

Farmers' Market moves to SoFA

The day and time remain the same, but the location of the San Jose Downtown Farmers' Market is changing, starting May 7.

For the 2021 season, the Farmers' Market will be in the heart of the SoFA District — specifically a one-block stretch of South First Street between San Salvador and William streets.

"It will be exciting to see the Farmers' Market in a new location," said **Donna Butcher**, SJDA events and promotions manager. "The local farmers and artisans are looking forward to returning and providing an essential service for students, employees, residents and the adjacent MANA (Market-Almaden) and SUN (South University) neighborhoods."

San Pedro Square businesses requested the Farmers' Market relocate from San Pedro Street in order to accommodate Al Fresco dining for downtown's restaurant row. The weekly set-up and take-down after the street was closed in July last year proved difficult both for businesses and market vendors.

Six potential sites were considered. One of the criteria for selecting a new location was how it could best support downtown recovery as businesses begin to reopen in 2021 after so many storefronts shuttered during a pandemic-ravaged year.

"The Farmers Market in the 400 block (of SoFA) would be great

activation since most everything there is currently closed," said **Frank Nguyen**, owner of Academic Coffee and SJDA's vice president of marketing.

The Farmers' Market started in 1993 and spent its first seven seasons in the "Block 2" surface parking lot on San Fernando Street between First and Second streets. For the past 21 years, San Pedro Street between Santa Clara and St. John streets was home to the popular mid-day Friday market.

For its 29th season, about 15 fresh vendors and numerous artisans will set up show every Friday from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Early season fruits include apricots, blueberries, strawberries, cantaloupes, cherries, nectarines, peaches, plums, prunes and raspberries. Vegetables sold include artichokes, asparagus, arugula, peas and garlic. Breads and baked goods, fresh fish, cheeses, honey, cut flowers, olive oils and vinegars, wine, jams — all locally grown or made — frequent the market during the season. Artisans sell their crafts, jewelry, soaps, lotions, scarves, candles and clothing.

Average weekly attendance dropped from 2,000 attendees to 800 last season as the pandemic changed the way people could shop and gather together. With many downtown offices still partially or fully closed, SJDA is increasing outreach to residents and has been

encouraged by the number of visitors to its recently opened SoFA Pocket Park.

"The Farmers' Market will be one more amenity for the people moving into SoFA," said **Chris Neale**, executive vice president of The Core Companies based in SoFA and developer of the Sparq apartment building. "SoFA's an arts district, nightlife district, dining district — and now a fresh produce district."

Pacific Coast Farmers Market Association (PCFMA) has been SJDA's partner for all 29 years of the event. Other long-time partners include Kaiser Permanente, VTA, Metro Newspapers, NBC Bay Area, Telemundo 48, El Observador, Content Magazine, Mix 106.5 FM and KBAY 94.5 FM, City of San Jose and Republic Services.

Parking is free for the first 90 minutes in the Second and San Carlos garage, just two blocks from the market. Check ParkSJ.org for parking information. VTA also has bus and light rail stops nearby.

Farmers' markets are considered essential businesses during the pandemic. The downtown market accepts WIC-FMNP coupons for families and seniors and Cal Fresh-EBT — just spend them like cash. Follow the market on Facebook @sjdowntown, Instagram sj_downtown.com and Twitter sj_downtown. Market websites are sjdowntown.com and pcfma.com, which shares recipes.

Letter from the President

DTSJ's future starts at street level

A vibrant, bright, and lively downtown is in the horizon for San Jose, but can buildings and development do this alone? I participated in a "Future of Downtown" webinar last month hosted by the *Silicon Valley Business Journal* and featuring Mayor **Sam Liccardo**, City of San Jose Downtown Manager **Blage Zelalich** and developers **Erik Hayden** of Urban Catalyst,

Matt Lituchy of Jay Paul Co. and **Gary Dillabough** of Urban Community, who all have active downtown projects both under construction and in the pipeline.

These projects will change the skyline of San Jose. I hope they also change the way people experience our downtown at the ground level and at a human scale. Stand-alone buildings do not create active public spaces on their own. What well-designed buildings bring, however, are connections with their surroundings; creating spaces with different experiences such as storefronts, gathering places and walkable streets.



Katia McClain

Each building should take a closer look at how it responds to its unique location, how it connects to the community through thoughtful art and quality architectural lighting installations, and the program designed at the ground level to draw people to visit and stay. At a larger scale, projects should look at how they interconnect with each other and how we can enliven the walk between districts — from San Pedro Square to Diridon Station and to SoFA. This is something that can only be done with collaboration between developers and with the City of San Jose.

Fortunately, this communication is happening and Park Avenue can be a great example. Jay Paul, Westbank and the City are the three property owners on the block between Market Street and Almaden Boulevard and are collaborating on a future vision for Park Avenue that knits together the entire block with their new developments, the Tech Museum, Plaza de Cesar Chavez and the paseo beyond.

Downtown needs people. People bring cities to life with how they interact, play, and work. Without people, downtown can be just a collection of nice buildings. I have big hopes for the Urban Confluence icon planned for Arena Green and creating a must-see destination, but I have even bigger hopes for unique small businesses opening up where we can go eat, shop, browse and explore. Entrepreneurs investing and believing in our downtown, along with music festivals and art events that reflect our community, will define our city alongside these new beautiful buildings.

We can do our part by coming downtown for coffee, lunch or dinner; by supporting development in the downtown area that will bring people in; and by holding our city officials accountable to maintaining a safe and clean downtown. It is on each of us to be part of creating our future city.



The City's Al Fresco dining, pictured here in San Pedro Square, is a budget priority.

Federal funds stimulate city budget

Mayor **Sam Liccardo's** March budget message for the City of San Jose fiscal year beginning July 1 was full of positive proposals for downtown thanks to an expected infusion of federal stimulus funds to the city.

The mayor directed the city manager to create a balanced budget that included attention to these priorities:

San Jose Al Fresco: Liccardo asked to use federal funds to extend San Jose's outdoor dining program at least through 2021-22 and to set the course for permanent Al Fresco dining beyond. In a letter to the City Council, SJDA offered its support for the "Al Fresco forever" initiative.

Storefront Activation Program: The program makes it easier and less costly for all types of businesses — including non-profits and arts organizations in downtown and other hard-hit neighborhoods — to transform empty spaces into vibrant storefronts. Federal funds would be used to offset permitting and parklets costs.

Downtown Foot Patrols: Liccardo wonders why the City Council keeps approving funding for a foot patrol downtown but rarely do officers actually walk the beat. For this round of funding, he requests \$250,000 for a downtown patrol and \$500,000 for patrols in other parts of San Jose that comes with a detailed plan for the year and a report where past allocated "foot patrol" money was

actually spent.

Resilience Corps: An allocation of \$20 million would create a Resilience Corps of young adults to help get them out of unemployment and poverty and into job placements. The one-year jobs program would focus on jobs assisting pandemic testing and vaccine sites, eliminating blight and trash in San Jose's waterways, provide funding for education and training, and building Al Fresco programming. SJDA asked that its Groundwerx cleaning and ambassadorial services be included in job placements.

Restoring our parks and public spaces: Hiring park rangers and encouraging people to safely retake public spaces will help our sense of well-being with money recommended for the rangers and at least 50 public events as the city recovers.

Airport connector RFP: A Request for Proposals (RFP) to build a connecting transportation system between downtown and the airport — including West San Carlos and Stevens Creek — is being recommended.

San Jose Small Business and Manufacturing Recovery Initiative: Liccardo asked that \$1.7 million in federal relief funds be spent providing support and technical assistance to small businesses and for manufacturers to hire blue-collar workers displaced by the pandemic.

New resident profile: meet Tom Badey

On occasion, *Dimension* has interviewed newcomers to downtown San Jose. In this edition, meet **Tom Badey**, who came to San Jose with his wife **Maddie**, dog **Max** and cat **Bella**. The family relocated to Modera at San Pedro Square two months ago from Orlando, Fla., where both worked at Walt Disney World.

What brought you to San Jose?

Unfortunately, I was one of the 28,000 whose role at Disney World was eliminated due to COVID-19. Maddie and I decided to shake things up and take the opportunity to relocate out-of-state. We went on a nationwide job hunt and decided whoever got the best offer first, that's where we would go. She got a great job here, so here we are.

Why downtown?

We've always loved California, especially the Bay Area, but we were never sure how to make moving here happen. We had actually never been to San Jose before, so it was a totally blind move for us. Our first month here has thankfully been wonderful.

How is downtown living compared to your former home?

We've always lived pretty deep in the suburbs of Orlando/Miami, so just the experience of living downtown is so fun. We can walk right downstairs and have our pick of tons of restaurants and things to do.

Where did you move?

We live at Modera. Right now, Maddie is working from home, and I've been entrenched in the job hunt, so we've gotten to spend a lot of time together. I was a resort manager prior to this, so getting time together was a rare commodity.

Why did you choose the part of downtown you are in?

San Pedro Square is a really cool spot. We are right on top of O'Flaherty's and Five Points. You've got San Pedro Square Market right there, Voyager Coffee on the corner, and Hart's Dog Park across the street. We even started buying our soap downstairs at The Source Zero. The only time we need to get in the car is to go to the grocery store.

What are the main topics of discussion between

you and your neighbors?

All the re-openings happening. It's been really neat seeing all the businesses re-awaken and adapt to evolving restrictions. It seems like every other day you see a new outdoor dining tent pop up, or something cool being added.

Are you finding downtown dog friendly?

We LOVE Hart's Dog Park. It's right across the street from us; we go there all the time. Everyone that goes there is really friendly, while making sure to stay safe with the

proper protocols. We've met some really nice people, and some really cute dogs!

Do you notice Groundwex out on the street?

I see them all the time. One gentleman actually sparked up a conversation with me while I was walking Max. Maddie and I make it a point to say "thank you" when we see them out and about. That's definitely an important job, and they are all super-welcoming.

Have you seen Downtowner Online and/or Downtown Dimension?

A local tipped me off to both, and I find them really valuable, along with the COVID-19 updates. They've really helped

us find new places to explore and hear about events downtown. The Valentine's Day décor and art installations were really cool.

Favorite places to eat and/or chill.

We love Urban Momo – the Manchurian chicken is amazing. We really enjoyed Ludwig's German Table, too. I'm originally from Germany, so the fact that I can walk a few blocks over and sit in a biergarten and drink a liter is just too perfect.

Where do you want to go downtown that you haven't tried yet?

We both were in theater in middle and high school, so we are really excited for all these theaters to eventually reopen.

Have you made any new friends since moving in?

We keep talking about how friendly everyone is here. Everyone has been very welcoming. It's been a little difficult with the pandemic to establish a "hey let's go get drinks" kind of friendship with new people, but I'm sure that will get progressively easier as things get better.

owned and operated by **Araceli Vizcaino**, a lifelong San Jose native. "I've been wearing secondhand clothes since childhood," he said. "I remember shopping at a local thrift store, which is currently the MACLA building, and being so embarrassed to admit that the item was from the thrift store. Now, I'm on a mission to show everyone how stylish secondhand and vintage clothing can be."

Thrill of the Luxe has strong sustainable values – all of the clothes are hand-washed with eco-friendly and hypo-allergenic soapberries. (thrilloftheluxe.com)

♦ San Jose illustrator **Kristina Micotti** will move her line of illustrated goods such as hats, beanies, blankets, shirts into one of the four MOMENT storefronts in mid-April. She also has earrings, key chains, patches and pins available. She has a special edition lapel pin of a raccoon for sale, inspired by her mural "Do You Know the Way to San Jose's Guadalupe River Trail" that she recently painted downtown. Check kristinamicotti.com.

Moving out: After "graduating" from MOMENT with a successful brick-and-mortar experience under their coordinated belts, the beautiful clothing from family-owned Aulala Design will now be available in Valley Fair Mall next to Victoria's Secret and across from Zara.

Moving The Shop: Chef **Rodney Baca** has moved The Shop from San Pedro Square Market to the former MakiBQ space in Fountain Alley (30 E. Santa Clara St.). His soft opening was March 18. Baca offers cured meats, sandwiches and sandwiches.

Hello Kronos: Kronos Mediterranean is open at 17 S. Fourth St. next to Fourth Street Pizza and across from City Hall. Order beef gyro, chicken shawarma, chicken kabab and falafel as a pita wrap, entrée with rice or salad. Check kronosmediterranean.com.



Tom Badey overlooks downtown from Modera.

Downtown News

D3 decides on park and crosswalk improvements: Councilmember **Raul Peralez** concluded a four-year program in which District 3 residents decide how some City money is spent in the district.

For this year, four projects totaling \$400,000 were funded:

- ♦ Refurbishing the eagle, Coyote and Hummingbird signs along Guadalupe River Park and Trail;
- ♦ Restoring the benches and picnic tables at Bierbach, Ryland, Forestdale and William parks;
- ♦ Install a crosswalk at N. 26th and East Julian streets, and;
- ♦ Install a flashing beacon crosswalk on West Carlos Street at Josefa Street.

More than 550 district residents participated.

"I hope this program gave residents the opportunity to learn more about our city process and allowed them to make an impact in the district," Peralez said.

New maintenance plan for Guadalupe River Park: Three local nonprofits begin a new partnership in the Guadalupe River Park to remove trash, clean up the trail, and provide outreach to unhoused residents.

The Guadalupe River Park Conservancy, San Jose Conservation Corps + Charter School and Downtown Streets



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Business News

Hotel reorganizes: The social unveiling of the newly renovated lobby at the Fairmont Hotel will have to wait while the hotel reworks its financing.

The hotel closed after filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in February, an effect of the coronavirus pandemic. The reorganization could take up to three months.

The Fairmont's reported loss in 2020 was \$18 million and it expects another \$20 million loss in 2021 as the hospitality industry has been devastated by the pandemic. Occupancy dropped to less than seven percent in 2020 and conventions have been canceled for both years.

The 805-room Fairmont, a San Jose landmark since the original hotel opened in 1987, fronts Plaza de Cesar Chavez on Market Street adjacent to the San Jose Museum of Art. The current owner, Eagle Canyon Capital based in San Ramon, purchased the hotel in 2018 for \$223.5 million.

Despite the financial restructuring, the hotel is poised to rebound as Silicon Valley's business travel and convention meetings return from a nearly complete shutdown during the pandemic. The ownership hopes to attract another top hotel brand to provide financing.

Also, before filing, the hotel committed about \$10 million to a new bar and lounge called Arca plus restaurant space, which will be ready to go when the hotel reopens later this year. The new interior was designed by Rockwell Group, which has dressed up a number of Planet Hollywoods, Nobu Restaurants, and W Hotels.

Now at MOMENT – clothing as art: Two new stores are rotating in later this month at MOMENT in San Pedro Square:

- ♦ Thrill of the Luxe is a vintage / thrift clothing shop

SJDA Meeting

SJDA meeting April 9: SJDA's next public meeting will be April 9, starting 8:15 a.m. on Zoom. City of San Jose Office of Racial Equity Director **Zulma Macial** will be guest speaker. Register at <https://tinyurl.com/apr9mtg>.

From the Archives

10 years ago – April 2011 – Groundwex added high-powered equipment to better maintain downtown sidewalks: two industrial-strength (250 gallon) pressure-washing units and two rugged Kubota utility vehicles to transport them; and two Green Machine sidewalk sweepers.

15 years ago – April 2006 – Following a grant from the Redevelopment Agency and an anonymous gift, the San Jose Institute of Contemporary Art (ICA) relocated to a new home on the 500 block of the SoFA District.

20 years ago – April 2001 – A city ordinance to restrict ground floor spaces for retail use along several prime downtown blocks became effective.

25 years ago – April 1996 – Guided by the Downtown 2010 Strategy Plan, the Downtown Housing Implementation Group (created by Mayor **Susan Hammer** and the City Council) called for construction of 8,000 new housing units by 2010.

30 years ago – April 1991 – After seven years of construction (beginning in 1984) the Guadalupe Corridor light rail project opened the final 10 miles of the 20-mile system stretching from Great America to Santa Teresa.

Downtown Facts

2016 Measure A Housing Bond Progress

Santa Clara County voters approved a proposition authorizing the county to issue up to \$950 million in general obligation bonds to acquire or improve property to provide affordable housing for vulnerable populations in the county. Here's a 5-year update, as of Dec. 31:

Finances
\$462 million to 40 housing projects // \$25 million to first-time home buyer program // \$11.9 million to Supportive Housing Fund pre-development loans // \$499.35 million total committed.

Units
The 40 projects represent 2,368 units of affordable housing, 323 units of low-income housing, and 80 units of moderate-income housing.
Units completed: 214 // In construction: 649 // In pre-construction: 1,505 // Units to be developed: 2,432 // 10-year goal: 4,800.

52.56% of bonds authorized are paying for 49.3% of units.

DOWNTOWN DIMENSION

Downtown Dimension is published monthly by the San Jose Downtown Association, a nonprofit organization established in 1986 to serve Downtown businesses.

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