

18th floor views

Councilmembers move into City Hall

The four new San Jose City Councilmembers answered questions about their goals and downtown for *Downtown Dimension*. Some answers have been edited to fit in this space:

What are your primary objectives for your first year?

Sergio Jimenez: My first objective is to gain a better understanding of the issues plaguing our city. You quickly learn on the 18th floor that many of the issues we grapple with have a long and complex history, which is essential to understand as we plot our course for the future. If I had to choose a few issues, I'd like to focus on public safety, community engagement and housing our most vulnerable residents.

Lan Diep: My first year will be about learning the ins and outs of governing the 10th largest city in the United States, and I want to share what I learn with residents so that folks can be better engaged. I have ideas about what I want to accomplish for District 4 and for the city, but I know that I can't accomplish those things in a vacuum. I want to focus on building good relationships with my council colleagues, city staff, regional elected officials, and community stakeholders like SJDA.

Concretely, I want to reach out to employers in North San Jose so that they know their representative cares about their issues and wants them to stay and expand in San Jose.

Dev Davis: 1) Increase the number of Community Service Officers in the Police Department and leverage technology to enhance public safety. 2) Focus on increasing the number of jobs in San Jose while improving the business experience by streamlining the permitting and inspection processes. 3) Improve housing affordability.

Sylvia Arenas: Ensuring that every family in District 8, and in the City of San Jose, has improved access to the opportunities and amenities that our city and region offer. Too many neighborhoods are geographically cut off from services and feel isolated from the community at-large. It can be an especially acute issue for our seniors and young people.

What do you anticipate the biggest challenge to be?

Jimenez: Managing the budget process and the amount of information coming through our offices. You learn very quickly that

Sergio Jimenez

District 2 (South San Jose)

Preceded by **Ash Kalra**

Education: Political Science degree from San Jose State University.

Employment/public service: Criminal defense investigator with Santa Clara County Public Defender Office; former chair of San Jose Parks and Recreation Commission.



Lan Diep

District 4 (North San Jose, Berryessa)

Preceded by **Manh Nguyen**

Education: Independence HS; Political Science and History degrees from UC-San Diego; Law degree from University of Pacific - McGeorge School of Law.

Employment/public service: International Broadcaster for Radio Free Asia; helped fishermen after BP oil disaster of 2010; director of Vietnamese American Workers Rights Project for Legal Aid Society - Employment Law Center.



Dev Davis

District 6 (Central SJ, Willow Glen, Rose Garden)

Preceded by **Pierluigi Oliverio**

Education: Economics degree and master's degrees in Public Policy and Policy, Organization and Leadership from Stanford.

Employment/public service: Education researcher for Stanford's Center for Research on Education Outcomes; past president of the North Willow Glen Neighborhood Association; former chair of the San Jose Early Care and Education Commission and on Junior League of California's Public Affairs Committee.



Sylvia Arenas

District 8 (Southeast San Jose, Evergreen)

Preceded by **Rose Herrera**

Education: Independence HS; degree in Human Development - focus Early Childhood from Cal State East Bay; master's in Public Administration from University of San Francisco.

Employment / public service: City of San Jose neighborhood services and youth intervention; FIRST 5 Santa Clara County; Gardner Family Health Network.



almost all requests or issues have budgetary implications. Attempting to figure out how to get things done without having the money is a challenging proposition and requires creativity.

The amount of information flowing through our offices is vital yet overwhelming. The issues that reach my office are so vast, diverse, and multifaceted that effective channels by which to filter and understand the issues are crucial. This is done by having good staff and good working relationships with city staff and constituents.

Diep: Remembering to carve out time for myself. I have a tendency to immerse myself into whatever I'm doing. Because I want to understand how things work, I attempt to do everything myself. I need to remember to not skip meals and to take care of myself. I have to remind myself that I'm representing the City now, not just myself.

My big challenge will be learning all the laws impacting municipal governance. Understanding what a city council can do regarding land use, economic development, job creation, etc. Imagining what I want is easy, figuring out how to get there within the limited power of a city council is the challenge.

Davis: Understanding the budget constraints and how to address the multitude of needs in such a large city with limited resources and a large unfunded pension liability.

Arenas: Our city's greatest challenge is ensuring that all residents have access to great city services, while ensuring the fiscal health of the city.

Before you ran for office, what enticed you to visit downtown?

Jimenez: Downtown has always been a part of my life - riding the light rail on its grand opening during a middle school fieldtrip, enjoying the nightlife as a young adult, working in downtown for many years. Having three children, my family often partakes in many of the events. We try our best to expose our family to the vibrancy and beauty of our city's diversity, which is often tied to downtown events.

Diep: The thing that I came downtown for most often was to hang out at San Pedro Square. It's a great space to eat, socialize, and people-watch. I think San Pedro Square is a model for how to create other great spaces in San Jose.

Davis: When our kids were younger, the Children's Discovery Museum was our main reason for visiting downtown. Now that they are older, we spend more time at The Tech and attending cultural performances.

Arenas: Before running for council, the biggest enticements to visit downtown were cultural activities, especially those that cater to

families. As the mother of an 8-year-old and a 2-year-old, the museums, sports and cultural events downtown are big draws.

If you could change one thing about downtown, what would it be?

Jimenez: Add more shopping venues. This would increase revenue for the city and create the needed vibrancy that I'm sure we all desire.

Diep: I would make our sidewalks wider. Successful downtowns focus on the pedestrian experience. A big part of that is giving people lots of room to walk. The gold standard for me is the super-wide sidewalks in Berlin that encourage people to pour out into the streets. Clearly we can't have that in San Jose, but I do wish our sidewalks were wider by a few feet. That way we could add vibrancy to our streets by way of street vendors, street performers, etc.

Davis: I would like to see more retail shopping downtown.

Arenas: I think our biggest challenge downtown is making sure that every block is thriving and vibrant. There are still some blocks that need our attention and continued work to activate.

What will it take to get more of your constituents downtown?

Jimenez: Whether real or perceived, some folks from South San Jose sometimes see traffic as an impediment to visiting downtown. To the extent that it's possible, easing the traffic congestion or offering discounted light rail fares may help in bringing folks downtown.

Also, there are folks who think downtown is unsafe so doing what we can to change that perception is essential. An effective citywide PR campaign promoting downtown in the outlying districts may be helpful. Word-of-mouth is also a good method in attracting visitors but we must give people a reason to talk about and promote downtown. There is work to be done but we already have a strong foundation of "desired" amenities such as shopping, restaurants and nightlife that we should leverage to get folks to the city core.

Diep: I think more people will come downtown if we continue to invest our efforts in attracting a greater variety of experiences downtown, whether that be food, art or social activities. This, combined with creating a more fast, reliable and streamlined public transit system that brings people in from outside.

Davis: Interesting retail/anchor tenants, events, parades and more place-making exhibits like the Musical Swings. Some residents have also told me a barrier to visiting downtown is that they don't feel safe.

Arenas: District 8 families enjoy visiting downtown, but I think that we

New council

From Front Page

can find more great opportunities to make the trip. As the transportation network improves and the city cultivates a vibrant downtown, families across our city and region will continue to make a point of planning visits.

How important are arts, music and culture to the vibrancy of San Jose?

Jimenez: They are essential to a thriving downtown. The SoFA district is a prime example of how all these critical components can come together to create a vibrant atmosphere. If we aren't successful in supporting arts, we'll have challenges in the years ahead in attracting the necessary visitors and commerce to make our downtown successful.

Diep: Very important to the vibrancy of San Jose. These are the things that give any city its unique personality and soul. When I think of cities with personality, I think of New Orleans, Austin, Nashville, and Portland. Each of these cities has a strong music and arts scene. San Jose doesn't have to copy these cities, because we would only succeed in being a watered down imitation. San Jose's brand is built on technology and innovation. There is a way for us to build on that to turn San Jose into an attraction all unto itself.

Davis: Very important! Those are the kinds of events that bring people together and make our community family-friendly.

Arenas: Hugely important. Our city is so diverse and vibrant! It's central to what I love about San Jose, and it's a treasure that we should continue to work on showcasing.

At the end of four years, what would you have liked to accomplish during your term?

Jimenez: It is my hope that the residents I represent are in a better place than when I began my term. I want to make certain our city returns to being one of the safest cities in the country. This benefits residents all around our city and is conducive to having a successful downtown.

I want to look back after four years and say that under my leadership we fought for more affordable housing and we succeeded in housing our most vulnerable residents. I also want to make certain that we have a thriving business district in D2. Additionally, I want to say I did all I could to protect Coyote Valley from ever-growing development pressures.

Diep: This is a difficult question to answer, because the problems we are dealing with today are the same problems that previous councils have faced – public safety, the rising cost of living, increasing homelessness. There are no simple solutions or else they would have already been resolved. I want to do these things, too, but it's hard to gauge how much I can get done in one term.

But one thing I do hope I can do within my time in office is to raise the public consciousness about how government works. I want to share what I learn as I learn it. If I can't do something the community should know why. Are we short on resources? Is there some legal conflict between state, county, or city law that prevents the City from acting? I want to help my constituents better understand how government works so that they can use government to better the quality of their lives.

Davis: Fiscal soundness/sustainability and a more technologically advanced municipality that is focused on customer service.

Arenas: One that we haven't discussed is improving the safety of our city streets. I'm fully committed to Vision Zero. This is a critical issue in my district – which has continued to face traffic fatalities.

Next SJDA Meeting

Feb. 10: San Jose Downtown Association's next public meeting will be Feb. 10 at Hyatt Place, 282 S. Almaden Blvd., starting at 8 a.m. **Daniel Harris**, San Jose program director at the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, will be guest speaker. Please RSVP to sjdarsvp@sjdowntown.com.

At the Convention Center

Feb. 1 - Watermark (5,925) watermarkconferenceforwomen.org
Feb. 24-26 - Spirit of the Flame Challenge (4,500) spiritoftheflamechallenge.com
March 1-2 - Monarch Madness (2,500) sanjosetheaters.org (estimated attendance)

Business News

Furniture merger: KBM Workspace has merged with San Francisco-based Hogue to form KBM-Hogue, which is now the largest Knoll office furniture dealership in Northern California. "Combining our larger geographic footprint and greater operating efficiencies, we become greater together," said CEO **Stan Vuckovich**, SJDA's current Board of Directors president.

Under Vuckovich's direction, KBM Workspace increased revenue six times over the past seven years. KBM started as Kennedy Business Machines in 1946. Hogue, which also has a dealership in Sacramento, opened in 1974. Check kbm-hogue.com.

Black Arrow not headed far: Black Arrow, now a part of Cadent Technology, will remain downtown, moving to 75 E. Santa Clara St. later this month. Black Arrow had been located at 65 N. San Pedro St. in a former restaurant that will once again become a San Pedro Square restaurant/bar called District.

Black Arrow now assists Cadent in its efforts to help pay-TV monetize video delivered to any screen at any time. Check cadenttech.tv.

Oh! le: Tac-oh! has opened for weekday lunch and dinner and Saturday brunch inside the recently renovated Avery building at 399 S. First St. Described by owners **Angelo Heropoulos** and **Molly Adams** as an upbeat, funky taqueria, Tac-oh serves Mexican comfort food with all fresh ingredients, tequila and custom cocktails. Visit tac-oh.com.

Also at 339 S. First: Avery Lounge opened in time for the holidays in the former Agenda upstairs at the corner of South First and San Salvador streets. Modern dance sounds fill the air during most of the week and reggae takes over on Sundays. Avery also has an app available that will generate discount points for regulars and keep them up to date on events. All the info is on their Facebook page @AveryLounge.



Forager hosted events prior to official opening.

Food as art: The former South First Billiards at 420 S. First St. in SoFA is being transitioned into Forager Tasting Room and Eatery, an "accelerator of market-driven feedback" for restaurateurs, said **Heinz Jones**, curator.

"Forager will have shareable kitchen spaces for chefs to test food concepts," Jones said. "Guests will support new businesses and get a sneak peek at the future of the food and beverage industry."

Customers will also pair craft brews with dishes. A good fit for SoFA, Forager has already hosted local arts and entertainment events inside the space. **Dave Johnson**, who has 30 years experience in the restaurant business, will serve as chief operating officer and **Bryan Chen** will handle finances.

Jones, who has been active recruiting investors, plans an intermittent opening that use the space for music and cultural events, with tap room open, while permitting details for the restaurant concept are worked out with the city. The grand opening event is Feb. 3. Check sjforager.com.

More LoCo: Downtown's newest artist space got an extended lease on life. The owners of the formerly vacant space that last housed Ross Dress For Less agreed last month to let Local Color stay on for an extra three months.

Local Color is a project of the Exhibition District, best known for murals around downtown. The group has partnered with yoga studios, artists and others for classes, paint nights, live music and more in the space. Executive director **Erin Salazar** said the first month of the storefront was affirmational.

"We've discovered that our community considers unique arts and cultural offerings essential to the growth of San Jose," she said.

Want to learn more? Upcoming events are at facebook.com/LocalColorSJ.

Zoom growing fast: Zoom Video Communications started 2017 making quite a buzz. On the same day, CEO **Eric Yuan** announced \$100 million in additional funding for the startup mostly from Sequoia Capital; the rollout of version 4.0 of its video conferencing software; that it has 450,000 customers, including Uber and SolarCity; and that it finished 2016 with back-to-back cash positive

quarters. Zoom, located on the sixth floor of 55 Almaden Blvd., picked up coverage from *Fortune*, *CNBC*, *Business Insider*, *Forbes* and *Yahoo Finance*, among others. Yuan, a former engineer at WebEx



and Cisco, who started the company in 2011, has added voice control, teleconferencing capabilities through mobile apps, and made it possible to broadcast webinars of up to 50 panelists to Facebook Live and YouTube, all the while protecting privacy. Check zoom.us.

Downtown Facts

Hotels	Rooms
Fairmont San Jose	808
San Jose Marriott	510
Hilton San Jose	353
Hyatt Place San Jose/Downtown	236
AC Hotel San Jose Downtown	210
The Westin San Jose (Sainte Claire)	171
Hotel De Anza	100
Four Points by Sheraton San Jose Downtown	86
Pacific Motor Inn (formerly Ramada)	72
Hotel Clariana	44
TOTAL ROOMS	2590

Source: Hotel websites

Cirque du Soleil's "Luzia" Feb. 9-March 19

cirquedusoleil.com/usa/san-jose/luzia/buy-tickets



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Downtown News

"Elevate" at Cinequest: Cinequest Film Festival returns for its 27th season Feb. 28-March 12.

New this year will be a virtual reality experience, where attendees can participate in exhibitions, workshops, awards and celebrations to be held at arts venues around downtown, said **Halfdan Hussey** and **Kathleen Powell**, Cinequest founders.

With the closing of Camera 12 Cinemas, Cinequest will expand the number of screenings at the California and Hammer Theatre Center, said **Antonea Colon**, business development and operations manager. Festival programming will also expand to San Jose State University, the Fairmont San Jose and San Jose Stage, plus venues in Santana Row and Redwood City, Colon said.

Screenings and events are increasing from 365 in 2016 to 504 in 2017. The opening and closing night celebrations, plus the Maverick Spirit Award events featuring **Jane Lynch** and **Jason Reitman**, will all take place in downtown San Jose.

Cinequest, recently named Best Film Festival by USA Today readers, hosts more than 100,000 people annually. Schedule and tickets are available at cinequest.org.

Winter Jazz fest this month: Multiple downtown restaurants and lounges will be active Feb. 14-March 3 for the Kaiser Permanente Winter Fest, produced by San Jose Jazz. Café Stritch, the Hedley Club at Hotel De Anza,

From the Archives

10 years ago – February 2007 – Two economic forces – downtown San Jose and the San Jose International Airport – began a debate still unresolved today over the maximum heights of downtown buildings that are in the airport's flight paths. City staff sided with the airlines who want the maximum building heights to be 0 to 90 feet lower than the FAA's prescribed limits, depending on location, in the event that infrequent south takeoffs must be conducted with one engine inoperable (OE).

15 years ago – February 2002 – A Mardi Gras party on Post Street got out of hand with revelers turning to vandalism and breaking windows as the police mounted unit pushed them toward San Jose State. The melee prompted the event's producer to declare, "no more," but the black eye for downtown San Jose lingered on Fat Tuesdays for more than a decade.

20 years ago – February 1997 – The original sj-downtown.com website was featured at a San Jose Rotary luncheon, with the CEO of Netcom giving the site props as a "great web page" and demonstrating how links work.

25 years ago – February 1992 – The inaugural Sharks 1992-93 season tickets went on sale. The 41-game package ranged from \$492 to \$1,107 for most of the 9,000 seats at the Cow Palace.

Deluxe Eatery, Poor House Studio, Trianon Theatre, The Continental and MACLA will all host jazz nights. **Ron E. Beck** of Tower of Power, **Mary Stallings** and the International String Trio featuring **Emily Day** are slated to perform. Hotel De Anza hosts a Mardi Gras Gala Feb. 25 featuring the **Villalobos Brothers**. The schedule is at sanjosejazz.org/winter-fest/

Leading librarian: Jill Bourne was named Library Journal's 2017 Librarian of the Year. Bourne has directed San Jose Public Library since 2013, turning the financially troubled system around, implementing a number of Maker programs, creating the Teen HQ at the downtown library and making sense of the program to collect fines.

Library Journal, founded in 1876, is one of the oldest and most respected publications covering the library field. It awards the Librarian of the Year to only one individual per year. Check lj.libraryjournal.com.

DOWNTOWN DIMENSION

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