

A park for the next 150 years

Two finalists emerge from St. James Park design competition

Four of the nation's leading landscape design firms competing to re-imagine St. James Park for its next 150 years presented their ideas on Oct. 16 to a jury that included Councilmember **Raul Peralez**, city parks chief **Angel Rios**, Levitt Pavilion representatives and local landscape architects.

The jury narrowed the field to two firms and will reconvene to make a final selection in early November.

Each of the presenting firms formed teams of architects, sound consultants and traffic engineers who have worked on similar projects for cities in the Bay Area and around the world.

Collectively, they weren't complimentary on the present conditions of the park: no boundaries or edge, no definition, no hierarchy or structure, trash cans everywhere, hodgepodge of lighting and auto/bus/light rail traffic along Second Street separating the "square" into two.

Their four proposals all shared some common characteristics:

- ◆ Integrated design enhanced by the historic architecture around the park.
- ◆ Levitt Pavilion and large lawn for music viewing, designed to be active and utilized even when events are not scheduled.
- ◆ Make the park "whole" again: light rail through park still OK, but remove autos and buses.
- ◆ **McKinley, Naglee and Kennedy** monuments remain in place.
- ◆ Heritage trees protected.
- ◆ Newly created water features and playground.

Both of the finalists

— Imelk fr-ee and CMG — acknowledged their designs are meant to move the 150-year-old park forward to its next century and a half. Here's how they would do it:

CMG Landscape Architecture, San Francisco:

CMG aims to re-create the old-fashioned Victorian strolling gardens that first appeared at the park, protect the canopy of trees of today's park and blend in new recreational features in a series of "rooms."

"It's important to keep the sight lines through the park," said **Willett Moss**, CMG partner. "The edge of the park would likely have a low fence to keep people out of the gardens and the plantings would have a height of about 30 inches."

Each piece of the park is meant to stand alone, but each is also mutually supportive of the others, Moss said. CMG's vision:



CMG's plan places Victorian gardens and paseo on the perimeter of the park, and expansive lawns and other amenities inside.

- ◆ Victorian gardens on the park edges.
- ◆ Garden walk that connects the three existing monuments and makes room for two more monuments.
- ◆ Custom playground adjacent to the Kennedy monument.
- ◆ Large "McKinley Meadow" in the northwestern quarter.
- ◆ "St. James Plaza" and paseo connect the interior elements, which include café, docent station, restrooms and Levitt hospitality center.
- ◆ A water feature in the middle of the park where a school of fish — playing off the previous fountain — splash water on the children beneath. Passing light-rail trains would trigger a fog-like mist.
- ◆ Dog park and shady picnic grounds near the Naglee Monument on the southeastern quadrant.

larger than that of Bryant Park in New York City — a place that holds 5,000 people," said **Yadiel Rivera-Diaz** of Imelk fr-ee. "But it is also a place for spontaneous events such as poetry readings, small gatherings and discussions. It is a place for exploration. It is the heart of the park."

A nook in the fanciful pavilion would be a "whispering gallery" for park visitors when the stage is not in use.

All park features would integrate into a unified layout of "petals," each with a "sub-surface recharge basin" for zero-net water use that turns the park into a "living machine," Rivera-Diaz said. The "petals" would be connected by walkways reminiscent of the park's original design.

Some of the "petals" include:

- ◆ Grand lawn, informal sports lawn, contemplation lawn, meditation lawns, yoga/tai chi lawn and "the hill," which has a slight undulation under one of the large trees.
- ◆ Gardens, recharge garden, redwood grove, flowering (but not fruit-bearing orchards), and bur oak plaza.
- ◆ A "floating" deck of natural woods.
- ◆ Customized children's playground with "bumper swings" and "view pods."
- ◆ Splash pad that also performs water ballet — at time mimicking the water spray of the former

(and now dilapidated) fountain.

- ◆ Café and café seating plaza, food truck/farmers' market plaza, neighborhood plaza with table games and court plaza.

"We're not so worried about the light rail through the park," said **Jerry Van Eyck**, Imelk founder. "We see people and rail co-exist all the time in Europe."

Estimated cost: \$60 million initially, re-estimated at \$43.8 million

"I am hopeful that one day our treasured St. James Park will return to its original intent to anchor the community as a primary gathering site," said **Julie Matsushima**, resident and St. James Park committee member.

The designs can be viewed at <http://sanjoseca.gov/index.aspx?NID=5235>.



Imelk fr-ee made a case for building a park that would drive economic impact downtown.

- ◆ A multi-tentacled Levitt Pavilion that is a monument in itself, useful as host to "film festivals, puppet shows, dance performances, informal jam sessions or experimental theater productions."
- The "directional" sound system integrated into the lighting and sunken lawn keep noise levels under control.

"The open colonnade that leads to the stage is also a sculpture," Moss said. "The underside is perfect for yoga and having lunch."

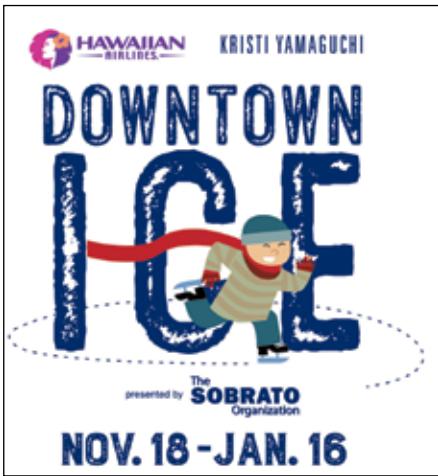
Estimated cost: \$41 million

Imelk fr-ee, New York:

The Levitt Pavilion would be designed in tribute to the other iconic domes in the city, such as those at the Cathedral Basilica of St. Joseph and City Hall.

"The acoustic shell protects the neighbors and the (Grand) lawn is

Downtown for the Holidays



Get ready to skate: Hawaiian Airlines / **Kristi Yamaguchi** Downtown Ice, presented by Sobrato Organization, opens Nov. 18 through Jan. 16 at the Circle of Palms, 120 S. Market St.

Yamaguchi, the 1992 Olympics figure skating champion, will take part in an opening celebration at 5 p.m. on Nov. 23. The public is welcome to attend.

Family and friends, along with fellow ice skaters can enjoy the beautifully lit palm trees for an unforgettable experience.

"My kids ask me, is that the place with the palm trees? And when I tell them yes, they race to the car," said Yamaguchi.

The downtownicesj.com website has daily hours. In general, during November and early December, Downtown Ice is open 5-9 p.m. Monday-Thursday; 5 p.m.-midnight on Friday; noon-midnight on Saturday; and noon-9 p.m. on Sunday. Special hours apply during Thanksgiving. During the winter break, the rink will be open 11 a.m.-midnight daily.

Admission is \$15 for children 10-under and \$17 for skaters 11-older. Those who bring their own skates will be admitted for \$10. A \$50 season pass, other discounts and details are at downtownicesj.com. The rink phone number is (408) 610-4055. Parking information is at parksj.org.

Downtown Ice is located within steps of Christmas in the Park displays, which opens Nov. 25.

Santa Run adds 'character.' Downtown Ice and Christmas in the Park are beneficiaries of the TiVo Santa Run Silicon Valley, a five-kilometer run/walk through downtown in the late afternoon of Dec. 18 as holiday lights take hold on the center city.

The festivities begin at 1 p.m. when participants come dressed in holiday character. Favorite costumes are of **Santa, Mrs. Claus, the Grinch**, reindeer, elves and trees. A costume contest, corporate team challenge and photo booth with the Grinch are new this year.

Kids' runs for 2-to-7-year-olds starts at 2:20 p.m. Everyone else takes off at 3 p.m. Entry fees are \$12 for the kids' dashes and \$35 for the 5K.

The race is put together by Silicon Valley Leadership Group, which also produces the Turkey Trot on Thanksgiving Day. This year, racers receive a discount for registering for both races. Register at santarunsv.com.

More November Downtown for the Holidays events

- Nov. 4, 11, 18 – Downtown Farmers' Market
- Nov. 4, Dec. 2 – South First Fridays
- Nov. 11 – Veteran's Day Parade
- Nov. 23 – Winter Wonderland opens
- Nov. 24 – Applied Materials Silicon Valley Turkey Trot
- Nov. 25-27 – Harvest Festival art and craft show

Downtown News

Incentive extended to Trammell Crow: The City Council agreed to grant Trammell Crow Co. a waiver on the collection of construction taxes if the developer can get its first building permit by spring and complete its massive commercial project near the arena and train station by Dec. 31, 2019.

Trammell Crow had its eye on the incentive – up to \$4 million in savings – almost since the city initially offered the tax waiver in 2014 to the first commercial non-hotel high-rise development to secure its permits.

Trammell Crow wants to build an office/retail development of up to 1 million square feet plus 325 residential units on a nearly nine-acre site at Santa Clara Street

SJDA News

Changes to SJDA staff: **Nate Echeverria** has been promoted to a newly created position as Acting Director of Policy and Operations.

In his new role, Echeverria will lead SJDA economic development, planning, transportation and advocacy initiatives, manage the Property-Based Improvement District operations, business development and street life staff, and oversee the newly formed Downtown Community Development Corporation. Echeverria served as Business Development Manager since March 2014.

Chloe Verrey has been promoted to PBID Operations Manager and will manage the Groundwerx clean teams, ambassadors and services with Downtown Streets Team, secondary employment officers, VTA and the City of San Jose. She also oversees construction mitigation issues. Verrey joined SJDA as Community Outreach Manager in 2013.

Jason Su has been promoted to Street Life Manager from his previous role as Street Life Project Manager, reflecting his increased responsibilities managing project coordinator staff, downtown tree care and beautification projects.

Danielle Ratliff has joined SJDA as Office Assistant, sitting in the receptionist chair at 28 N. First St., 10th floor. Ratliff, a longtime downtown resident, provides concierge services to SJDA members and is responsible for database management and staff support.

SJDA posts its job opportunities at sjdowntown.com/opportunities.

PBID / Groundwerx News



Hart's Dog Park: fun for people, too.

Dogs bark approval: The Property-Based Improvement District worked with one of its commercial property owner members to turn a long-vacant parcel at 194 W. Santa Clara Street into a 2,000-square-foot dog park.

Since its opening Oct. 11, dogs of all sizes have romped on artificial turf and over wood stumps, and played with toys donated by Andy's Pet Shop.

"Thanks to the PBID for creating a great safe environment for our four-legged companions," said **Mark Haney**, a One South Market resident with three dogs.

Hart's Dog Park is set on downtown's busiest corridor and in immediate vicinity of more than 2,000 recently built residences.

"I'm proud that the PBID is a part of this, because it is these types of projects that creates community and makes people say, 'I want to live here,'" said PBID President **Chuck Hammers**.

Benches, planters and energy-efficient lighting make the park appealing to dog-owners, too. A mural by local artist **Tom Colla** acknowledges Hart's, a former long-time downtown department store. Groundwerx will maintain the pocket park.

The site has remained vacant for more than a decade after a fire destroyed the previous structure. The park will remain in place until the site is developed. The property owner also owns the small buildings on either side of the park.

and Delmas Avenue. Trammell Crow Senior Vice President **Don Little** said construction would begin

this month with early site work and be completed by the fourth quarter of 2018.

The Structure Construction Tax and Construction Excise Tax normally paid by

developers is often used to support road and traffic improvements around the projects.

The project will be built in two phases, Little said. The first phase is a 500,000-square-foot office tower, the residential tower and parking for the entire project.



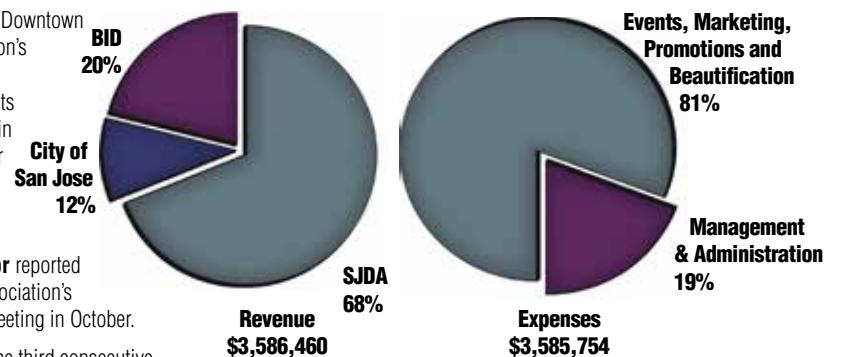
SJDA FY 2015-16 financial summary

San Jose Downtown Association's expenses matched its earnings in fiscal year 2015-16, Treasurer **Liam O'Connor** reported at the association's annual meeting in October.

"This is the third consecutive year when we either came in with a balanced budget or exceeded our financial goals," O'Connor said.

The total budget of almost \$3.6 million included \$707,000 contributed by Business Improvement District members.

Most SJDA expenses go to its programs: Hawaiian Airlines / **Kristi Yamaguchi** Downtown Ice, Dine



Downtown, Music in the Park, Farmers' Market at San Pedro Square, downtown marketing for the holidays, Live & Local music, promotions, parking and beautification projects.

"SJDA takes accountability and transparency very seriously," said O'Connor, adding that complete financial reporting can be found on sjdowntown.com.

At the Convention Center

- Nov. 13 – Marquez Brothers Public Dance (18,000)
- Nov. 19-21 – Abilities Expo (4,500) abilities.com

- Nov. 26 – Living Stream Ministry Thanksgiving Day Conference (3,000) lsm.org/upcoming-conf-info



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SJDA Year-in-Review Meeting

December 9: San Jose Downtown Association's last public meeting of the year will be Dec. 9 at 8 a.m., in the Hammer Theatre Center, 101 Paseo de San Antonio between Second and Third streets.

The meeting features a visual summary of all things downtown in 2016, the Golden Nail Awards and recognition of termed-out SJDA and PBID board members.

Please RSVP at sjdarsvp@sjdowntown.com.

From the Archives

10 years ago - November 2006 – Lew Wolff opened an office in his Fairmont Hotel, hoping to put together deals to bring the Earthquakes back and move his Athletics baseball franchise to the South Bay.

15 years ago – November 2001 – The term "staycation" hadn't been coined yet, but SJDA worked with KBAY 94.5 and KEZR 106.5 on the "Escape to San Jose" promotion, which encouraged South Bay residents to reconnect with downtown San Jose.

20 years ago – November 1996 – The Free Tree with your Shopping Spree promotion gave away a free Douglas fir for spending \$100 or more at participating stores. SJDA ran this promotion 1994-1996.

25 years ago – November 1991 – SJDA added white lights to the San Pedro Square arch so that it could be more festive after dark.

DOWNTOWN DIMENSION

Downtown Dimension is published monthly by the San Jose Downtown Association, a nonprofit organization established in 1986 to serve the Downtown business community. It is printed on recycled paper.

Editor-in-Chief: **Scott Knies**
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sjdowntown.com

Phase 2 office of another 500,000 square feet will be "permit ready" for a quick start, he added.

"It is our belief that both towers will end up being built at the same time – but can't commit to that without a firm leasing commitment," Little said. "We would start the second tower even if there was partial leasing on Phase 1."

Trammell Crow's plans can be viewed at vimeo.com/180084876

Building on North First: Construction officially began Oct. 5 on Marshall Squares at North First Street and St. John Street. The project includes up to 195 residential units and 9,700 square feet of retail space in seven stories on the 1.4-acre site. Six buildings were razed last year to make way for construction.