cleaners, chefs, and service employees who are uncertain when they will be able to return to work in a quickly evolving economy. But true to the spirit of Silicon Valley, our community members just want to work.

COVID-19-Related Job Losses Have Disproportionately Affected Communities of Color and Undocumented Workers



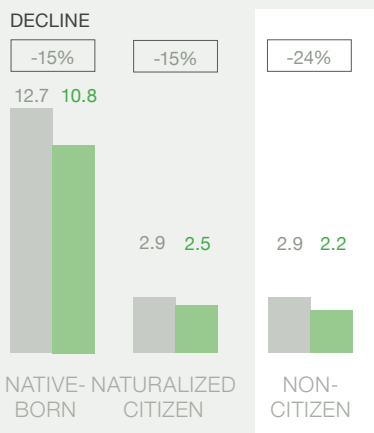
COVID-19-related **job loss** across racial groups in California

Total jobs in Feb '20 vs. Apr '20 (millions)



COVID-19-related job loss across **citizenship status** in California

Total jobs in Feb '20 vs. Apr '20 (millions)



Source: [UC Merced Community and Labor Center](#) analysis of US Census Bureau Current Population Survey February and April 2020 data
Photos courtesy of Silicon Valley Community Foundation

Inability to pay rent

Even before the spread of COVID-19, Silicon Valley had one the country's tightest and most expensive housing markets, with more than half of our families being housing burdened.⁴⁹ Job losses due to COVID-19 have increased the risk of homelessness for those hardest hit.⁵⁰ Many community members have been forced to move in with friends or family members, and some faced the difficult decision of deciding whether to leave California and go back to their country of origin. In fact, according to a UC Merced report, close to 400,000 undocumented immigrants left California between February and April of 2020.⁵¹

Limited access to financial tools and services

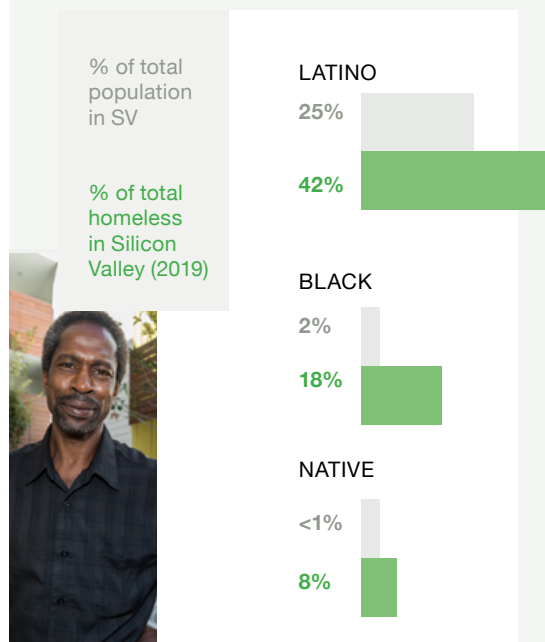
Low-income communities, communities of color, and undocumented workers have historically lacked access to banking tools and services.⁵² COVID-19 has accelerated the transition to cashless payments that threatens to leave behind unbanked and underbanked vulnerable communities.⁵³ These communities are often wary of banks in the first place⁵⁴ and concerned about becoming victims of predatory "schemes" involving high interest rates.⁵⁵ Being unbanked has hurt their financial stability in the past, and now it is preventing them from having financial access when they need it most.

Lack of sufficient social safety net

Although unemployment benefits and other government programs have helped some individuals manage the economic impact of COVID-19, they have systematically skipped over vulnerable communities who cannot show documentation or leverage connections.⁵⁶



Even Prior to COVID-19, Housing Instability Disproportionately Impacted Families of Color



In addition to experiencing higher rates of homelessness, communities of color are

2X more likely to be in low-income housing

Sources: [Census data](#), [HUD housing](#), [The Gap report](#) (National Low Income Housing Coalition)

Photos courtesy of Silicon Valley Community Foundation

Loss of income:

All of us [group of five undocumented immigrants in focus group] have lost our jobs as a result of COVID-19.

My boss told me he was so sorry that he had to reduce my hours from ten to zero.

Inability to pay rent:

We were struggling to pay the rent before the pandemic hit. It's so expensive to live here. Now we've both lost our income.

I had to move in with my sister and her kids because I knew I wasn't going to be able to keep paying rent.

**Limited access to financial tools and services:**

I was offered a loan from the bank, but I knew they would charge me such high interest and I wouldn't be able to pay it back.

I don't have access to a bank, so I couldn't access any PPP loans.

I don't want to tell my employer I feel sick, as he will fire me, and then they will just replace me.

Lack of sufficient social safety net:

As an immigrant, I haven't seen a penny from the government.

I've received some groceries from the local food bank, but it hasn't been the amount my family needs now that we don't have an income.



Recommendations

To address the needs and challenges of our most vulnerable communities, we worked with community groups to develop six recommendations that align with the priorities for Silicon Valley identified in the introduction to this report. Our recommendations represent a mix of public- and private-led initiatives, with a particular focus on near-term action that can be implemented within the next three to twelve months. In making these recommendations, we have balanced the need to meet emergency needs while also positioning all our residents to thrive through full participation in an evolving Silicon Valley. While the majority of our recommendations are designed to be pragmatic and actionable in the near-term, we recognize that some are more aspirational, and we acknowledge the reality that funding will need to be prioritized among all the recovery efforts, not just by the public sector, but also by employers.



Strengthen Financial Stability for Individuals and Businesses



- 2a.** Expand emergency financial assistance programs and better enable vulnerable communities to access available support
- 2b.** Scale equitable financial services to address needs exacerbated by COVID-19 (such as cashless payments) and better communicate availability to vulnerable communities
- 2c.** Spur large employers to improve living wages and increase adoption of a net disposable income approach

Drive Job Creation and Support Displaced Workers to Promote Economic Recovery



- 2d.** Prevent further displacement of low-income workers by galvanizing large employers to halt layoffs and furloughs and prioritize reskilling individuals into new roles
- 2e.** Bolster job creation and economic mobility to support displaced low-income workers, and scale up wraparound support services

Galvanize Housing Preservation, Protection, and Production



- 2f.** Keep vulnerable communities housed in their current place of residence by extending the eviction moratorium and supporting landlords who are housing low-income residents

Recommendation 2a.

Expand emergency financial assistance programs and better enable vulnerable communities to access available support.

Actions

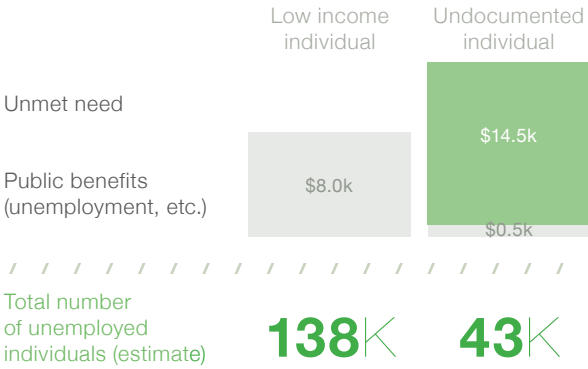
Increase funding for emergency financial assistance to fill the income loss gap.
We call on public sector, private sector, and philanthropic organizations to provide more emergency financial assistance for undocumented immigrants and low-income workers. With further funding, both the San Mateo County Strong (<https://www.smcstrong.org/>) and the Silicon Valley Strong Fund (<https://siliconvalleystrong.org/>) are well-positioned to provide immediate relief and meet the needs of our communities.

Help communities sign up for financial assistance programs. City and county communications teams should partner with community organizations to better communicate eligibility requirements for publicly funded assistance programs. For example, those who received the unemployment federal booster became ineligible for CalFresh, and will need to reapply. There is an opportunity to expand existing one-to-one application support initiatives, such as Redwood city’s curbside support for filling out online application forms.



Estimate of an individual’s total expenditure on housing, food, and health care for 5 months between August to December

Vulnerable Communities Need Significant Support Just to Meet Their Basic Needs



Total unmet need for unemployed individuals

= ~\$1.5B

Note: Basic necessities includes housing, food, healthcare; assumes that \$1400 in monthly benefits is provided for low-income W2/ Independent Contractors, earning on average \$40K per year; Assumption that \$600 / week federal unemployment voucher is ended at end of July; Assumption that DRAI vouchers and/or other support have reached undocumented individuals– though many have not received it; 121K W2 and 17K IC low income workers, earning less than 80% of median household income in the area. Actual unemployment data from May 2020 for W2 employees; estimates based on at-risk industries

Sources: Estimate based on ULS; US Census, CDSS

Photos courtesy of Silicon Valley Community Foundation

Recommendation 2b.

Scale equitable financial services to address needs exacerbated by COVID-19 (such as cashless payments) and better communicate availability to vulnerable communities.

Actions

Scale equitable banking services and products.

This is the time for banks, local credit unions, and FinTech companies to convert temporary services (for example, reduced ATM fees, halted overdraft, or check cashing fees) into permanent offerings and rapidly develop new products and solutions to address needs that have been exacerbated by the pandemic. COVID-19 has accelerated the adoption of cashless payments, which are particularly challenging for those without bank accounts.

Invest in financial education, community awareness, and uptake of equitable banking products. Partner with community-based organizations, banks, credit unions, and FinTech companies to develop tailored financial education and communication strategies that reach vulnerable communities (such as Bank of America’s Better Money Habits) and educate them about equitable banking products (such as same-day payment of daily wages, loans with zero overdraft fees, and prepaid cards to make cashless payments).



Photos courtesy of Silicon Valley Community Foundation



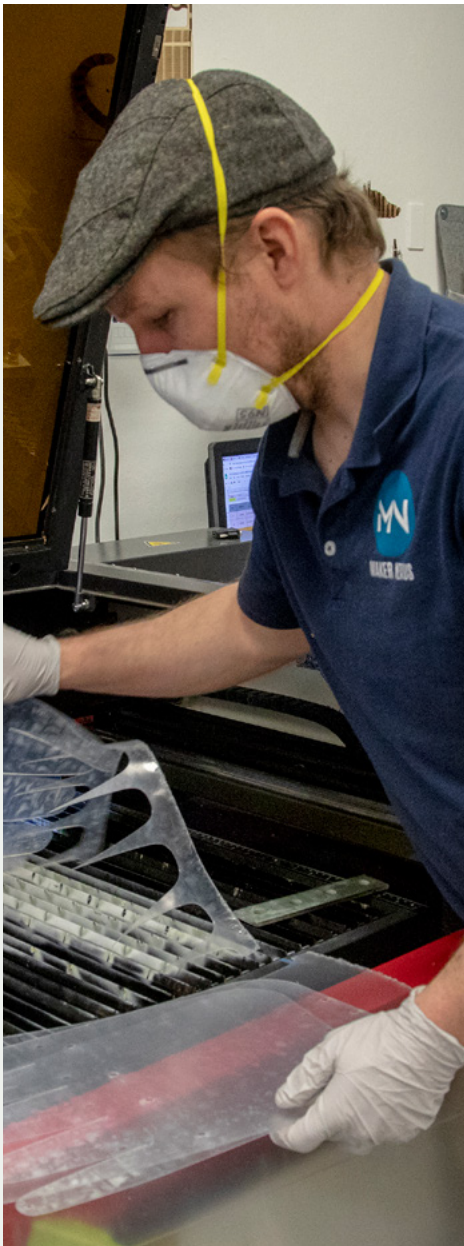
Recommendation 2c.

Spur large employers to improve living wages and increase adoption of a net disposable income approach.

Actions

Develop equitable compensation structures. We urge large Silicon Valley employers to critically analyze employee income in relation to the cost of living (for example, taxes, food, housing, and transport) and make appropriate changes so that all employees are paid living wages, with sufficient net disposable income to meet long-term needs—for example, PayPal implemented a program to elevate the net disposable income of all employees to 20%; in other words, at the end of every month, after paying for living costs, on average, employees would have 20% of their paycheck to save or use for other needs.⁵⁷

To galvanize action, there is an opportunity to launch a “Build a Better Silicon Valley Employer” branding campaign for large Silicon Valley employers who voluntarily commit to this, and who communicate and share their participation in this virtuous movement. These employers could also incentivize contractors to join the campaign.



Recommendation 2d.

Prevent further displacement of low-income workers by galvanizing large employers to halt layoffs and furloughs and prioritize reskilling individuals into new roles.

Actions

Encourage large Silicon Valley employers to voluntarily commit to retaining low-income employees.

The “Build a Better Silicon Valley Employer” pledge could also encompass a commitment to agreed standards regarding retaining low-income workers and investing in reskilling or upskilling. Alternatively, employers could commit to redeploying workers, in partnership with non-profit organizations, to help meet emergency social service needs during the pandemic. To illustrate, workers in kitchen, cleaning, and administrative services could support community-based organizations by providing basic services.

“

To strengthen our social fabric, we need immediate strategies for keeping people housed paired with rapid increases in low-income housing to ensure that the workers who sustain Silicon Valley’s innovation can live here too..

Recommendation 2e.

Bolster job creation and economic mobility to support displaced low-income workers, and scale up wraparound support services.

Actions

Create a collective impact employment program for low-income workers through a Silicon Valley public-private partnership that:

- Identifies and creates new job opportunities supported by employer intelligence on future growth areas and specific industry needs
- Designs customized training programs considering existing skills (such as hospitality, food service, caregiving, and construction)
- Supports upskilling of low-income workers via an “earn & learn” model (for example, such a model has been deployed in Detroit, and has helped over 1,000 individuals with training opportunities and securing long-term employment <http://www.earnandlearn.org/>)
- Aligns and takes advantage of state efforts around a state-wide technology platform for job seekers

Broaden entry points for training programs for higher-paying trades (such as mechanical, electrical, plumbing, or “MEPS”) to include more low-income neighborhoods and support recruitment efforts. This is key to expanding the construction labor pool to both meet housing and transit construction demand, reduce construction costs and delays, and provide job opportunities.



Provide economic mobility opportunities for undocumented workers through new or expanded on-ramp programs that help undocumented workers transition into salaried, stable jobs or entrepreneurial pursuits (for example, pre-apprenticeship programs for construction, opportunities for day workers to sell prepared food or teach unique cultural skills such as cooking in community colleges).

Double down on hiring nontraditional talent, specifically in growth sectors, by radically rethinking the skills that employees need to excel in their jobs. For example, hospitality workers with excellent customer service skills could thrive in sales roles even if they lack academic degrees. We encourage both public and private employers to develop a common protocol for diverse hiring and to work with community-based organizations to seek talent where low-income people of color currently work and learn. The “Build a Better Silicon Valley Employer” pledge could also encompass a commitment to joint standards for diverse hiring.

Prioritize wraparound services for low-income workers. Use CARES Act funding and/or philanthropic dollars to create a public-private program that expands and improves existing subsidized services like childcare, trauma care, access to technology, and public transportation for vulnerable individuals who are in reskilling or retraining programs or entering new jobs.

Recommendation 2f.

Keep vulnerable communities housed in their current place of residence by extending the eviction moratorium and supporting landlords who are housing low-income residents.

Actions

Extend the eviction moratorium and create repayment plans for low-income tenants. Extend that moratorium, at least until the counties allow all businesses to open and boost communication to make sure that low-income tenants know their rights. Implement universal repayment programs with flexible metrics for low-income tenants.

Provide landlord tax incentives in exchange for rent forbearance or rent forgiveness. Advocate immediately for federal resources to support landlords specifically if they house extremely low-income tenants and forgive rent that went unpaid during the eviction moratorium. Strive to ensure that any tax incentives offered provide: (1) a prohibition from evicting existing tenants for a set period of time, and (2) financial relief as quickly as possible for impacted landlords participating in the program via tax credits, rebates, or other financial tools.

Extend mortgage forbearance. Expand mortgage forbearance to landlords of low-income tenants to align with timing of the eviction moratorium. The CA Mortgage Relief Package program announced in March 2020 provided no-interest deferred loan payments for 90 days but has since expired.⁵⁸

Recommendation 2g.

Rapidly increase affordable housing stock by identifying new opportunities to quickly create affordable residential units, to particularly support vulnerable communities who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness.

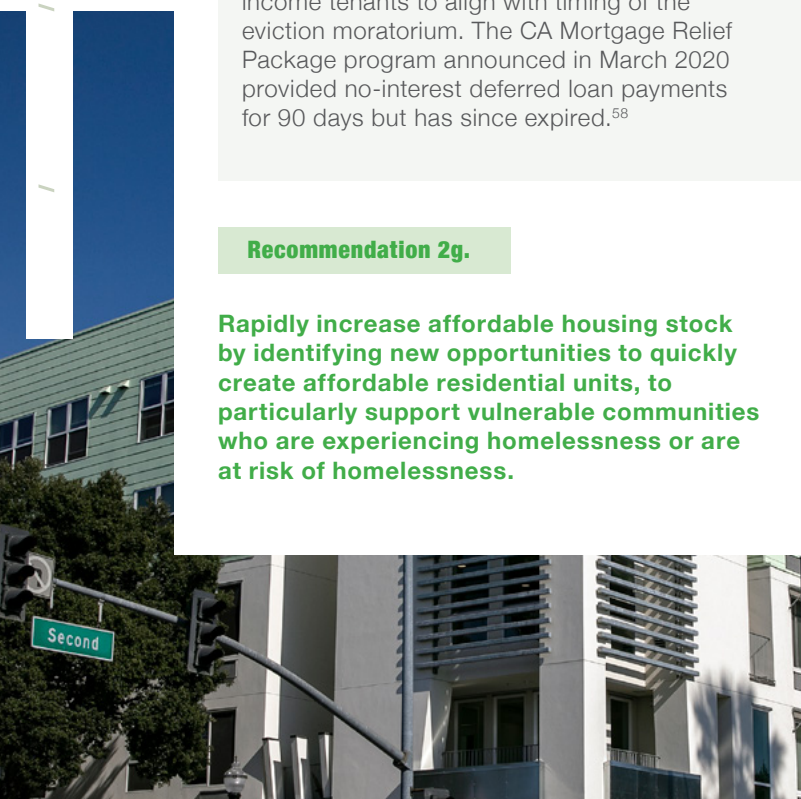
Actions

Provide emergency financial support to landlords in exchange for long-term affordable rental rates. Advocate for immediate federal funding to support a “pay it forward” approach, and create a public-private partnership (such as the Housing Trust and private sector organizations and potentially city and county) that provides loans to small site landlords to bridge the financial gap between rent received and mortgage payments due. To participate in the program and benefit from no-interest loans and deferred payments, landlords would need to agree to a deed-restricted decrease in the rent for low-income tenants for a set period of time (for example, rent reduced by \$X/Month for Y number of years). Such a partnership can save small landlords from insolvency while also increasing the number of properties with affordable rental rates.

Adapt more hotels and motels for low-income housing. Given low occupancy levels and reduced rates due to pandemic-related travel restrictions, there are plenty of opportunities for low-income, structurally unhoused, homeless, or evicted residents to move into unused motels and hotels. To implement this idea, we recommend launching a fund with private dollars to match with existing local, state, and federal programs, such as Project Homekey⁵⁹ to purchase and rehabilitate suitable hotels and motels or the City of San José’s program to convert publicly-owned land into emergency interim housing for homeless individuals⁶⁰

- Housing advocates can work with counties and cities to identify sites that could be rapidly developed and funded by public, private, and philanthropic dollars. Private sector actors could sponsor wraparound services such as food delivery and WiFi. These wraparound services could have the ancillary benefit of enabling restaurants or hotels to open their kitchens while providing some revenue to delivery drivers.
- Housing advocates can call on cities to adopt ordinances and development standards to streamline approvals and conversions of commercial hotel and motel sites for the purpose of 100% affordable housing.

Building on the recommendations in this chapter to support preservation and protection of affordable housing in the near-term, focus area 4 of this report covers recommendations for further accelerating affordable housing production over the longer-term.



Focus Area



How Do We Enable Businesses to Survive and Thrive?

This focus area was led by Ru Weerakoon, former Senior Policy Advisor for Land Use & Economic Development at the City of San José. Dilawar Syed, CEO of Lumiata and Tom Werner, CEO and Chairman of SunPower, served as focus area co-chairs.





Introduction

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and startups are the lifeblood of the Silicon Valley economy. They are a primary force behind new job creation in our region.⁶¹ In San José, for example, more than half of SMEs were established by immigrants and people of color.⁶² Many SMEs are located in underdeveloped and challenged business corridors that rely on foot traffic, and are self-financed, making them particularly vulnerable during economic downturns.⁶³

SMEs and startups have taken a significant hit due to COVID-19.⁶⁴ Many face the real risk of being forced out of business, while others have already shut down operations.⁶⁵ The industry sectors most impacted are leisure and hospitality, retail and wholesale trades, transportation and utilities, and education and health services.⁶⁶

Nearly all small businesses, whether self-financed or operating under loans and credit card debt, are facing cash-flow concerns and are unable to access traditional forms of capital.⁶⁷ Many SMEs were deemed ineligible for federal grants and loans.⁶⁸ Now they face an unprecedented drop in consumer demand, low sales and revenues, and supply chain disruptions.⁶⁹ The dire impacts of the pandemic have resulted in boarded-up storefronts, record high layoffs and employee furloughs, reduced hours and salaries for employees, and an inability to meet rent obligations.⁷⁰

Similarly, the pandemic has been severe for early stage entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley.⁷¹ Many lack cash reserves to survive longer than a year⁷²

and have been forced to restructure their business models and marketing plans,⁷³ while putting plans for initial public offerings on hold.⁷⁴

Against this backdrop, we have focused our efforts on identifying steps that various government (local, regional, and state) and non-government (companies, unions, and NGOs) stakeholders can pursue to support SMEs and startups across multiple sectors of the economy and to reinforce Silicon Valley's reputation as a leading hub of entrepreneurship.

To inform the recommendations in this section and put SMEs and startups at the center of our work, we conducted focus groups and interviews with over 100 Silicon Valley stakeholders, capturing a breadth of perspectives.

Our recommendations focus on serving our most vulnerable and impacted businesses and helping them to survive and thrive. By investing strategically in our job creators, neighborhood anchors, and early stage companies, we can boost Silicon Valley's economic recovery and bolster our ability to weather any resurgence of the virus.

COVID-19 Has Hit Small Businesses from Multiple Angles, Putting a Large Proportion of Silicon Valley Jobs at Risk



SMEs are important drivers of Silicon Valley jobs...

99%*

of businesses in Silicon Valley are SMEs

70%*

of employees in Silicon Valley are employed by SMEs and startups

*99%/70%; †44%; ‡58%; § 40%

Sources: Facebook Small Business Roundtable "Status of Small Businesses" (May 2020); US Census Bureau Small Business Pulse survey (week of 6/21-6/27) CA Employment Development Department, Bureau of Economic Analysis

Across the US and North America, SMEs and start-ups are facing challenges in financing and demand

84%

of startups had to layoff employees

58%‡

only have enough cash reserves to last 2 months or less

44%†

of small businesses that remained open had to layoff employees

40%§

experienced decreases in weekly revenues as of 6/27



Photos courtesy of City of Morgan Hill and the Mercury News

Challenges

At the onset of our efforts, the SVRR member panel of advisors identified six core challenges that Silicon Valley SMEs and startups would experience through the end of 2020:

Declining consumer demand

Until a COVID-19 vaccine is widely available, most economists anticipate less overall consumer spending.⁷⁵ Brick-and-mortar stores throughout Silicon Valley will likely be impacted as remaining consumer spending continues to shift toward e-commerce.

Diminishing access to capital

Most small businesses are precariously close to closing their operations due to a lack of liquidity and capital.⁷⁶ Many SMEs—particularly those owned by people of color—were not able to access funding from the federal Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) due to the preference given to those with preexisting relationships with banks.⁷⁷ For many of these businesses, the most sensible option may be to “fail fast” and then transition to a new line of business. Early stage startups—key drivers of economic growth and job creation—are also facing extreme risks and seeking different forms of capital outside of VC and angel funding, such as grants and debt.

Trouble paying rent and mortgages

Faced with falling revenues and growing health and safety costs, small businesses and startups are desperately seeking to reduce operating expenses, including rent payments. Many small retail tenants simply cannot cover their full rent obligations. Commercial landlords also face sustained cash-flow challenges that make it difficult for them to meet their own financial obligations for loans or mortgages on their properties.

Photos courtesy of the City Mountain View and the City of San José



Burdensome regulatory processes

Navigating regulatory processes are time consuming and costly for SMEs and startups. Given the other financial constraints these small businesses face from COVID-19, lengthy and complex processes and regulations around permitting, bankruptcy, and personal injury liability are too cost prohibitive.

Escalating workforce displacement

The pandemic has wreaked havoc on our most vulnerable small businesses and startups and their employees.⁷⁸ Redeploying these displaced workers into available jobs where industry sectors are growing may be challenging due to the mismatch of skills.⁷⁹

Widening digital divide for SMEs

Modern data tools can transform business models and make operations more efficient, but many small businesses lack access to such tools.⁸⁰ Brick-and-mortar SMEs need to find new ways of distributing their products and services digitally to meet changing customer expectations and increase their competitiveness.⁸¹



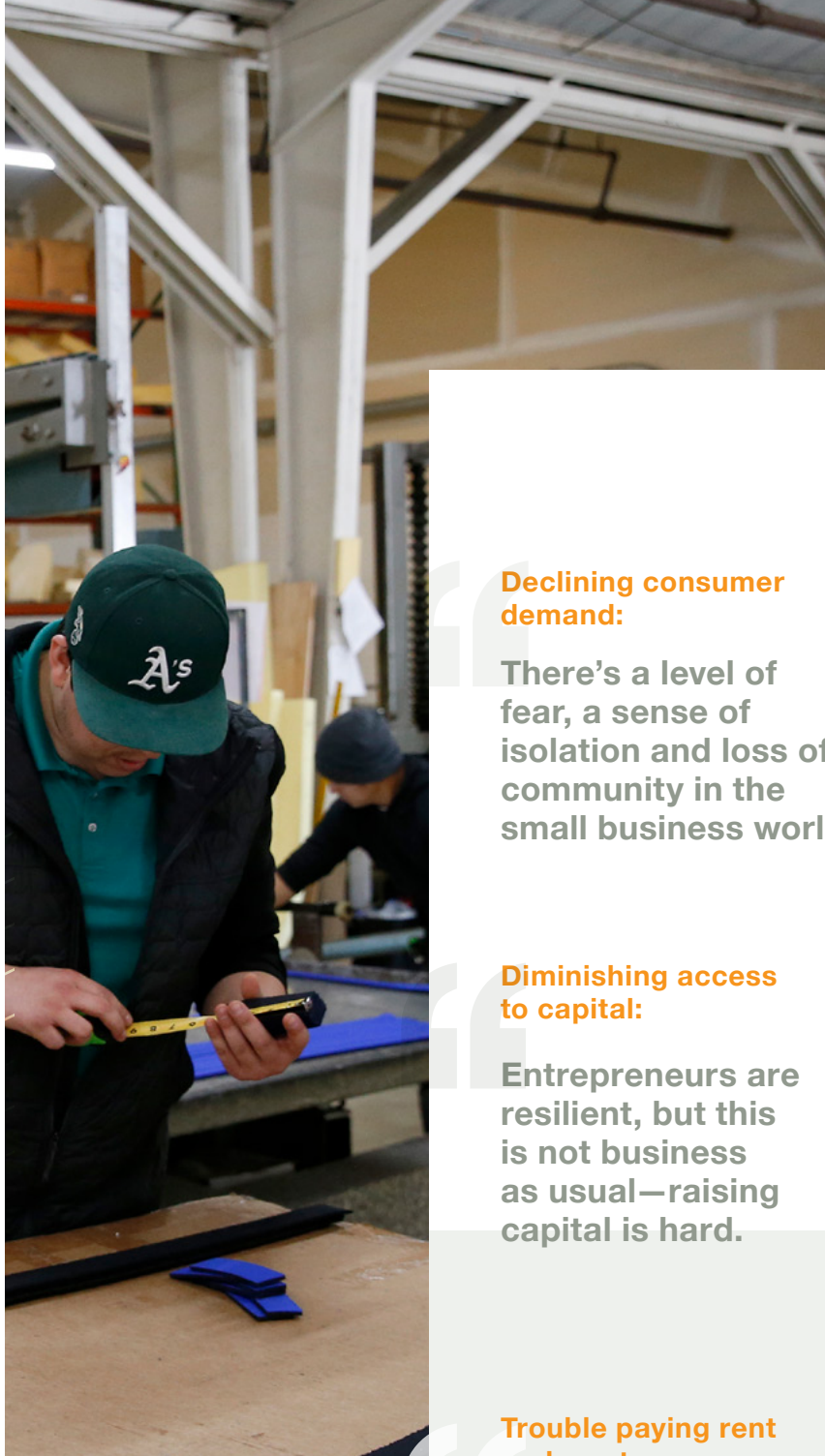


Photo courtesy of the Mercury News

Declining consumer demand:

There's a level of fear, a sense of isolation and loss of community in the small business world.

Diminishing access to capital:

Entrepreneurs are resilient, but this is not business as usual—raising capital is hard.

Trouble paying rent and mortgages:

Government policies cannot encourage tenants not to pay rent unless there is also some consideration for landlord obligations to lenders

Burdensome regulatory processes:

Government often gets in the way. SMEs don't have funds to hire consultants to get them through the rigorous permitting process. Neither can they pay the fees and taxes and the costs associated with delays in the process. They can barely pay to get their operations off the ground.

Escalating workforce displacement:

One high tech job induces 30 to 40 indirect jobs. Work from home and worker mobility may make life worse for service workers and SMEs.

Widening digital divide for SMEs

Small businesses must evolve into the digital environment but don't have the ability, the equipment, and technology that is required. It always comes down to money.

Recommendations

The proposed recommendations seek to address the enduring and emerging challenges which will be faced by SMEs and startups related to COVID-19 over the next year, with a focus on reinvesting in our most precious people and places: small businesses and the places where they do business; startups and the entrepreneurial ecosystem in which they do business; and Silicon Valley, which we all call home.

While the majority of these ideas are pragmatic and actionable in the near-term to support recovery, some are longer-term actions to support businesses to thrive. We recognize that near-term recovery efforts will need to be prioritized, and funding will be highly constrained. However, we share these longer-term ideas to inspire action toward future resilience.

Strengthen Financial Stability for Individuals and Businesses



Drive Job Creation and Support Displaced Workers to Promote Economic Recovery



Reimagine Neighborhood Districts



Expand Digital Inclusion for Individuals and Businesses



3a. Double down on SME and startup access to capital to support at-risk small businesses and to enable early stage entrepreneurs to grow and innovate

3b. Create more opportunities for SMEs and startups to capitalize on new waves of innovation by supporting new investments and spurring the public and private sector to prioritize procurement from SMEs

3c. Streamline regulations and expedite permitting approvals and online inspection services to facilitate new investments and developments that generate new jobs, and ongoing General Fund revenues

3d. Rethink Main Street and explore new models to revive and redevelop neighborhood business districts and commercial corridors throughout Silicon Valley and adapt to community needs that have changed due to the pandemic

3e. Bolster SME digital capabilities so they can better compete in the e-commerce marketplace



Recommendation 3a.

Double down on SME and startup access to capital to support at-risk small businesses and to enable early stage entrepreneurs to grow and innovate.

Actions

Establish a Silicon Valley small business revolving loan fund:

Create a revolving loan fund—administered by cities through partners such as the Opportunity Fund—as a gap financing measure to support the operations of small businesses that are in danger of closing due to the pandemic, with a special focus on supporting women-owned and minority-owned SMEs. With approval from Federal authorities, the revolving loan fund could be funded with Community Development Block Grants and used to offer grants or forgivable loans for small businesses with low-to-moderate income. Public dollars can have an even greater impact by leveraging available private sector investments, such as those announced by Facebook.⁸²

Promote financial toolkits and training initiatives for SMEs:

Enhance existing networks of experts serving our small businesses (for example, BusinessOwnerSpace partners in San José, including but not limited to Anew America, SBDC, Start Small Think Big, the SBA, the Better Business Bureau, Opportunity Fund, Bank of America, Wells Fargo, Small Business Majority, Ethnic Chambers of Commerce, The SVO, Business Associations, Grameen Bank, Working Solutions, and SV SCORE) to provide financial mentoring, consulting, and

educational services for small businesses. Encourage lenders to dedicate specific business hours to providing personalized assistance for SMEs on loan applications to help these businesses access much-needed capital. In addition, connect small businesses with the California Small Enterprise Task Force (CASE Force), a consortium of legal, financial, and non-profit professionals working together to connect California small businesses with the local, state, federal, and private resources they may be eligible to access during the pandemic. CASE Force also provides small businesses with weekly access to live support via virtual office hours.

Convene an annual entrepreneurship summit

of venture capital investors, technology companies, and early stage entrepreneurs to promote Silicon Valley's unique culture of innovation as a key driver of economic growth. The summit could place special emphasis on helping women and minority entrepreneurs to obtain capital and mentorship, while building the networks and skills to grow successful companies here.

Support women-owned and minority-owned tech startups

to better access crowdfunding campaigns. Local banks and other financial institutions could host webinars for women-owned and minority-owned startups on how to access capital and build lender relationships, with a special emphasis on setting up and running successful crowdfunding campaigns.

Photo courtesy of
the Mercury News



Recommendation 3b.

Create more opportunities for SMEs and startups to capitalize on new waves of innovation by supporting new investments and spurring the public and private sector to prioritize procurement from SMEs.

Actions

Promote manufacturing growth opportunities

by engaging the Bay Area Urban Manufacturing Initiative, SFMade, and Manufacture: San José to develop a regional index or inventory of contract manufacturers and build linkages between small contract manufacturers and potential Silicon Valley customers.

Promote and support Silicon Valley PPE manufacturers:

Conduct an assessment with cities, counties, and health care providers regarding the most in demand personal protective equipment (PPE), devices, and supplies. Many local contract manufacturers stepped up during the onset of the pandemic to increase supplies of PPE. As the demand for PPE undoubtedly continues to grow, promote and support Silicon Valley contract and custom manufacturers to increase production of supplies in accordance with FDA specifications.

Initiate a Silicon Valley Creative Corps to advance arts, culture, and creativity and retain and attract emerging and innovative artists—both self-employed and small businesses. The efforts of the SVCC will catalyze a creative transformation of the region, improve the built environment, help shape Main Streets, inspire our residents, and promote cultural equity for low-income neighborhoods and community life. This initiative will leverage existing public sector investment, attract matching private sector and nationally renowned foundation funding, and utilize federal and state funding for the arts, in service to community placemaking, arts education, creative storytelling, and health messaging.

Cultivate new areas of growth in Silicon Valley to explore opportunities to catalyze emerging industries, diversify growth sectors, and rejuvenate R&D and business corridors. Invest in physical hubs and office/laboratory space for start-ups in industries that both require a physical workplace and leverage Silicon Valley's world class universities and industry clusters focused on biotechnology and sustainable transportation innovation.



Recommendation 3c.

Streamline regulations and expedite permitting approvals and online inspection services to facilitate new investments and developments that generate new jobs, and ongoing General Fund revenues.

Actions

Prioritize Small Business Advocate (concierge) programs that

deploy teams of small business ambassadors, advocates, and permit specialists to address the urgent permitting needs of SMEs and startups. Cities should partner with Silicon Valley Ethnic Chambers of Commerce, the SVO and Business Association representatives, and other small business service providers to facilitate this service.

Consider Business Tax Amnesty programs and/or small business license fee reductions and/or deferrals for small businesses who have not operated their businesses since March 2020. To compensate for lost revenue, cities could supplement their General Funds with federal relief funds.

Expedite development process timelines

with impactful and bold revisions to administrative reviews and development services procedures, so as to radically shorten development timelines from zoning or site permit application submittals to the start of construction, and to reduce overall costs of doing business.

Reduce regulatory restrictions and barriers to accelerate recovery

and streamline existing processes and create new opportunities to offer the maximum level of flexibility in reinvigorating our downtowns, Neighborhood business districts, and commercial corridors. For example, provide for different types of uses to occupy vacant ground floor storefronts; offer clear rules to fast track tenant improvements to support business reopening; extend Al Fresco outdoor dining guidelines to continue throughout the length of the recovery.

Advocate for clear and consistent workers' compensation regulations to maintain the highest standards of safety for all employees during their time on the job, while minimizing undue burdens on SMEs and startups ensuring clarity around issues related to liability. For non-SMEs, create clear guidelines regarding liability.



Photo courtesy of the City of Newark

Recommendation 3d.

Rethink Main Street and explore new models to revive and redevelop neighborhood business districts and commercial corridors throughout Silicon Valley and adapt to community needs that have changed due to the pandemic.

Actions

Establish Property-Based Improvement Districts (PBIDs) and Business Improvement Districts (BIDs).

PBIDs and BIDs create vibrant, clean, and safe business districts that generate new investments and job creation, which helps the local economy to grow. PBID and BID services vary, but can include business development, branding, and localized marketing for small businesses, special community events and promotions, placemaking and beautification, capital improvements, security, street cleaning, and maintenance. An assessment is levied on the business or property owner to fund the services that directly benefit the assessed business or property.

Implement commercial Community Land Trusts (CLTs)⁸³

to facilitate community-oriented use of strategically located vacant buildings in neighborhood business districts. For example, a building could be repurposed to house commercial tenants within a small business incubator or to provide office space for non-profits. CLTs can also be an effective tool in neighborhood business districts where city zoning codes require retail on the ground floor of a housing development.

Implement Main Street Regenerators to preserve and revive distinctive neighborhood business districts.⁸⁴ Regenerators are public-private partnerships that can act as master tenants for business districts, supporting common services for SMEs such as marketing, and filling vacated space with a vibrant and diverse mix of tenants—including pop-up restaurants, shared kitchens, health clinics, daycare services, and arts and cultural activities—and enhancing opportunities for small businesses to access capital.

Develop neighborhood business district recovery trackers to gauge activity levels in neighborhood business districts and commercial corridors throughout Silicon Valley. By collecting and analyzing anonymized mobile phone data,

Business Associations, cities, and counties could see, for example, where customers are coming from at different times of the day and week. Technology companies can facilitate the development of such trackers to determine levels of business activity in cities throughout Silicon Valley.

Encourage Buy-Local campaigns modeled on Independents Week, Small Business Saturday®, and California’s new #ShopSafeShopLocal initiative to promote and sustain independent local small businesses.⁸⁵ Larger Silicon Valley companies and organizations can support this campaign by redirecting, to the extent feasible, discretionary funding of onsite food and fitness amenities to support local businesses in the immediate vicinity. Companies may already be rethinking onsite cafeteria options and fitness offerings as well as snack and catering services. These changes afford the opportunity to support nearby small businesses who previously relied on more robust foot traffic provided by larger commercial tenants. This example of “large businesses helping small businesses” will hopefully be a logical extension of “shop local” efforts across the region.

Build consumer confidence with strategic public–private partnerships to develop certification programs promoting SMEs that adhere to public health and safety protocols and guidelines. Consumer confidence campaigns such as the “Safely Social San José” currently in design to educate consumers and train businesses is a model that could be explored. This campaign includes a toolkit that provides onsite branding elements such as window signage and ground stickers.



Recommendation 3e.

Bolster SME digital capabilities so they can better compete in the e-commerce marketplace.

Actions

Create the small business playbook on expanding from offline to online commerce.⁸⁶ Establish a consortium of private sector e-commerce leaders to help SMEs successfully implement online operations. Small business owners could be incentivized to prioritize and complete the training, via a stipend or cash bonus offered by corporations and/or philanthropies. Donations of laptops and desktop computers could also help cash-strapped SMEs acquire the hardware they need to make the jump to doing business online.

Develop a volunteer marketplace of tech professionals who are willing to mentor, train, and support SMEs with their digital needs.



Focus Area



How Do We Innovate to Build the Foundation of a Better Normal?

This focus area was led by Karli Stander, Innovations Lead of Stanford Impact Labs. David Wehner, CFO of Facebook, Lisa Su, President & CEO of AMD, and Zia Yusuf, Managing Director & Senior Partner at Boston Consulting Group, served as focus area co-chairs.





Introduction

COVID-19 has delivered a massive shock to our economy and society, shifting organizations toward new ways of working and forcing many to move to remote work, almost overnight. Traffic congestion has waned,⁸⁷ and many people have begun remotely accessing health and education services.⁸⁸ In light of these transformations, both companies and individuals are questioning the benefits of being physically located in an expensive, congested Silicon Valley region that has struggled to find a clear path toward progress on its chronic challenges.⁸⁹ COVID-19 has also shone a harsh spotlight on inequities in the region, with the pandemic's impacts falling disproportionately on low-income households and people of color.

As we look toward recovery, we have an opportunity to take concrete steps that will ensure the Silicon Valley region continues to be the innovation hub of the 21st century, where small and large employers continue to grow and drive economic growth for the state and the country. We also envision Silicon Valley as a place where residents of every race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status can live sustainably, with access to affordable housing, transportation, and the services required to survive and thrive (healthcare, education, culture). Achieving this vision requires a clear political commitment to and plan for **unlocking housing production, particularly for extremely low-income, very low-income, and middle-income residents, providing universal access to wireless connectivity at scale, and building dense and connected transportation networks.** These changes will create more jobs and opportunities, allow people to work closer to where they live and play, allow the region to reduce our carbon footprint, and support the growth of diverse, inclusive, thriving communities.

The consequences of continuing to recognize the region's problems without taking meaningful action are serious. The transition to remote work has enabled companies to envision a future in which their operations are far more distributed outside of high-cost Silicon Valley.⁹⁰ This shift would ripple down the income ladder, affecting every industry and occupational category, and threaten state and local government finances due to a heavily decreased tax base as well as permanent job losses among the ecosystem of service workers and vendors serving company campuses.⁹¹ Even without significant change in the corporate footprint, existing levels of racial inequality⁹² and unaffordability have become untenable.⁹³

If this region is to thrive and to reflect our commitments to equity and inclusion, we need a new approach that plans for the future and includes residents at all income levels in that vision. *The Atlantic* referred to “nineteenth-century Pittsburgh and Henry Ford’s Detroit [as] the Silicon Valleys of their time.”⁹⁴ If we fail to use this moment to address our long-standing issues and to confront the diminishing returns of physically locating in the region, Silicon Valley risks a similar fate.

Challenges

We conducted interviews with over 30 corporate leaders, public officials, philanthropists, non-profit organizations, and global and regional academic experts in the areas of housing policy and development, transportation networks and infrastructure, digital inclusion, and remote work to inform the discussion about the future of Silicon Valley. Our consultations and discussions highlighted housing, transportation, and digital access as three critical, interconnected areas that require significant progress in order to support economic recovery, maintain innovation and job growth, and promote greater equity and inclusion.

The private sector and community leaders engaged on Focus Area 4 expressed significant frustration with the status quo in the region and the slow pace of change. The recommendations therefore reflect ambitious solutions that require significant funding and political will. While these may not be achievable in the near-term, there is a strong desire among many stakeholders to rethink what's possible, to be bold, and to actively counter the political obstacles that have stood in the way of progress on housing, transportation, and equity issues.

Housing affordability

For many years preceding the COVID-19 pandemic, Silicon Valley and the entire Bay Area has had a severe housing crisis.⁹⁵ In Silicon Valley, job growth has exceeded housing development for decades.⁹⁶ High housing costs impact vast segments of the population from first-time homebuyers to renters, with the most serious burdens falling on low-income communities and communities of color.⁹⁷

The job losses associated with COVID-19 have made housing more precarious for both renters and homeowners.⁹⁸ Unless we take bold, concrete action, we are likely to experience a tsunami of evictions and foreclosures that disproportionately impact Black and Latinx communities. Thousands of people could become homeless, as 270,000 Bay Area families are only one paycheck away from losing their home.⁹⁹ Homelessness disproportionately impacts communities of color, even after accounting for poverty levels.¹⁰⁰ Black residents make up 6% of the Bay Area population, yet represent 30% of the homeless, while indigenous residents who are 1% of the Bay Area population represent 6% of the homeless.¹⁰¹ The turmoil in the housing market caused by COVID-19 is also likely to slow construction and development, both for rental and for-sale housing, further exacerbating the original housing crisis.¹⁰²



26%[†] of Bay Area families spend more than

50%

of their income on housing

Since 2010, Silicon Valley has created

3X^{*}

more jobs than housing units

In the Bay Area between 2000 and 2015, a

30%[‡]

increase in median rent was associated with a 21% decrease in the number of low-income households of color

^{*}3X; [†]26%, 2015; [‡]30%

Sources: Vox Media; Bay Area Equity Atlas; University of California, Berkeley Urban Displacement

Painful commute times and environmental impact

Before COVID-19, Silicon Valley had the second-worst traffic in the country, and commuters were facing productivity decreases and poor health outcomes due to time stuck in traffic.¹⁰³ These transportation and congestion challenges disproportionately impact communities of color. Rising housing costs have driven more Black renters, nearly 50% of whom are rent-burdened or severely rent-burdened, out of city centers and into far-flung suburbs far from transit access points, forcing them into longer commutes.¹⁰⁴ Solving the disconnect between where people live, how they get to their jobs, and the decisions they're required to make to do so is necessary to ensure a more equitable and thriving Silicon Valley.

While current research indicates that the risks of viral transmission on public transit are relatively low¹⁰⁵ and regional transportation agencies have implemented new safety protocols,¹⁰⁶ we expect long-term impacts to public transit as the result of COVID-19. As residents physically return to work, we are likely to see reduced demand for public transit as a combination of individual rider concerns, accelerated remote work (no longer having a daily commute), and having the alternative choice to revert to private autos.¹⁰⁷ Reduced transit demand and increased private auto use would create significant financial strains on transit systems and potential negative impacts to local transit service, which is relied on most by low-income residents, many of whom are essential workers. From an equity perspective, it is imperative to make improvements to Silicon Valley mobility and ensure that all residents have convenient and reliable transport options that connect their jobs, home, work, and recreation.

Congestion has significantly outpaced growth in the Bay Area: per-commuter delays increased by

65%^{*} while the population grew by 15% and jobs by 12%

A Bay Area worker is

4X[†] more likely than the average American worker to be a **mega-commuter** (defined as spending 90 minutes or more to get to the office and over 50 miles of travel)

Rising housing costs have forced more Black renters, nearly

50%[‡] of whom are **rent-burdened or severely rent-burdened, out of city centers and into longer commutes**

^{*}65%, 2019; [†]4X, 2016; [‡]50%, 2018

Sources: Metropolitan Transportation Commission; Mercury News; CALMATTERS



Limited access to digital services

As companies transition to a remote workforce, schools embrace distance learning, and health practitioners shift to telemedicine, a large section of the population is left behind because of the digital divide—inequitable access to the internet and digital services due to the absence of connections, devices, and/or digital literacy.¹⁰⁸ The majority of these individuals are from low-income communities and communities of color.¹⁰⁹

For many, the cost of a device and/or service is prohibitive.¹¹⁰ COVID-19 has left these individuals unable to access essential services like education and health care, and hampered their ability to work, train, and/or apply for a job. This has had the effect of exacerbating existing inequality and structurally excluding lower-income communities from economic opportunities at a time when various sectors of society are primarily operating remotely.¹¹¹



Top two barriers* to connectivity are cost of service and device



55%[†]

of unconnected families (cannot access or afford to access internet) are low-income

28%[‡]

of San José residents cannot afford broadband

*Two barriers; [†]55%; [‡]28%

Sources: City of San José; San José Digital Inclusion Fund; KQED

Recommendations

We recognize that these are long-standing challenges and that many of the solutions, while known, are financially and politically difficult. However, the emergency created by COVID-19 and the reckoning of racial injustice have created the urgency and opportunity to rethink what is possible, overcome historic obstacles to change, and create the political conditions to implement bold and ambitious solutions. The greatest threat to continued growth, innovation, and inclusion in Silicon Valley is not financial capital, but rather political courage.

We need a clear commitment to increasing the number of low-density housing options in residential neighborhoods, building higher-density multifamily options along commercial and transit corridors, making transportation more economically viable so that we can achieve climate goals, and closing the digital divide so that no one in Silicon Valley is left unconnected. Our recommendations aim to acknowledge and complement those put forward by a number of other organizations in Silicon Valley and the Bay Area.¹¹² Our ambition is to add the SVRR's voice and muscle to advance critical solutions across housing, transit, and digital inclusion that are needed to build a better normal for Silicon Valley.

Galvanize Housing Preservation, Protection, and Production



- 4a.** Increase housing supply by implementing a consistent upzoning and entitlement streamlining framework, with a concerted focus on mixed-use transit and underutilized commercial corridors and scaling accessory dwelling units (ADUs)
- 4b.** Support and advocate for state leaders to pass significant housing legislation by joining existing efforts or forging a new statewide 501(c)(4) or 501(c)(6) organization that brings together a diverse coalition of big-city California mayors, labor leaders, and high-profile corporate and philanthropic leaders to break through political barriers to benefit Silicon Valley
- 4c.** Ensure that the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) is actively enforced
- 4d.** Form public-private partnerships that fund housing transformation through shared capital investments
- 4e.** Develop an emergency COVID-19 housing and prioritized transportation plan for infrastructure funding from federal, state, private, and/or philanthropic sources

Create Next-Generation Transportation



- 4f.** Prioritize the redevelopment of underutilized commercial corridors into higher-density mixed-use neighborhoods
- 4g.** Develop a comprehensive and equity focused new multimodal transport system that connects jobs to housing and includes next-generation technological innovations
- 4h.** Drive commuter behavior change through city- or employer-provided incentives and disincentives
- 4i.** Promote equitable connectivity through new financial tools that offset costs of internet service and devices for low-income areas and individuals
- 4j.** Lower device and connectivity barriers with innovative corporate investment or donation programs
- 4k.** Streamline how local municipalities permit and approve wireless connectivity projects to speed up infrastructure deployment and reinvest cost savings into providing universal connectivity to Silicon Valley residents who do not have access to the internet at home

Expand Digital Inclusion for Individuals and Businesses



Accelerate Housing Production

To maximize the competitive advantages of Silicon Valley, and offset the rising challenges of living and working here, we must **galvanize action toward housing production across low and middle incomes**, with a specific focus on increasing density by building more multifamily and affordable housing near job- and transit-centers. We acknowledge that there are unique challenges to housing production within different cities in the region, but parallel progress at the state and local level to produce substantially more units will ensure continued job growth, access to affordable housing, and a sustainable future for Silicon Valley. The recommendations below are complementary to those made in Focus Area 2, which focuses on housing preservation and protection initiatives.

Recommendation 4a.

Increase housing supply by implementing a consistent upzoning and entitlement streamlining framework, with a concerted focus on mixed-use transit and underutilized commercial corridors and scaling accessory dwelling units (ADUs). Local governments have broad authority to streamline approval processes for more affordable housing units and transportation investments. While production of the 441,000 units allocated by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG)¹¹³ has been extremely slow to-date, stymied by a myriad of local challenges, we believe that a response to a crisis of this magnitude requires a more substantial effort—a plan for 700,000 new units¹¹⁴—to address the “missing” market.¹¹⁵ By upzoning commercial corridors across the region, focusing on mixed-use developments in transit corridors, and building ADUs and other gentle density options at scale, the region would be able to achieve these ambitious housing goals. To support these goals, efforts are needed on multiple fronts at the local level:

Actions

Amplify the efforts of regional coalitions to oppose constraints on housing production and ensure jobs-rich cities build housing commensurate with jobs. Corporate leadership is needed to support pro-housing groups that are demanding

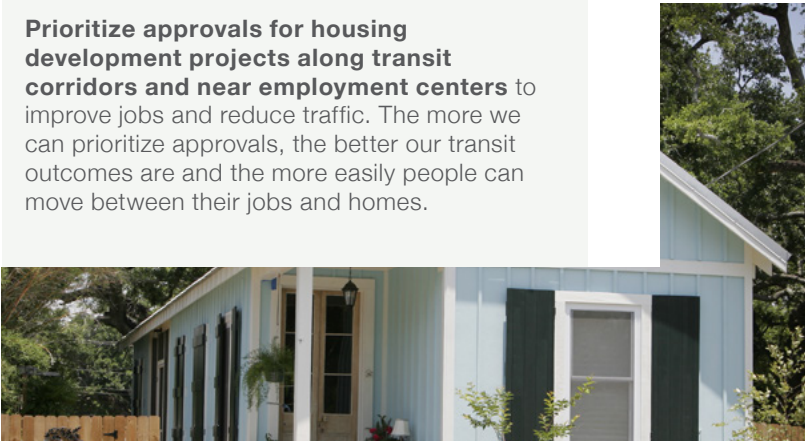
that cities build housing commensurate with workforce expansions. For example, leaders must oppose individual cities’ efforts to block housing production at high densities near transit centers, or add millions of square footage of commercial space while adding less than the housing capacity needed to house employees for those projects. To make this work, existing collaboratives must (1) strengthen resident-led, local YIMBY (“yes in my backyard”) groups through financial support, advocacy tools, and a larger network, and (2) launch significant communications efforts to support forward-leaning, pro-housing elected officials.

Update zoning codes and parking policies and expedite zoning processes to accommodate innovative construction methods such as factory-produced housing. For example, multistory factory-produced housing generally requires higher per-floor height maximums than most Silicon Valley municipalities currently allow. Updating those codes and/or modifying parking requirements, such as establishing parking maximums instead of minimums, would lower the barrier to the production of such housing. A regional collaborative could offer best practices and funding support to smaller cities willing to update zoning codes and requirements but facing the staffing challenges to do so.

Seek and support **state legislation to waive CEQA for upzoning** in order to reduce year-long delays.

Implement by-right development policies, specifically for multifamily housing projects along underutilized commercial corridors and lot splits in single-family neighborhoods, similar to what is already allowed for accessory dwelling units (ADUs) statewide.

Prioritize approvals for housing development projects along transit corridors and near employment centers to improve jobs and reduce traffic. The more we can prioritize approvals, the better our transit outcomes are and the more easily people can move between their jobs and homes.



Recommendation 4b.

Support and advocate for state leaders to pass significant housing legislation by joining existing efforts or forging a new statewide 501(c)(4) or 501(c)(6) organization that brings together a diverse coalition of big-city California mayors, labor leaders, and high-profile corporate and philanthropic leaders to break through political barriers to benefit Silicon Valley. This would complement the work of other statewide groups,¹¹⁶ aim to demonstrate cross-sectoral support (for example, labor, investors, environmentalists, realtors, affordable housing advocates, residents), and involve corporate leaders and celebrity activists using their influence and cross-sector alliances for meaningful policy reform. This coalition would:

Actions

Support the state legislature's housing reform package. In the 2020 session, the state legislature came close to passing more significant housing legislation. In the 2021 session, it must succeed. Civic labor and elected leaders should collaborate to ensure that labor protections are included in final legislation. This coalition must also make the jobs and equity argument more visible in order to make meaningful progress on building support for the legislation.

Conduct advocacy and activate partnerships that make progress at the local level alongside state-level efforts. For example, corporate leaders must speak up about the need for housing near their offices, fund and endorse projects and candidates that are pro-housing, and push developments to include grant funding for affordable housing.

Activate a wide diversity of non-traditional partners to make bold statements on the need for affordable housing, the consequences of not making progress, and the centrality of this issue to a growth and equity agenda. Examples of this are labor unions and real estate developers holding joint meetings with municipalities about expediting housing approvals without compromising labor or the cost to produce housing, and private companies speaking out publicly about homelessness and demonstrating leadership through policy advocacy and capital investments.

Recommendation 4c.

Ensure that the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) is actively enforced through state policies at the Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) and explore new incentive and penalty ("allocate and trade") programs.

Actions

Explore mechanisms that complement new state policy enforcements and incentivize housing production at the required levels. For example, jurisdictions that have not produced one-half of their planned units after half of the time allocated could be required to send revenues (at a per unit cost) to a grants program for jurisdictions that have met production to spend on public projects. Alternatively, the state could create a commercial linkage fee tied to jurisdictions' current housing-jobs balance so that jobs-heavy jurisdictions have to impose a higher commercial impact fee, the revenue from which would fund affordable housing projects, while housing-heavy cities have a lower fee, which would encourage job creation close to large residential cities.¹¹⁷



Recommendation 4d.

Form public–private partnerships that fund housing transformation through shared capital investments. For example, cities can work with willing public and private partners to:

Actions

Pilot, scale, and finance Accessory Dwelling Unit programs across Silicon Valley cities. For example, work with lenders on low-cost, publicly subsidized financing programs to ensure that new ADUs remain affordable, while providing homeowners with a steady source of future rental income. Streamline ADU permitting, especially with the use of prefabricated, modular units.¹¹⁸

Encourage redevelopment agencies to leverage tax increment financing as a longer-term strategy.

Scale new construction methods that bring down the cost to produce housing, such as factory-produced housing or converting hotel rooms to housing units (with a concerted focus on cities that are already renting them to house the homeless during COVID-19).

Launch new financing solutions that enable the use of innovative construction methods (for example, modular housing deposits, bonding for housing production factories, ADU loans based on future rental income).

Incentivize mixed-income buildings where market rate housing is used to offset costs of producing affordable and essential worker housing side-by-side (for example, 50–30–20 housing developments).

Recommendation 4e.

Develop an emergency COVID-19 housing and prioritized transportation plan for infrastructure funding from federal, state, private, and/or philanthropic sources. This plan could include a faster, shorter-term plan to connect Silicon Valley's transportation network with the greater Bay Area. Additionally, it would build on existing efforts already in place aimed at addressing high levels of inequity and homelessness,¹¹⁹ and it would include building several hundred thousand new homes¹²⁰ as a bridge to the longer-term Plan Bay Area 2050 process.¹²¹ For example, a plan like this could:

Actions

Outline municipal financing approaches— such as re-establishing redevelopment agencies, Mello-Roos districts, community development funds, and permanent funding measures—that can complement private funding commitments for transportation, more affordable housing, and other community services, such as broadband connectivity.

Plan for upgrades to existing community infrastructure such as sewer systems, electrical transmission lines, and water supply to accommodate existing facilities and future growth.

Plan for hundreds of thousands of new homes and mixed-use buildings near job centers, primarily in San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, Alameda, and Contra Costa counties, by incorporating a mix of high-density developments¹²² and low-density solutions¹²³ to address community character. Municipalities could leverage city-owned land, rezone underutilized or underperforming commercial spaces¹²⁴ for mixed-use development that includes residential, and scale ADU programs in order to build this high volume of new units.

Plan for several regional multimodal mobility hubs as the basis of a Regional Rapid Rail (R3) System running high-speed trains between each. For example, use those that are already planned, such as Diridon Intermodal and TransBay, to demonstrate the value of multimodal connections, and plan for new hubs for lower-income individuals with longer commutes, such as in the east bay near the Oakland Coliseum.



Design our freeways for dedicated autonomous vehicle and multi-occupancy vehicle lanes. This would show that we are embracing and moving toward electric autonomous vehicles by repurposing our concrete, asphalt, and steel investments and retrofitting them so that autonomous vehicles, such as bus rapid transit, autonomous rapid transit, and Mobility-as-a-Service vehicles, can operate and expand in the future. This design should also consider rerouting freeways to achieve climate-related flood protection infrastructure systems, redress historic redlining, and create space for more housing units.

Encourage the replacement of **personal cars with a suite of micromobility options**, including greater use of delivery drones, electric bikes, and scooters. With fewer private cars on the roads, Silicon Valley municipalities could repurpose curb space and parking stalls as public space.

Pilot next-generation transportation solutions such as technological innovations in areas of bus rapid transit (BRT), autonomous rapid transit (ART), and light rail networks that connect to regional rail and micromobility solutions. The only way we can make this possible is for cities to get together and commit to making high occupancy vehicles a priority.

Build a Sustainable, Integrated Transportation System

We envision a future in which Silicon Valley is a leader in sustainable, carbon-free mobility and equity through access to transport. We aim to reduce traffic congestion while giving residents and visitors broad access to affordable, convenient, and efficient transportation. Voters in the region have already demonstrated their desire for progress by approving previous ballot measures that increased sales taxes for transportation improvements. This desired future will require bold, region-wide steps on policy, governance, and investment; the integration of goals on transportation, housing, equity, and the environment; and a robust political strategy.

Recommendation 4f.

Prioritize the redevelopment of underutilized¹²⁵ commercial corridors into higher-density mixed-use neighborhoods with integrated transportation solutions. Achieving this shift will require action on multiple fronts:

Actions

Approve higher density¹²⁶ housing and commercial projects along underutilized corridors (such as dead strip malls) in order to create a source of tax revenue that can be bonded against or directly fund needed transportation and affordable housing.

Prioritize multimodal street and sidewalk infrastructure and complete streets efforts that facilitate safe carbonless travel— for example, more car-free roads, adding protected bike lanes and more bike/pedestrian infrastructure, creating grand boulevards, lower speed limits, launching a regional Vision Zero strategy, and/or increasing incentives for micromobility.

Fund infrastructure projects by using financial vehicles such as tax increment financing (TIF), Mello-Roos districts, community development funds, and by introducing new long-term financing models (such as permanent funding measures and data-driven congestion pricing).



Recommendation 4g.

Develop a comprehensive and equity focused new multimodal transport system that connects jobs to housing and includes next-generation technological innovations in the areas of bus rapid transit (BRT), autonomous rapid transit (ART), and light rail networks that connect to regional rail and micromobility solutions. This new regional system would better connect jobs to housing and create new transit corridors by reexamining the position of rail and supporting new modes of transport—for example, last mile Mobility-as-a-Service, bus rapid transit, autonomous rapid transit, and micromobility easements and incentives.

Actions

Rethink the role and position of our existing rail system, include new modes of transport, and convert existing street lanes to support new modes.

Expand on the comprehensive and network-based multimodal plans that have been created by groups like MTC and their Blue Ribbon Task Force, FASTER Bay Area, and Seamless Bay Area across the more than 27 agencies to move beyond the existing transit platforms; fully integrate travel behavior decisions, private operators, and new modes of transport to make seamless connections between jobs, housing, and recreation.

Eliminate policy bottlenecks to testing or implementing innovative transportation solutions. Invite local companies, startups, and non-profits to innovate and experiment with new modes and technologies.

Evaluate the potential value of new types of regional governance to address the issues that can only be solved with a regional approach, such as the implementation of a region-wide transportation infrastructure. New regional approaches might also prove useful for increasing the regional housing supply and improving climate resilience for sea level rise.¹²⁷



Recommendation 4h.

Drive commuter behavior change through city- or employer-provided incentives and disincentives.

Actions

Use data to document vehicle miles traveled and to **explore options for roadway/congestion pricing and/or additional incentives not to drive.**

Launch or scale individual commuter behavior programs at each company and organization, as well as through actions by cities and counties (for example, electric bike incentives, free public transit for low-income individuals, changes to employer-provided parking).



Expand Digital Inclusion

Public health concerns due to COVID-19 have led to a significant increase in remote work, online education, and telehealth. By taking swift action to expand digital inclusion and close the digital divide, we can ensure that all Silicon Valley residents have equal access to the connectivity and tools needed to thrive in the 21st century. Regional leaders should align with the state's *Closing the Digital Divide Task Force*¹²⁸ and take advantage of statewide partnerships with internet service providers and manufacturers.

Recommendation 4i.

Promote equitable connectivity through new financial tools that offset costs of internet service and devices for low-income areas and individuals.

Actions

Map the existing state of connectivity across Silicon Valley to inform future investments and efforts that seek to bridge the digital divide.

Work with internet service providers to finance digital inclusion through social impact bonds or other creative mechanisms to support device and service subsidies for low-income households. For example, utilize sliding-scale fees and/or no-loss provisions to ISPs to incentivize larger volumes of deployment of small cells, and reinvest a portion of the revenue into a broadband and connectivity team to work with ISPs, creating operational efficiencies and faster deployments with greater ROI.¹²⁹

Create a **digital inclusion fund** that offers internet service subsidies, devices, and investments in innovative digital literacy programs—for example, library and community center programs that promote “family digital training programs.” This could also be funded through 5G deployment revenues.

Provide more free public Wi-Fi to digital deserts—such as San José's “Terragraph” project—and develop plans and budgets to maintain and sustain WiFi networks.

Support state and federal public policy measures to drive down connectivity costs and expand coverage by maximizing competition among internet service providers by:

- Creating a unified, targeted message that advocates for meeting the urgent need for broadband access—mayors and company leaders lobby ISPs to increase bandwidth, expand affordable offerings, reduce service delivery times, and remove adoption barriers such as credit checks
- Supporting state and local legislation that increases physical digital access infrastructure—for example, legislation that promotes the construction of supportive technologies like power, network conduits, and fiber optic lines
- Pushing cities and the FCC to encourage competition in the market by reversing current FCC regulations that prevent local communities from negotiating with ISPs for community benefits or infrastructure improvements for deployment of small cell or 5g towers
- Promoting inclusive investments of small-cell deployments in urban areas, including low-income neighborhoods



Recommendation 4j.

Lower device and connectivity barriers with innovative corporate investment or donation programs.

Actions

Reimagine the end-of-life process for company devices and allocate them to digital inclusion programs—for example, donate used employee devices to a collective impact organization that packages the devices with digital literacy—or explore profit-sharing business models with refurbishers.

Tech companies repurpose and provide a small number of “tech shuttles” to school districts that can be leveraged as connected, physical public education spaces for low-income students. For example, these tech shuttles could park in under-connected areas, offering students a connected place to do homework and take class online, and could replace the bus for transport in the future.¹³⁰

Create “new literacy” programs that include digital literacy (including online safety), financial literacy, media literacy, and health literacy, and ask local companies to create in-kind innovative content, packaged and delivered to residents by the city or county.

Recommendation 4k.

Streamline how local municipalities permit and approve wireless connectivity projects to speed up infrastructure deployment and reinvest cost savings into providing universal connectivity to Silicon Valley residents who do not have access to the internet at home.

Actions

Fund a regional Joint Powers Authority (JPA) to address municipal staffing and expertise challenges for approving wireless infrastructure proposals. This has proven effective for other types of complex municipal projects, such as Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority.

Reduce permitting costs in low-income areas to incentivize coverage expansion.

Accelerate the development and infrastructure planning of free community Wi-Fi in high-need areas.



Calling Our Community to Action





In developing this report, the roundtable—a cross-section of 59 private, social, and public sector Silicon Valley leaders—came together to imagine ways for our region to emerge from the pandemic into a better, more inclusive, and more equitable future. Over the course of the last 100 days, we delved into the challenges our region is grappling with most. We forged openings for the voices of our communities to be heard. We cultivated a broad range of recommendations, some of which are designed to be pragmatic and actionable in the near-term, while others are intentionally bold and deeply transformative to the way the region has operated in the past. COVID-19 has presented an opportunity to think differently about how we might be able to make dramatic change within Silicon Valley.

Implementing these recommendations will not be a straightforward task, particularly as the pandemic stretches onwards. But this moment of crisis presents a unique opportunity to join forces together in championing a better normal for Silicon Valley. Now more than ever, we need to channel the entrepreneurial spirit for which we are celebrated across the world to effectively and energetically respond to this pandemic. We need to rally not just the will to act expeditiously, but also the sustained commitment to keep plugging away over the coming years on some of these transformative efforts that have the potential to drive such positive impact in our community.

We look forward to continuing to discuss, develop, and implement these recommendations with local, regional and state governments, as well as non-governmental stakeholders including corporates, non-profits and organizations from multiple other sectors. We now turn to you to take the charge in bringing the ideas off these pages, recognizing that we each have a role to play in shaping a better Silicon Valley—one which benefits all our diverse communities. As we asked in the Introduction, as you reflect on this report, ask yourself: What can I do and what can my organization do to move Silicon Valley toward a better normal?

Each of us has a role to play in shaping a better Silicon Valley—one which benefits all our diverse communities.

Evolution of SVRR

As this report is published, there are already clusters of activity forming around the six priorities we outlined, led by organizations from the SVRR and beyond. We are encouraged and energized by these efforts and urge other organizations to join forces and build on this momentum. As mentioned, our intention is for this report to function as a marketplace of ideas and an open source tool for the entire Silicon Valley community to build upon. To that end, we trust in the leadership and energy of Silicon Valley communities across sectors to drive this work forward

Acknowledgments

Core working group:

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Silicon Valley Mayors' Circle

Thank you to the Silicon Valley Mayors' Circle for their support and guidance, and to the Silicon Valley Leadership Group for convening and supporting the work of the Silicon Valley Mayors' Circle.

Co-Chairs

Diane Howard: Mayor, Redwood City

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Regina Wallace-Jones: Mayor, East Palo Alto

Michelle Wu: Mayor, Los Altos Hills



Appendix: Full list of recommendations and actions

RECOMMENDATIONS

ACTIONS

Reopen Safely and Productively



- 1a.** Establish a public-private sector partnership with the public health departments of the nine-county Bay Area to compare public health orders (pg. 23)
- 1b.** Continue the Testing and Tracking Task Force (pg. 23)
- 1c.** Create a team who can help businesses stand-up their internal contact tracing and testing teams (pg. 23)
- 1d.** Continue the Mayor's Circle to share best response practices across city lines (pg. 23)
- 1e.** Continue collaboration between small businesses (pg. 23)

Strengthen Financial Stability for Individuals and Businesses



- 2a.** Expand emergency financial assistance programs and better enable vulnerable communities to access available support (pg. 31)
 - Increase funding for emergency financial assistance to fill the income loss gap
 - Help communities sign up for financial assistance programs
- 2b.** Scale equitable financial services to address needs exacerbated by COVID-19 and better communicate availability to vulnerable communities (pg. 32)
 - Scale equitable banking services and products
 - Invest in financial education, community awareness, and uptake of equitable banking products
- 2c.** Spur large employers to improve living wages and increase adoption of a net disposable income approach (pg. 32)
 - Develop equitable compensation structures
- 3a.** Double down on SME and startup access to capital to support at-risk small businesses and to enable early stage entrepreneurs to grow and innovate (pg. 42)
 - Establish a Silicon Valley small business revolving loan fund
 - Promote financial toolkits and training initiatives for SMEs
 - Convene an annual entrepreneurship summit
 - Support women-owned and minority-owned tech startups

Drive Job Creation to Support Displaced Workers and Promote Economic Recovery



- 2d.** Prevent further displacement of low-income workers by galvanizing large employers to halt layoffs and furloughs and prioritize reskilling individuals into new roles (pg. 33)
 - Encourage large Silicon Valley employers to voluntarily commit to retaining low-income employees
- 2e.** Bolster job creation and economic mobility to support displaced low-income workers, and scale up wraparound support services (pg. 34)
 - Create a collective impact employment program for low-income workers
 - Broaden entry points for training programs for higher-paying trades to include more low-income neighborhoods and support recruitment efforts
 - Provide economic mobility opportunities for undocumented workers
 - Double down on hiring nontraditional talent, specifically in growth sectors
 - Prioritize wraparound services for low-income workers
- 3b.** Create more opportunities for SMEs and startups to capitalize on new waves of innovation by supporting new investments and spurring the public and private sector to prioritize procurement from SMEs (pg. 43)
 - Promote manufacturing growth opportunities
 - Promote and support Silicon Valley PPE manufacturers
 - Initiate a Silicon Valley Creative Corps
 - Cultivate new areas of growth in Silicon Valley
- 3c.** Streamline regulations and expedite permitting approvals and online inspection services to facilitate new investments and developments that generate new jobs, and ongoing General Fund revenues (pg. 43)
 - Prioritize Small Business Advocate (concierge) programs
 - Consider Business Tax Amnesty programs and/or small business license fee reductions and/or deferrals for small businesses
 - Expedite development process timelines
 - Reduce regulatory restrictions and barriers to accelerate recovery
 - Advocate for clear and consistent workers' compensation regulations




Appendix: Full list of recommendations and actions (continued)

Galvanize Housing Preservation, Protection, and Production



RECOMMENDATIONS		ACTIONS
2f.	Keep vulnerable communities housed in their current place of residence by extending the eviction moratorium and supporting landlords who are housing low-income residents (pg. 35)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend the eviction moratorium and create repayment plans for low-income tenants • Provide landlord tax incentives in exchange for rent forbearance or rent forgiveness • Extend mortgage forbearance
2g.	Rapidly increase affordable housing stock by identifying new opportunities to quickly create affordable residential units, to particularly support vulnerable communities who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness (pg. 35)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide emergency financial support to landlords in exchange for long-term affordable rental rates • Adapt more hotels and motels for low-income housing
4a.	Increase housing supply by implementing a consistent upzoning and entitlement streamlining framework, with a concerted focus on mixed-use transit and underutilized commercial corridors and scaling accessory dwelling units (pg. 51)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amplify the efforts of regional coalitions to oppose constraints on housing production and ensure jobs-rich cities build housing commensurate with jobs • Update zoning codes and parking policies and expedite zoning processes • Seek and support state legislation to waive CEQA for upzoning in order to reduce year-long delays • Implement by-right development policies • Prioritize approvals for housing development projects along transit corridors and near employment centers
4b.	Support and advocate for state leaders to pass significant housing legislation by joining existing efforts or forging a new statewide 501(c)(4) or 501(c)(6) organization that brings together a diverse coalition of big-city California mayors, labor leaders, and high-profile corporate and philanthropic leaders to break through political barriers to benefit Silicon Valley (pg. 52)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the State legislature's housing reform package • Conduct advocacy and activate partnerships that make progress at the local level alongside state-level efforts • Activate a wide diversity of non-traditional partners to make bold statements on the need for affordable housing
4c.	Ensure that the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) is actively enforced (pg. 52)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore mechanisms that complement new state policy enforcements and incentivize housing production at the required levels
4d.	Form public-private partnerships that fund housing transformation through shared capital investments (pg. 53)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot, scale, and finance Accessory Dwelling Unit programs across Silicon Valley cities • Encourage redevelopment agencies to leverage tax increment financing as a longer-term strategy • Scale new construction methods that bring down the cost to produce housing • Launch new financing solutions that enable the use of innovative construction methods • Incentivize mixed-income buildings where market rate housing is used to offset costs of producing affordable and essential worker housing side-by-side
4e.	Develop an emergency COVID-19 housing and prioritized transportation plan for infrastructure funding from federal, state, private, and/or philanthropic sources (pg. 53)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline municipal financing approaches that can complement private funding commitments for transportation, more affordable housing, and other community services, such as broadband connectivity • Plan for upgrades to existing community infrastructure to accommodate existing facilities and future growth • Plan for hundreds of thousands of new homes and mixed-use buildings near job centers • Plan for several regional multimodal mobility hubs as the basis of a Regional Rapid Rail System running high-speed trains between each • Design our freeways for dedicated autonomous vehicle and multi-occupancy vehicle lanes • Encourage the replacement of personal cars with a suite of micromobility options • Pilot next-generation transportation solutions that connect to regional rail and micromobility solutions

Appendix: Full list of recommendations and actions (continued)

	RECOMMENDATIONS	ACTIONS
Reimagine Neighborhood Districts 	3d. Rethink Main Street and explore new models to revive and redevelop neighborhood business districts and commercial corridors throughout Silicon Valley and adapt to community needs that have changed due to the pandemic (pg. 44)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish Property-Based Improvement Districts and Business Improvement Districts Implement commercial Community Land Trusts Implement Main Street Regenerators Develop neighborhood business district recovery trackers Encourage Buy-Local campaigns Build consumer confidence
	4f. Prioritize the redevelopment of underutilized commercial corridors into higher-density mixed-use neighborhoods (pg. 54)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approve higher density housing and commercial projects along underutilized corridors Prioritize multimodal street and sidewalk infrastructure and complete streets efforts that facilitate safe carbonless travel Fund infrastructure projects by using financial vehicles and by introducing new long-term financing models
Create Next-Gen Transportation 	4g. Develop a comprehensive and equity focused new multimodal transport system that connects jobs to housing and includes next-generation technological innovations (pg. 55)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rethink the role and position of our existing rail system Expand on the comprehensive and network-based multimodal plans that have been created across the more than 27 agencies to move beyond the existing transit platforms Eliminate policy bottlenecks to testing or implementing innovative transportation solutions Evaluate the potential value of new types of regional governance to address the issues that can only be solved with a regional approach
	4h. Drive commuter behavior change through city- or employer-provided incentives and disincentives (pg. 55)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use data to document vehicle miles traveled and to explore options for roadway/congestion pricing and/or additional incentives not to drive Launch or scale individual commuter behavior programs at each company and organization, as well as through actions by cities and counties
Expand Digital Inclusion for Individuals and Businesses 	3e. Bolster SME digital capabilities so they can better compete in the e-commerce marketplace (pg. 45)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a small business playbook on expanding from offline to online commerce Develop a volunteer marketplace of tech professionals who are willing to mentor, train, and support SMEs with their digital needs
	4i. Promote equitable connectivity through new financial tools that offset costs of internet service and devices for low-income areas and individuals (pg. 56)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Map the existing state of connectivity across Silicon Valley to inform future investments and efforts that seek to bridge the digital divide Work with internet service providers to finance digital inclusion through social impact bonds or other creative mechanisms to support device and service subsidies for low-income households Create a digital inclusion fund that offers internet service subsidies, devices, and investments in innovative digital literacy programs Provide more free public Wi-Fi to digital deserts and develop plans and budgets to maintain and sustain Wi-Fi networks Support state and federal public policy measures to drive down connectivity costs and expand coverage
	4j. Lower device and connectivity barriers with innovative corporate investment or donation programs (pg. 57)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reimagine the end-of-life process for company devices and allocate them to digital inclusion programs Tech companies repurpose and provide a small number of “tech shuttles” to school districts Create “new literacy” programs that include digital literacy (including online safety), financial literacy, media literacy, and health literacy
	4k. Streamline how local municipalities permit and approve wireless connectivity projects to speed up infrastructure deployment and reinvest cost savings into providing universal connectivity to Silicon Valley residents who do not have access to the internet at home (pg. 57)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fund a regional Joint Powers Authority to address municipal staffing and expertise challenges for approving wireless infrastructure proposals Reduce permitting costs in low-income areas to incentivize coverage expansion Accelerate the development and infrastructure planning of free community Wi-Fi in high-need areas

Appendix: Recommendations and Actions by Audience

SECTOR

RECOMMENDATIONS

Local, regional and state governments

- 1a.** Establish a public-private sector partnership with the public health departments of the nine-county Bay Area to compare public health orders (pg. 23)
- 1b.** Continue the contact tracing task force, partnering with the counties through the Silicon Valley Leadership Group (SVLG) (pg. 23)
- 1c.** Call on county governments to create a team of employees who can help businesses stand-up their internal contact tracing and testing teams (pg. 23)
- 1d.** Continue the Mayor's Circle to test best response practices across city lines (pg. 23)
- 1e.** Continue to promote collaboration between small businesses and hear from them about their evolving challenges, needs, and opportunities (pg. 23)
- 2a.** Expand emergency financial assistance programs (pg. 31)
- 2f.** Keep vulnerable communities housed in their current place of residence (pg. 35)
- 2f.** Rapidly increase affordable housing stock by identifying new opportunities to quickly create affordable residential units (pg. 35)
- 3a.** Double down on SME and Start-Up Access to Capital (pg. 42)
- 3b.** Create more opportunities for SMEs and Start-ups to capitalize on new waves of innovation (pg. 43)
- 3c.** Streamline regulations and expedite permitting approvals and online inspection services (pg. 43)
- 3d.** Rethink Main Street and explore new models to revive and redevelop neighborhood business districts (pg. 44)
- 4a.** Increase housing supply by implementing a consistent upzoning and entitlement streamlining framework (pg. 51)
- 4c.** Ensure that the Regional Housing Needs Allocation (RHNA) is actively enforced (pg. 52)
- 4e.** Develop an emergency COVID-19 housing and prioritized transportation plan (pg. 53)
- 4f.** Prioritize the redevelopment of underutilized commercial corridors (pg. 54)
- 4g.** Develop a comprehensive and equity-focused new multimodal transport system that connects jobs to housing (pg. 55)
- 4k.** Streamline how local municipalities permit and approve wireless connectivity projects (pg. 57)

Non governmental stakeholders (incl. companies, unions, universities, non-profits and non-governmental organizations)

- 1b.** Continue the contact tracing task force, partnering with the counties through the Silicon Valley Leadership Group (SVLG) (pg. 23)
- 1e.** Continue to promote collaboration between small businesses and hear from them about their evolving challenges, needs, and opportunities (pg. 23)
- 2a.** Expand emergency financial assistance programs (pg. 31)
- 2b.** Scale equitable financial services (p. 32)
- 2c.** Spur large employers to improve living wages (p. 32)
- 2d.** Prevent further displacement of low-income workers (p. 33)
- 2g.** Rapidly increase affordable housing stock by identifying new opportunities to quickly create affordable residential units (p. 35)
- 3a.** Double down on SME and Start-Up Access to Capital (p. 42)
- 3b.** Create more opportunities for SMEs and Start-ups to capitalize on new waves of innovation (p. 43)
- 3c.** Streamline regulations and expedite permitting approvals and online inspection services (p. 43)
- 3e.** Bolster SME digital capabilities (p. 45)
- 4j.** Lower device and connectivity barriers with innovative corporate investment or donation programs (p. 57)

Whole community driven

- 2a.** Bolster job creation and economic mobility to support displaced low-income workers (p. 34)
- 4b.** Support and advocate for state leaders to pass significant housing legislation by joining existing efforts or forging a new statewide 501(c)(4) or 501(c)(6) to break through political barriers to benefit Silicon Valley (p. 52)
- 4d.** Form public-private partnerships that fund housing transformation through shared capital investments (p. 53)
- 4h.** Drive commuter behavior change through city- or employer-provided incentives and disincentives (p. 55)
- 4j.** Promote equitable connectivity through new financial tools that offset costs of internet service and devices (p. 56)

Endnotes

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106. San Francisco Chronicle <https://www.sfchronicle.com/bayarea/article/Is-it-safe-to-get-back-on-the-bus-Ask-Bay-Area-15389962.php#:~:text=Keep%20your%20distance%3A%20Maintain%20at,stations%20and%20at%20bus%20stops.>
107. Santa Clara VTA
108. OECD <https://stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail.asp?ID=4719>
109. San Jose Digital Inclusion Fund <https://www.sjdigitalinclusion.org/>
110. Pew Research <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/05/07/digital-divide-persists-even-as-lower-income-americans-make-gains-in-tech-adoption/>
111. Pew Research <https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2020/04/30/53-of-americans-say-the-internet-has-been-essential-during-the-covid-19-outbreak/>
112. These include, but are not limited to, MTC, SPUR, SVCF, SVLG, SV@Home, All Home, Partnership for the Bay's Future, and more
113. Association of Bay Area Governments <https://abag.ca.gov/our-work/housing/rhna-regional-housing-needs-allocation>
114. This number is based on 686,000 homes in the 9-county bay area this RHNA cycle, supportable by this UCLA Lewis Center report: <https://www.lewis.ucla.edu/research/regional-housing-need-san-francisco-bay-area/>
115. This number is also supported by this SPUR report: <https://www.spur.org/news/2019-02-21/how-much-housing-should-bay-area-have-built-avoid-current-housing-crisis>
116. Other statewide groups include but are not limited to California Forward (CA Fwd), the California Housing Consortium, CalYIMBY, and the Regional Economic Association Leaders of California (R.E.A.L.) Coalition
117. Silicon Valley Leadership Group <https://www.svl.org/game-changers-2019-essay-series-4/>
118. See programs like: United Dwelling, LA ADU Accelerator program, SJ Backyard Homes
119. Partnership for the Bay's Future <https://baysfuture.org/>
120. SPUR <https://www.spur.org/news/2019-02-21/how-much-housing-should-bay-area-have-built-avoid-current-housing-crisis>
121. <http://2040.planbayarea.org/>
122. 5-stories along commercial corridors
123. duplexes to fourplexes in single family neighborhoods
124. Underutilized or underperforming commercials include those with very low floor area ratio (FAR), vacant storefronts, or low tax revenues
125. those with very low floor area ratio (FAR), vacant storefronts, or low tax revenues
126. 5-stories over podium or less
127. SPUR <https://www.spur.org/publications/urbanist-article/2018-03-19/can-we-achieve-regionalism>
128. California Department of Education <https://www.cde.ca.gov/nr/ne/yr20/yr20rel21.asp#:~:text=State%20Superintendent%20Tony%20Thurmond%20Announces.as%20internet%20connectivity%20and%20devices>
129. For example, City of San Jose partnership with AT&T
130. This would be particularly meaningful for low income students bussed 2-3 hours each day via the Tinsley Transfer Program



SILICON VALLEY
Recovery Roundtable

