

Confluence Center Dome

Project Statement

The Confluence Center Dome will be an iconic landmark for San Jose and Silicon Valley. A geodesic dome will visually stand out from a distance during day or night. LED lighting can project programmable patterns of colors at night. It will serve as a functional structure for tourism and events.

An interior column provides elevator access to the observation deck at the top of the dome. Tourists exploring any city enjoy an observation deck. The view will overlook the Guadalupe River, parts of downtown San Jose and out to the mountains on both sides of the valley.

The 250 foot diameter dome sits on a base of five 4-story buildings with main-level retail and exhibits. A second level has meeting and presentation venues reservable by the public. Medium-sized conferences or events could reserve the entire facility on weekdays. While we can't make an observation deck in San Jose any higher due to the airport approach, the Confluence Center adds to its attraction with cafes, meeting and presentation venues and rooms for exhibits that can attract people for various technical topics. Examples include conferences, tutorials and Maker community demos. It can also hold cultural events other than tech. It can be filled with a constantly-changing list of things to see and speakers to hear.

A ground-level basement and truck loading dock provides logistics support for the main-level cafes, retail businesses, gift shop and exhibits. The surface ramps up around the dome to provide access to the main level, which is above the ground-level basement. Putting the basement at ground level minimizes potential issues from ground water adjacent to the river.

The geodesic dome structure allows simple placement of solar panels angled out from the south-facing horizontal struts of the dome. There would be room over 440 standard-size panels for at least 110kW of power to mitigate the power needs of the site. The solar panels can cover LED lighting, shielding them from shining upward, avoiding interference to birds and planes.

The theme of a dome on a cylinder can be expanded to a theme across San Jose. Smaller scale structures at community centers with neighborhood-themed art would amplify each other. Such a theme based on attractive geometry would include the existing San Jose City Hall rotunda dome to reinforce these as symbols of San Jose.