

Knight invests \$1 million in downtown recovery

The Beautiful Tableau initiative, supported by the **John S. and James L. Knight** Foundation, sparks a five-year recovery and transition period for Downtown San Jose.

The San Jose Downtown Association project will focus on strengthening the center city core to more effectively integrate public life given the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the significant development and transportation projects underway and the opportunity to strengthen connections between downtown districts.

“The definition of ‘tableau’ is a memorable and dramatic image or scene,” said **Sarah Billings**, SJDA street life manager. “We’re inspired to collaborate with our partners to evoke new opportunities for our residents, workers, students and visitors by activating the spaces between our established districts.”

Over the course of the five-year program, Knight Foundation is investing \$994,500 with SJDA.

“San Jose can learn from shared experiences and challenges during the pandemic to build a city that amplifies our diversity, accelerates our innovation, leverages our history, and builds equity by connecting residents and business owners with those who wish to invest in the city’s



Downtown’s present and future merging at Park Avenue and Market Street.

future,” said **Christopher Thompson**, Knight’s San Jose director. “Now, we’re moving forward with this unique opportunity to reimagine a downtown that is welcoming, safe and desirable for everyone.”

The plan includes SJDA accumulating and then sharing data to provide insights for stakeholders including business and property owners, artists, investors, developers and public agency partners.

Data gathered will help with big and small capital projects. For

example:

- ◆ On Santa Clara Street, SJDA will gather information regarding how future BART stations might be utilized, and how downtown can improve connections with San Jose State University and Guadalupe River Park.
- ◆ How Park Avenue between Market Street and Almaden Boulevard now and in the future can be managed while 200 Park Avenue, Park Habitat and the new CityView Plaza are under construction.

Other plan elements include:

- ◆ A goal to integrate street life into daily public life with surprising aesthetic delights, service businesses such as salons and cleaners, and

outdoor amenities for gathering, mingling and lingering.

- ◆ Improved physical connections between The Historic District, SoFA, San Pedro Square and Little Italy and along the Paseo de San Antonio, accomplished through public art and both temporary and permanent street life enhancements.

- ◆ Utilizing and strengthening data to help create more cohesive systems, such as filling empty storefronts and better use of public spaces such as sidewalks, parklets and curbs for delivery driver services.

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Letter from the President

Still a long path ahead

It seems like January 2020 was an eternity ago. At the beginning of my tenure as President of the SJDA Board, I knew there would be some key items that I wanted to lead: moving new development projects forward; creating energetic places downtown; engaging with other districts and share lessons learned; and diversifying the Board.



Katia McClain

March 2020 arrived and a bigger force changed the direction of SJDA, San Jose and the world. At a fundamental level, the people in Downtown changed. Lives were disrupted. We stopped taking our health and social privileges for granted. As an architect, I have always believed that the built environment shapes lives but this time, no building was going to make things better.

Life continued and we adapted. December 2021 is here and new projects are moving forward:

- ◆ Murals and Downtown Doors continue popping up downtown;
- ◆ We are sharing knowledge with the Alum Rock-Santa Clara and the Monterey Corridor business districts;
- ◆ And we have the most diverse board in the history of SJDA.

I am proud to see SJDA’s staff responding quickly to the changes and adapting to different needs. I am happy to see projects like Miro, Adobe, 200 Park, and PASEO moving along with construction, despite supply-chain and workforce challenges. I am glad to see our small businesses being creative with outdoor space, showing resiliency and fighting to stay relevant. However, our homeless population continues to increase and for some, adapting has not been easy or even an option.

There is a long path ahead of us as an organization. To make sure the built environment does shape our lives in a positive way through quality design and innovation. To make sure the fragile ecosystem around small businesses survives and then thrives. To make Al Fresco a permanent gathering and dining option. To support programs that enrich public life downtown. To ensure that vibrant projects and investment see Downtown San Jose as a viable option. To make sure that political boundaries make us a better city and not divide us. To keep opening doors for residential projects at all levels. To vote for those in office who will make the city better – not just their political interest groups. To make Downtown San Jose one of the best urban experiences in California.

It is said: “Every new beginning comes from some other beginning’s end.” In this new beginning, there is plenty of room for all of us to be kind to one another and make a difference.

Special MOMENT for Source Zero

Entrepreneur and owner **Ashley Merz** has expanded her successful MOMENT store, The Source Zero, into a retail space at San Pedro Market.

“It almost seems unreal that I have employees and a customer base that rely on The Source Zero to continue making a positive and personal impact on the environment,” Merz said.

The Source Zero is a zero-waste shop and soap refill boutique that also features locally made home goods from various women artisans based in the Bay Area. The Source Zero is now located in the former Vino Vino space near the San Pedro Street entrance of the public market.

Bring in a clean container and refill hair shampoos and conditioners, face scrubs, creams and washes, body oils, gels and lotions and household cleaners. Top-selling physical products include local



Ashley Merz

hand-poured candles (Eiar and Opals), low-waste dental care such as David’s toothpaste, reusable ear and beauty swabs from The Last Object, hand-sewn “unpaper towel” rolls and beeswax wraps from Gilroy local **Mishka Hands**.

“With MOMENT we had 310 square feet of space to work with and we made it all fit,” Merz said. “What a wonderful opportunity that was to get our feet on the ground and name and idea out there.”

TheSourceZero.com online store features almost 100 products, but the variety of items from which shoppers can choose is larger in the store, Merz said.

“We have more space now so we can display more



The Source Zero has about twice the space it had across the street.

products and support more local businesses,” she added, noting that her plans also include ramping up regular DIY class workshops.

Merz believes she is on the front end of a trend that is starting to sweep across the nation.

“It gives customers a sense of control over this one area of their life where they understand that they are making a positive change,” she said. Merz has consulted with more than 20 other up-and-coming businesses to open similar shops with their own personal flair.

“This is exactly what we hoped for when we came up with the concept for a retail incubator in the city’s parking garage,” said **Scott Knies**, SJDA executive director. “An entrepreneur testing her idea at MOMENT, seeing it work, and expanding into another downtown location.”

Merz looked at several different locations downtown before

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Beautiful Tableau From Front Page

"I picture stronger connections where public life amenities attract more people to downtown and keep them here longer," said **Chloe Shipp**, SJDA director of public space operations.

The Beautiful Tableau's core activities are partnering and mentoring; community engagement; placemaking and public conservancy; research and development; and enhanced storytelling, all of which are imperatives to tying downtown together.

The new grant builds off the success of two impactful Knight investments with SJDA over the past eight years: The MOMENT shops in San Pedro Square, which added four ground-floor micro retail spaces by renovating a section of the Market-San Pedro Square parking garage; and a five-year Street Life initiative completed in June 2020 that resulted in dozens of downtown decorative and landscape improvements, including colorful crosswalks, LED lighting, murals, Hart's Dog Park and SoFA Pocket Park.

Downtown News

Holiday lights are up: Kristi Yamaguchi Downtown Ice, Christmas in the Park and Winter Wonderland return this holiday season after skipping 2020 due to COVID-19.

Also back are versions of The Nutcracker by San Jose Dance Theater and The New Ballet, plus other traditional performances hosted by arts groups throughout the downtown and some new events, like A Holly Jolly Holiday at 3Below Theaters. For the calendar of events, please check sjdowntown.com/holidays.

December events at the skating rink include the Dec. 4 Pet Pantry Skate Drive with Humane Society Silicon Valley and the Dec. 16 Silent Skate. Musical Mondays presented by Broadway San Jose takes place each Monday in December.

Session skating occurs daily. Tickets must be purchased in advance at downtownicesj.com. Use the same url for the rink's COVID protocols.

Downtown Ice is presented by First Tech Credit Union and Alaska Airlines. Other sponsors this season include: Google, John & Timi Sobrato, SWENSON, City of San Jose, San Jose Office of Cultural Affairs, Urban Catalyst, SJAAC's organic chocolates; media partners NBC Bay Area, Telemundo 48, The Mercury News, K-Sleight FM, mix 106.5; and promo partners San Jose Chamber of Commerce, San Jose Museum of Art, Content Magazine and Christmas in the Park. Kristi Yamaguchi's Always Dream is beneficiary.

Christmas in the Park events in December include free movies at dark on Saturdays. Plaza de Cesar Chavez is divided into eight themed zones, plus the community tree area. Visit christmasinthepark.com.

Both the ice rink and the Chrstmas in the Park benefit from the annual Santa Run, this year to be run Dec. 19 wherever you are. Information and registration at santarunsv.com.

Land gifted for affordable housing: Google has given the City of San Jose three parcels totaling 0.8 acre to be developed as affordable housing.

The properties are at 240-250 N. Montgomery St. (15,180 square feet) and 255 N. Autumn St.-260 N. Montgomery St. (20,000 square feet). The contiguous donated plot is across the street from Google's planned Downtown West mixed-use project. Up to 250 homes could be put on the site. Google bought the 240-250 Montgomery addresses in April 2018 for \$1.9 million and the Autumn-Montgomery site for \$3 million in November 2018.

The land is part of the June 2021 development agreement between the City and Google to amass 25 percent affordable units in the Diridon Station Area Plan (DSAP). Google also has committed another 1,000 units within its development, which is part of the larger DSAP.

Business News

Starbucks at full strength: A new Starbucks coffee and tea has opened at 181 E. Santa Clara St., in the Miro residential towers across the street from City Hall.

"Knight's support and the leveraging of funds provided by property owners, businesses and City of San Jose resources resulted in a more dynamic downtown environment pre-COVID, which sets the table for the Beautiful Tableau initiative," Shipp said.

The initial data collected for the program aims to focus on new uses for outdoor spaces and improving development zones undergoing transformation with useful, strategic and attractive barriers and public furniture. The implementation of the Beautiful Tableau's physical additions will likely occur in the later – and hopefully post-pandemic – years of the grant.

The Source Zero From Front Page

deciding to move across the street.

"San Pedro Square Market seemed like the best, most central location to service the South Bay area," Merz said. "With great parking, food options and a lively scene of people, we get good foot traffic. Plus, we are already known in the area, so it makes sense to stay down here."

That brings the number of Starbucks downtown back up to four. The other locations are on West Santa Clara Street at San Pedro Square, on Paseo de San Antonio and Second Street, and in the San Jose MarketCenter on Coleman Avenue. The new location, which replaces a Starbucks that closed at 101 E. Santa Clara at Third street, is the most spacious of the four. Visit starbucks.ca.

Mochi and donuts in one: One of fast-growing Mochinut's 90 new stores is planned to open soon in San Pedro Square Market, 100 Almaden Ave. Originated in Hawaii, Mochinut is a combination of Japanese mochi and American donut, with a light crispy coating and soft chewy inside. Mochinut also specializes in Korean rice flour hotdogs.

Mochinut has expanded to South Korea and Thailand, and has 23 stores in California. Check mochinut.com.

Welcome back Wells: Wells Fargo returned to the downtown core over the summer, relocating its customer-service branch from CityView Plaza to 50 West San Fernando St. The 5,000-square-foot ground-floor financial center is decked out with modern banking amenities including new ATMs, offices for private transactions and traditional teller windows. Check wellsfargo.com

Jay Paul Co. acquired the Wells Fargo building at 121 S. Market St. in April 2020 for \$42 million, a key purchase for the proposed 3.8 million square-foot urban campus on the mega-block facing Market Street, Park Avenue, Almaden Boulevard and San Fernando Street.

Smoke and gifts shop: Bulldog Mini Market, 121 E. San Carlos St, is a one-stop shop for smokers. The store opened in September, specializing in e-cigarettes, e-juice, e-hookahs, vape pens, Shisha and accessories. Also, shop online at bulldogsmokeshop.com.

Groundwerx News

Employee of the month: Working at Groundwerx is one way that **Adrian Ortega** feels he can give back to the community he has in lived in since he was five years old.

"I get a sense of joy from the work that I do," said Ortega, Groundwerx Employee of the Month for October. "Working for Groundwerx makes me feel like I'm directly contributing to my community."

Like his co-workers on the clean team, Ortega consistently accumulates some staggering statistics for the month:

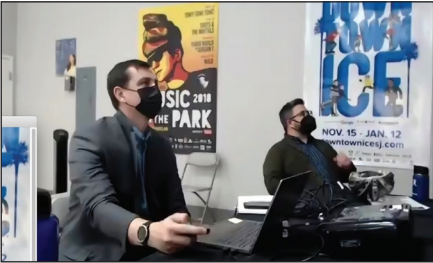
- ♦ Removing 164 bags of trash from the public right of way and trash cans, totaling 4,100 pounds
- ♦ Providing 138 hours of service cleaning 511 block faces
- ♦ Cleaning 1,341 trash cans and 1,317 pieces of street fixtures, such as benches, crosswalk buttons and bike racks
- ♦ Removing 129 pieces of graffiti

Born in Mexico and growing up on San Jose's West Side, Ortega remembers visiting downtown every holiday season to enjoy Christmas in the Park and Winter Wonderland.

"I enjoyed the rides so much, I would buy a wristband so I could get on every ride," he recalled.

He joined Groundwerx at the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020, coming from jobs in retail and restaurant industries.

SJDA News



Chris Arkey, left, and Nate Le Blanc in new satellite office.

New business support center: San Jose Downtown Association announces a new business support center located at 16 N. Third St. and staffed by SJDA's Business Development team. One or more members of the team – Business Development Manager **Nate LeBlanc**, Business Resiliency Manager **Omar Torres** and Community Engagement Manager **Chris Arkey** – will be in the office weekdays to answer questions and provide business support. The office is already being used for meetings.

"Businesses can come to us, but we're not waiting for people to pop in," LeBlanc said. "We'll be actively reaching out and visiting businesses, just like always." Building owner **Helen Ebert** and broker (and SJDA

Board member) **Geri Wong** arranged the lease, which fulfills another goal of the 2020 SJDA Stabilization Plan.

Community Engagement Manager hired: Long-time San Pedro Square Market employee **Chris Arkley** has been hired by San Jose Downtown Association as Community Engagement Manager. He is responsible for outreach and membership services for SJDA.



Chris Arkey

Arkley will take a lead role strengthening relationships with members, partners, stakeholder organizations and funders. He will also assist in PBID renewal, database management and construction mitigation. Arkley will serve as SJDA's liaison to the Historic District Committee and San Jose State.

The SJSU graduate most recently served as a field engineer for Tech City Builder of San Jose, but is best known downtown for climbing the organizational chart of San Pedro Square Market, where he started as a beer tender in 2013 and worked his way up to assistant general manager. Email him at carkley@sjdowntown.com.



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He's a frequent customer of SoFA Market. where the variety of tastes suit him. He also notices the streets beginning to fill with people from when he started under shelter-in-place.



Adrian Ortega swept a ton of leaves.

"The most unexpected thing about my job is the number of people who are clearly in need of social services, as well as medical and mental healthcare," he said. "I've never worked with unsheltered people before so this was entirely new to me."

Year-in-Review Meeting is Dec. 10

Highlights, awards and farewells: San Jose Downtown Association's traditional Year-in-Review meeting on Dec. 10, for the first time, will be a hybrid format and attendees can be in person at the Hammer Theatre Center or online.

The 8:15-9:30 a.m. public meeting features a review of 2021 on the big-screen, the awarding of the **Jim Fox** Golden Nail and a farewell to board members who have reached the end of their terms.

Register at sjdowntown.com/sjda-public-meeting.

From the Archives

10 years ago – December 2011 – Councilmember **Sam Liccardo** proposed changes to the city's zoning code to suspend the ground-floor ordinance (written 10 years prior) for one year to allow office uses in storefronts without a special use permit. Other changes included expanding the downtown zoning boundaries and eliminating Conditional Use Permits for full-service hotels.

15 years ago – December 2006 – Oakland A's co-owner **Lew Wolff** opened an office downtown with the hopes of putting together a deal for Earthquakes Major League Soccer to return to San Jose and for the A's franchise to move to the South Bay.

20 years ago – December 2001 – Following a fire in 1995, the city landmark First Unitarian Church of San Jose (built in 1892) reopened after six years of reconstruction and restoration projects.

25 years ago – December 1996 – Cathedral Basilica of St. Joseph's started the Season of Hope Performance Series, with three performances a night Dec. 1-23.

DOWNTOWN DIMENSION

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